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The Campaign of Essex in Ireland, 1599

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THE CAMPAIGN OF ESSEX IN IRELAND, 1599

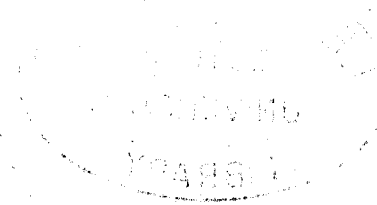
by

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VITA

The author, Robert Edward Morris, is the son of Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Edward Joseph Morris and Marion (Lucy) Morris. He was born May 14, 1943, in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

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Upon graduation he was commissioned as a Regular Army Second Lieutenant in the Infantry, and was married to Patricia Orlando on June 25, 1966. The author was promoted to First Lieutenant in June 1967, and to Captain in June 1968.

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The author has two children, Michael, age six, and Daniel, age three.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>C.S.P. Domestic</u>	Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series
<u>C.S.P. Ireland</u>	Calendar of State Papers, Relating to Ireland
<u>C.S.P. Simancas</u>	Calendar of State Papers, Relating to English affairs, in the Archives of Simancas
<u>MSS. Carew</u>	Calendar of Carew Papers, preserved in the Lambeth Library
<u>MSS. Salisbury</u>	Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honorable The Marquis of Salisbury, K.G.
<u>E.H.R.</u>	English Historical Review
<u>I.H.S.</u>	Irish Historical Review
<u>Ir. Sword</u>	Irish Sword

INTRODUCTION

On April 15, 1599, Sir Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, arrived in Dublin to assume his new position as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, having been charged by Elizabeth I with the task of subduing that restless island once and for all. Outwardly confident, bolstered by the popular acclaim which followed his triumphant expedition to Cadiz in 1596, and leading the largest force hitherto maintained in Ireland, the Earl was determined to subdue the Gaelic rebels thoroughly and, above all, quickly.

Five months later he was back in England, having left behind an army decimated by disease, exhausted by difficult marches across the treacherous Irish countryside, and morally crushed by fear and despair. His own illustrious military reputation was shattered, and shortly after his return to England he was imprisoned, officially charged with disobedience to orders and unofficially suspected of treason.

Castigation of Essex began while his campaign was still in progress and has continued to the present day. Letters from Elizabeth to the Earl in Ireland contain scathing denunciations of his inefficiency, disobedience, lack of resolution, and, most seriously, the assertion that Essex had no excuse for failure, because, as the

Queen wrote, "you had your asking, you had choice of times, you had power and authority more ample than ever any had, or ever shall have."¹ Succeeding historians have echoed Elizabeth's charges and continued to place the blame solely on Essex.

Cyril Falls, author of Elizabeth's Irish Wars and Mountjoy states that Essex "began with every advantage,"² and "no army ever established in Ireland had better prospects of being adequately maintained."³ Regarding the Earl's strategy, Falls writes that Essex, rather than striking at Ulster, the root of the rebellion, "chose the easier course" and moved south, where he wore out his best troops while accomplishing nothing.⁴ The author of The Second Cecil, Phyllis M. Handover, attributes failure to the defeatism of Essex and to the fact that the Earl found guerrilla warfare "so contemptible according to his standards that he had not bothered to devise a means of countering the insidious etiolation of his army."⁵ Ewan Butler, in his book The Cecils, curtly dismisses the campaign by

¹C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 152.

²Cyril Falls, Mountjoy (London: Odhams Press Unlimited, 1955), 108.

³Cyril Falls, Elizabeth's Irish Wars (London: Methuen and Company, 1950), 232.

⁴Ibid., 231.

⁵Phyllis M. Handover, The Second Cecil (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1959), 194.

saying that Essex "seemed unable to come to grips with Tyrone."⁶

The Earl of Essex always maintained that the expedition was sabotaged by his numerous enemies in England, but his protestations were dismissed in 1599 and are largely discounted now. Handover states that "with nothing to distract him except his own failure, the mind of Essex became infected and poisoned,"⁷ while Butler concludes that Essex's "consciousness of failure" began to "disturb his never very well-balanced mind."⁸

Articles by Reverend David Hicks (1955) and L. W. Henry (1959) suggested a need to reevaluate the Essex campaign; however their suggestions have been generally ignored. In the most recent (1971) biography of the Lord Lieutenant, Robert, Earl of Essex by Robert Lacey, the author states that "He could not complain at the strength or condition of the troops given him for the task";⁹ and then simplistically condemns the "aimlessness"¹⁰ of Essex's movements in Ireland, without even considering the crucial problems of logistical support on which the

⁶Ewan Butler, The Cecils (London: Frederick Muller Limited, 1964), 113.

⁷Handover, The Second Cecil, 194.

⁸Butler, The Cecils, 113.

⁹Robert Lacey, Robert, Earl of Essex (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 224.

¹⁰Ibid., 222.

campaign depended. Finally, Lacey chides Essex and his subordinates for complaining that they were misunderstood in England and poorly supported by men of ill-will,¹¹ when in fact the evidence supports the Earl's complaints.

To date, the campaign of Essex in Ireland has not been studied or analyzed in any great detail, most authors preferring to dismiss the campaign briefly, and it is this void in Tudor history which the author hopes to fill. In order to place the events of 1599 in proper historical perspective and to familiarize the reader with the Irish situation which Essex would confront, it would be profitable to begin by examining the catalyst which would eventually bring Essex to Ireland: the great rebellion of 1595.

¹¹Ibid., 233.

CHAPTER I

TYRONE'S REBELLION

On June 28, 1595, Queen Elizabeth I issued a royal proclamation declaring the Irish Lord, Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, a traitor and rebel.¹ This action marked the beginning of an eight-year conflict which drained the English treasury and devastated the Irish provinces in the last years of Elizabeth's reign. The war began in Ulster and remained localized, with intermittent truces, for the first few years. Then in August, 1598, the main English Army, under Lord Marshal Sir Henry Bagenal, was ambushed and destroyed at the Yellow Ford while attempting an invasion of Ulster.² This defeat signalled a general uprising throughout Ireland, as the indigenous population made a determined and savage effort to drive their English overlords into the sea.

As with other major conflicts, the causes of the rebellion of 1595 were numerous and complex, involving deep-seated hostilities building up over a period of years, and immediate provocations and precipitous incidents. The immediate causes centered around the personality of Hugh

¹Robert Lacey, Robert, Earl of Essex (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 224.

²C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 228.

O'Neill, whose personal ambitions and diplomatic duplicity provided the spark which set off the uprising. The long-range causes can be attributed to the nature of English rule in Ireland and to the attempts made to subvert Gaelic institutions.

Sixteenth-century Ireland was a forbidding land of mountains, forests and bogs which, despite its proximity and historical ties to England, was surprisingly uncivilized. English writers in the 1500's used the Irish as the standard of savage behavior against which they compared others. As late as 1640 Englishmen who went to America constantly compared Irish customs, manners, dress and even hair styles to those of the American Indians whom they encountered.³

The inhabitants met by the New English settlers of the Tudor age were usually a mixture of native Irish and the descendants of Norman conquerors who had settled in Ireland during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Normans had generally established themselves in the eastern province of Leinster, in the section known as the Pale; however, great baronial families such as the de Burghs and the Fitzgeralds had moved into the western province of Connaught and the southern province of Munster.⁴

³David Beer Quinn, The Elizabethans and the Irish (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), 23-26.

⁴John C. Beckett, A Short History of Ireland (New York: Hutchinson's University Library, 1952), 19-24.

The Norman descendants, or Old English, kept up a limited connection with England, chiefly through shipping between Dublin and the southeastern ports of Ireland, and the English ports of Bristol, Milford and Chester. However, this uncertain contact was not enough to preserve the Norman identity in a Gaelic environment, and by the sixteenth century the Normans had lost virtually all traces of their ancestry.⁵ By the 1500's the Old English families had adopted Irish customs, institutions and language to the point where there seemed to be no difference between the two groups.⁶ Additionally, the Old English solidified their position by ties of marriage and friendship with the local Irish chiefs.⁷ With the exception of the northern province of Ulster, where the native Irish were still supreme, all the Irish chieftains of importance who opposed the English were descendants of the early Norman invaders.⁸

The Irish society of the sixteenth century was a primitive, feudalistic society in which the local chiefs ruled a depressed class of serfs. The nucleus of the society was centered around large households of men whose

⁵Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, 143.

⁶Ibid., 160.

⁷William Z. Renwick (ed.), A View of the Present State of Ireland by Edmund Spenser (London: Eric Partridge Ltd., 1934), 229.

⁸Cyril Falls, Elizabeth's Irish Wars (London: Methuen and Company, 1950), 23-24.

main occupation was fighting.⁹ Additionally, there prevailed an elaborate military hierarchy of horsemen, light infantry and most importantly, Scots heavy infantry. The presence of Scots, known as Gallowglasses and Redshanks, added to the instability of the Irish situation. The Gallowglasses had entered the country in the mid-thirteenth century as mercenaries to the Irish and Anglo-Irish Lords, and had remained their hereditary allies. Settling all over Ireland they fought as heavy infantry and soon became the backbone of the rebel Irish armies. Under the Tudors, a new wave of Scots mercenaries, the Redshanks, began to enter Ireland on a seasonal basis. Crossing from the peninsula of Cantyre, separated from the north Irish coast by a mere twelve miles, the Redshanks fought for brief periods or a campaign, and then returned to Scotland.¹⁰

The local chiefs were linked to the more powerful Irish lords by bonds of fealty and tribute. The Lord had the right to levy feudal dues which obliged the local populace to feed the lord and his retinue whenever they visited. In war, a more encompassing levy, the "bonaght", was used to gather "victuals" and money to support any venture.¹¹ Throughout the sixteenth century, therefore,

⁹Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, 15, 39.

¹⁰Gerard A. Hayes-McCoy, Scots Mercenary Forces in Ireland (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1937), 13-23.

¹¹Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, 34-35, 52.

any chieftain in revolt had a legal source of support at his disposal.

One of the most troublesome aspects of sixteenth-century Ireland was the system of succession, known as tanistry. Whereas the English had the system of primogeniture, by which the eldest son inherited an estate, the Irish and Old English families handed down authority and land not from father to eldest son, but from the head of a family group to the next strongest personality. The successor, or tanist, was usually chosen in the ruler's lifetime, and was always an adult, since this turbulent society could not afford to have minors as chieftains. However, if there were no appointed successor, the dispute was settled by election or force of arms.¹² The system of succession, the presence of mercenaries from Scotland, and the martial orientation of the ruling classes, kept Ireland in a state of continuous warfare and instability.

The legal system of Ireland did nothing to bring order to the island. Theoretically, Ireland was under the English law, but in fact legal jurisdiction was ineffective outside of those areas occupied by the New English settlers.¹³ The native Irish and Old English relied on the Brehon Law, a system based on Irish tradition and

¹²Renwick, View, 232.

¹³George B. O'Connor, Elizabethan Ireland (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker, 1940), 97.

custom. The Brehons were a professional class of hereditary jurists who used archaic texts and commentaries as a basis for law. The system did not uphold the power of the state and was extremely unstructured. For instance it provided no machinery for putting law into motion against criminals, but left it to the aggrieved person to press charges. Additionally the entire system provided no punishment greater than fines for any offense, including murder.¹⁴ Contemporary English observers like Edmund Spenser, Secretary to Lord Deputy Grey, noted that the system invited corruption in that the Brehons could be intimidated or easily bribed by powerful Lords. In fact the Brehons actually made a business of gathering exorbitant rewards in return for favorable decisions, a situation which increased the financial position of the Brehons, while allowing local lords to violate the law with impunity.¹⁵

Finally, the entire economic system of Ireland made it difficult to establish an orderly and manageable society. The basis of Irish society was pastoral, cattle being the chief source of wealth.¹⁶ Most Irish were forced to move with their herds on a regular basis, going to the

¹⁴Ibid., 99.

¹⁵Renwick, View, 18.

¹⁶Henry Morley (ed.), Ireland Under Elizabeth and James the First, Described by Edmund Spenser, by Sir John Davies and by Fynes Moryson (London: 1890), 418-421.

mountain pastures in summer, and back to the lowlands in winter. Consequently, Irish settlements tended to be irregular rural units rather than towns and large villages.¹⁷ This constant movement away from the towns at regular intervals attracted all sorts of vagabonds, thieves and wandering minstrels, who attached themselves to the migrating parties. Additionally, the process of moving from town to mountain wilderness involved a more primitive existence with its concomitant decivilizing social implications.¹⁸ The whole setup of Irish society, therefore, hindered the establishment of an orthodox civilization on the Continental standard.

Ireland had been virtually ignored by most English kings, and little effort had been exerted to bring it under control. Sir John Davies, Attorney-General for Ireland in 1606, observed that prior to Elizabeth's reign the Crown of England had never sent over enough men or treasure to defend the small territory of the Pale, let alone insure the conquest of the whole island. However, Henry VIII, although he sent few troops, did establish a new administrative organization in an effort to make the island more manageable.¹⁹

In 1534, Henry VIII set up a governing system centered

¹⁷Renwick, View, 64-65.

¹⁸Ibid., 98-99.

¹⁹Morley, Ireland Under Elizabeth, 245-246.

in Dublin. At the head was the Viceroy, bearing the title of Lord Deputy, or in exceptional cases, the higher title of Lord Lieutenant.²⁰ The Lord Deputy was responsible for all of Ireland, with direct responsibility for the administration of Leinster and the Pale, while the Provinces of Connaught and Munster were administered by a President and Council appointed by the Lord Deputy. The northern province of Ulster remained virtually independent, being ruled by various feuding tribal chieftains who maintained a sporadic alliance with the English, communicating directly with the Lord Deputy.²¹

The Lord Deputy was assisted by an Irish Council including a Lord Chancellor, Chief Justice, Treasurer at Wars and Marshal of the Army. Most of these positions, particularly that of the Lord Deputy, were filled by men chosen in England, although Old English nobles at times were able to hold the lesser offices.²² The Irish Parliament was theoretically to function as the government of Ireland, but its independence had long since been undermined. In 1494 Sir Edward Poyning, sent by Henry VII to bring order to Ireland, passed laws which provided that all acts which the Irish Parliament wished to consider had to be first certified in England and approved by the King

²⁰Falls, Irish Wars, 20.

²¹Renwick, View, 225-226.

²²Ibid., 228.

and his Council.²³

The Irish Parliament was dominated by the Lord Deputy, who found little use for it, since English administration was subsidized almost completely by England. Since the Parliament was not needed for revenue, it was only called for some special purpose, such as to restore the Protestant religion or to extinguish the title of some recalcitrant noble.²⁴ During Elizabeth's reign the Irish Parliament's most significant action was to pass several acts of attainder against the Desmond clan on April 26, 1585, confiscating their lands as penalty for rebellion. After this, the Irish Parliament did not meet again for the rest of Elizabeth's reign.²⁵

In addition to reorganizing the administration in Ireland, Henry VIII sought to assert English authority by inaugurating the policy of "Surrender and Regrant." From 1541 to 1543 a procession of Irish Lords came to England and submitted to the king. Through this method the Irish chieftains showed their good faith by surrendering their lands to the Crown, which gave the lands back to the chiefs under royal patent letters. It was stipulated that the lands would be forfeit if the chieftains were disloyal.²⁶

²³Morley, Ireland Under Elizabeth, 399.

²⁴Falls, Irish Wars, 21.

²⁵Ibid., 157.

²⁶Ibid., 30.

Furthermore the Irish Lords promised to serve the king, give up Irish dress, and use the English language. In return the Lords were promised English protection and were given English titles. Of all the Irish who came to England during this period, the most important was Con O'Neill, head of the most powerful clan in Ulster, who was awarded the title Earl of Tyrone.²⁷

By the above methods Henry VIII had hoped to bring the Irish under control. However the new administration, along with the policies of Surrender and Regrant, were neglected by succeeding monarchs, Edward VI and Mary I.²⁸ In 1558 Elizabeth came to the throne, and after solving her immediate problems of succession at home, turned her attention to the restless island across St. George's channel.

The official English position toward Ireland was expressed by Queen Elizabeth in her Proclamation for Ireland on January 25, 1598. In this she maintained that trouble in Ireland was caused by "the cunning of seditious priests and seminaries" from "foreign parts," who stirred up the people by telling them that the English wished to conquer them.²⁹ Elizabeth maintained that:

²⁷Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, 145.

²⁸Falls, Irish Wars, 30.

²⁹C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 468.

the very name of conquest seemeth so ridiculous to us, as we cannot imagine upon what ground it could enter into any man's conceit, that our actions, tending only to reduce a simple and barbarous rabble of misguided rebels, should need any such title of conquest...³⁰

Despite this vehement denial of conquering designs the English reasoned that Ireland could never be properly administered until it was organized in English fashion, with appointed representatives of state controlling a stable population, unhindered by the destructive effects of clan warfare.³¹ Therefore the English wished to establish a loyal landowning class which could have no special privileges as did the Irish Chieftains of Ulster. Furthermore, stability would be insured by a central administration assisted by garrison troops and uniform systems of taxation and legal jurisdiction. Finally, cohesion would be attained by creating a church whose clergy would support the state, and by establishing English as the sole official language.³² Conquest, therefore, would be the only feasible means of facilitating the English objectives.

Under Elizabeth's rule the government increasingly looked on colonization by New English settlers as the best method of solving the Irish question. Queen Mary I had endeavored to establish New English colonies in King's and

³⁰ Ibid., 469.

³¹ Renwick, View, 233.

³² Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, 10.

Queen's counties in an effort to secure the border of the Pale; however, these attempts were only halfheartedly supported.³³ Likewise, Elizabeth, ever conscious of finances, would never agree to complete subsidization of a new colonial settlement, but encouraged several wealthy nobles to carve out estates for themselves on the promise that the government would pay half the expenses. As land became available several nobles attempted to take advantage of this new opportunity.³⁴

Making land available was no serious problem since the policy of Surrender and Regrant provided the legal means of confiscating territory of rebel chieftains. Elizabeth had reinstated this policy by 1562 and many chieftains, including Shane O'Neill of the Ulster clan, made their submission to the Queen.³⁵ Shane O'Neill revolted shortly thereafter but was subdued in 1566. The new Lord Deputy, Sir Philip Sidney, decided that lasting peace would only be assured if the O'Neill lands were parceled out to enterprising colonists. Elizabeth supported this concept when the Lord Deputy pointed out that New English settlements in northeastern Ulster would prevent the Scots from coming across the channel from their Highlands on periodic raids.³⁶

³³Ibid., 106.

³⁴C.S.P. Ireland, 1574-85, 406.

³⁵Falls, Irish Wars, 89.

³⁶C.S.P. Ireland, 1509-73, 318.

The attempted settlement under Sir Thomas Smith was furiously contested by the Irish, who realized that they would be thrust down to a class of depressed peasants under a New English aristocracy. The Smith venture, suffering from Irish hostility and the usual skimpy financial support, collapsed altogether when Sir Thomas was killed in 1569.³⁷

At the same time new efforts were made further south as New English settlers under William St. Leger attempted to confiscate the territory of the Old English Earl of Desmond, who had assisted the rebellious Shane O'Neill. The Earl of Desmond was arrested and sent to London, but his cousin, James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald, took over leadership of the Desmond clan and led a serious revolt in 1569. The bloody rebellion was not settled until 1573, and only after Elizabeth had sent many troops and spent much treasure.³⁸

Still not discouraged, Elizabeth immediately supported new colonization attempts in both north and south Ireland after the Fitzmaurice rebellion. In 1573 Elizabeth sent Walter Devereux, first Earl of Essex, to settle the peninsula of Antrim in the extreme northeast corner of Ulster, in order to stop Scots' assistance. The expedition

³⁷Ibid., 424.

³⁸C.S.P. Simancas, 1568-79, 694.

failed in that bleak country and most settlers returned home when the Earl of Essex died in 1575.³⁹

The southern venture was more successful as many ambitious nobles, led by Sir Walter Raleigh, seized great tracts of Munster territory which had been confiscated after the suppression of Desmond's rebellion.⁴⁰ New English colonists poured into this area, and by 1589 over 1,000 New English were settled. The colony continuously expanded in strength up to the time of the great Irish uprising of 1598, whereupon the settlement was quickly and completely destroyed.⁴¹ The New English settlers consciously sought to expel the native Irish from their territory rather than integrate with them, and soon found their colonies bordered by hordes of sullen Irish refugees. Even those Irish not directly injured by the policy of confiscations viewed the English policies with mistrust and apprehension.

The manner in which the English conducted military operations and handled resistance did much to alienate the Irish population as a whole. Back in England sentiments were expressed by high-ranking officials on the importance of building a bridge between the two societies.⁴² However,

³⁹C.S.P. Ireland, 1574-85, 89, 99.

⁴⁰Ibid., 406.

⁴¹C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 290-292.

⁴²Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, 125.

in the grim realities of guerrilla warfare, such high-minded sentiments were lost on the local commanders charged with keeping order.

The exasperation invariably felt by the English officials in attempting to combat the Irish guerilla tactics, led them to resort to famine as one sure method of dealing with an enemy that found support among the indigenous population. From the beginning to the end of Elizabeth's reign the Lord Deputies would ultimately rely on starvation to bring the rebel Irish into line. Even normally humane personalities, like Henry Harvey, Secretary to Lord Lieutenant Essex in 1599, ultimately came to the conclusion that the rebellious Irish were "savage beasts," "rats and similar vermin" to be rooted out and slain.⁴³ The surest method of dealing with them was famine; "famine which eats up, not the fighting men alone, but the women and the children too, till there be not one of them left." The justification, as Henry Harvey expressed it, was that "they be one and all either rebels themselves or kin to rebels... they seem to have deserved no less."⁴⁴

The policy of starving the population into submission was perfected during the Desmond uprising of 1579-1583. Not being able to come to grips with the Irish force, the

⁴³ Emily Lawless (ed.), With Essex in Ireland (London: Methuen and Company, 1902), 179.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 243.

English attacked their source of supply by destroying any food and beef they could find, regardless of the consequences to the civilians. The end result of this policy of despoliation was described by Edmund Spencer, who visited Munster at the conclusion of the rebellion and noted the condition of the people:

they were brought to such wretchedness, as that any stony hearts would have rewed the same, out of every Corner of the woods and glens they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them, they looked Anatomies of death, they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves, they did eat of the dead Carrions, they spared not to scrape out of their graves, and if they found a plot of water cresses or shamrocks, there they flocked as to a feast...in short space there was none almost left and a most populous and plentiful Country suddenly left void of man or beast, yet sure in all that war there perished not many by the sword, but all by the extremity of famine, which they themselves had wrought.⁴⁵

Colonization and conquest were to be followed by a complete transformation of Gaelic society. Richard Stanyhurst, a contemporary official observer, noted that a successful conquest had to insure the incorporation of three basic elements: law, apparel and language.⁴⁶ English legislation in the occupied areas therefore sought to regulate these three elements of Gaelic life. While the new rules on legal jurisdiction and apparel were treated with indifference by the Irish, the rules pertaining to language were opposed with open hostility. Language

⁴⁵Renwick, View, 135.

⁴⁶Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, 57.

is probably the most basic manifestation of group identity, and probably the most difficult characteristic to attempt to regulate. A contemporary English observer noted: "For language, they do so despise ours, as they think themselves the worst when they hear it."⁴⁷ The Irish stubbornly resisted these attempts to change their life, particularly in Ulster, where Con O'Neill, upon his deathbed, "left his curse to any of his posterity, that would either learn English, sow wheat, or make any building in Ulster."⁴⁸

One particular class singled out for destruction by English legislation was the Irish poet or "bard." The poets formed a privileged class which either wandered through the countryside or secured a position at an Irish court. In a society with such a low literacy rate, the bard preserved Irish tradition and folk lore. They glorified in song and rhyme the Irish lords to whom they were attached, going so far as to assert that some Lords were descendants of Caesar, Alexander or Darius.⁴⁹ The bards were the most vocal critics of English interference and the most uncompromising advocates of preserving Irish identity. They particularly lauded the martial spirit of the old Irish and incited younger Irishmen to go on robbing and cattle rustling forays in emulation of their

⁴⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 440.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Renwick, View, 94.

ancestors. The Irish revered the bards as a source of tradition and pride, while the Irish Lord welcomed their praise and adulation. To the English, however, the bard was a disruptive influence and the Lord Deputies took drastic measures, including execution, to eliminate the influence of these hostile poets.⁵⁰

Another method by which the English sought to subdue the Irish was to take advantage of the many factions and rivalries in Ireland, and thereby use the Irish to defeat themselves. The most intense Irish rivalry which the English exploited was the long-standing feud between the Earls of Desmond and Ormonde. The Desmonds, descendants of the Norman Fitzgeralds, were the acknowledged leaders of large areas in Leinster and Munster and as the spokesman for Catholicism and independence, were the chief targets of English repression.

The Ormondes, located in and around the Pale area, were their chief rivals, and throughout all of Elizabeth's reign they were led by Thomas Butler, tenth Earl of Ormonde. Butler was brought up as a Protestant, the first of his lineage, although he conformed as was necessary under the harsh Catholic reaction of Queen Mary I. In 1562 and again in 1565 the Earl of Ormonde came to England to protest outrages committed by the Desmonds, and

⁵⁰C.S.P. Ireland, 1509-73, 514, 535.

made a fine impression on the Queen.⁵¹

Thomas Butler, known as "Black Thomas" from his dark hair and complexion, was a charming personality and stayed around Elizabeth's court for long periods of time. He and the youthful Queen Elizabeth, who were about the same age, developed a deep affection for each other--some said it was love⁵²--which lasted throughout Elizabeth's reign. With the Queen so firmly on his side Ormonde secured a leading position in Irish politics, rallied the Protestant Irish to the English cause, and brought in many former rebels to fight on the Queen's side. Throughout the long wars, while English viceroys came and left, and even in the lowest ebbs of English fortune, Ormonde's loyalty and support was something on which Elizabeth could always count; and in the end it did make a difference.

Of all the sources of conflict between English and Irish the most significant area of disagreement was in matters of religion. Before the English attempted to impose the Reformation on Ireland, religion in that country was treated with a mixture of superstition and indifference. The Catholicism of the native Irish and the Old English settlers, though firmly entrenched, had gradually been allowed to lapse to the point where religion was practiced in name only. The New English Bishop of Cork,

⁵¹Falls, Irish Wars, 101-102.

⁵²Ibid., 102.

charged with ensuring the success of the Reformation in his area, wrote despairingly:

I am persuaded, and do partly know the same by experience, that a great part of this kingdom are no better than mere infidels, having but a bare name of Christians, without any knowledge of Christ or light of his truth, that I myself have examined divers of them, being sixty years of age or upwards, and have found them not able to say the Lord's Prayer, or the articles of the Christian faith, neither in English, Latin, nor Irish, neither have they ever been taught the same or examined by the priest whether they could say the same or not.⁵³

Additionally, the English were appalled at the moral turpitude of the native Irish. Contemporary writers abhorred certain practices, particularly those relating to marriage, while the New English noted that illegitimacy and incest were widespread. Probationary marriages for a year and a day were common, and divorce was easily obtained, since the Brehons supervised the proceedings.⁵⁴

Under Henry VIII the first efforts were made to spread the Reformation to Ireland, as the king dissolved the monasteries and forced the heads of the O'Neill and O'Donnell clans to abjure the Pope.⁵⁵ Under Edward VI, the beginnings of a religious rift became evident as England turned to Protestantism and the Irish and Old English clung to the traditional faith. However any slight progress made

⁵³C.S.P. Ireland, 1596-97, 16.

⁵⁴Quinn, Elizabethans and Irish, 80-81.

⁵⁵Falls, Irish Wars, 18.

under Henry VIII and Edward VI was reversed forever under the reaction of Mary I. When Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558 the Bishops in Ireland made statements of adherence to the Reformed Church in the Irish Parliament of 1560, but still celebrated Latin masses. However, those bishops under the North Irish chieftains did not even attend the Parliament. Although Elizabeth had left the question of doctrine rather vague to avoid confrontation, she vigorously pursued the establishment of a church which outwardly seemed to be united to the state. The English, therefore, took over Church property, installed obedient clergy and gave away monastic property to their own officials.⁵⁶

Around Dublin the process seemed to be successful, as even the Archbishops of Dublin went over to Protestantism without reservation. The farther one proceeded from Dublin the more tenuous was the hold of the Reformed Church, until it was lost altogether in the wilds of Ulster and Connaught. There, the native Irish and Old English rejected any aspect of the new forms of service or articles of faith which could be identified with the Anglicizing process.⁵⁷

The impetus to resist was given by vigorous efforts

⁵⁶Myles V. Ronan, The Reformation in Ireland (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1930), 6-24.

⁵⁷Ibid.

of the Catholic Counter-Reformation in general, and in particular by the efforts of James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald. Fitzmaurice was the first Irish layman who attempted to connect politico-religious strings. After taking over leadership of the Desmond clan and leading a revolt in 1568, he sent the Archbishop of Cashel, Maurice Fitzgibbon, to the courts of Philip II of Spain and the Pope in a fervent appeal for aid.⁵⁸ In the next year he sent a letter to Philip II in which he stated that the Irish wished to have a Catholic king, namely Don Juan of Austria, appointed over them in an effort to unite the country and save them from the damning effects of Protestantism. Furthermore, Fitzmaurice asserted that if the king offered no aid, the rebels would have to make peace with the English.⁵⁹ Despite his efforts no significant aid was forthcoming, and with the collapse of the rebellion Fitzmaurice went into exile on the Continent.⁶⁰

In 1572, Fitzmaurice went to France, and after staying two years, journeyed to Rome where the Pope gave him a warm reception. Equipped with a ship, 100 men, and a Papal proclamation depriving Elizabeth I of her possessions, Fitzmaurice set sail for Ireland and landed at Dingle Bay

⁵⁸Falls, Irish Wars, 126.

⁵⁹C.S.P. Simancas, 1568-79, 521.

⁶⁰Falls, Irish Wars, 104.

on July 17, 1579.⁶¹ The small force was immediately crushed and their leader killed; however, Fitzmaurice had set many precedents which would be later used by the Earl of Tyrone, particularly in his diplomatic dealings with the Spanish. Additionally, the travels of Fitzmaurice aroused renewed interest in Ireland, and from 1580 onward Ireland was deluged by an ever-increasing number of traveling friars and missionaries, particularly Jesuits, educated in England during Mary's reign and later on in Flanders and Spain. The new, well-educated arrivals placed themselves at the sides of the great lords, becoming scribes and advisors, using their influence to exhort ever greater resistance to Protestantism and Anglicization.⁶²

The end result was that by the 1590's it was plain that the Reformation had failed. Cyril Falls, author of Elizabeth's Irish Wars, considers the failure of the Reformation the most significant event in Irish history and concludes that if the Reformation had succeeded Ireland might have become as closely united with England as Scotland and Wales.⁶³ The attempts at reformation caused religion to become such an emotional subject, with such symbolic significance, that it soon became the one universal cause in Ireland and the rallying point for Irish nation-

⁶¹Ibid., 126.

⁶²Ibid., 19.

⁶³Ibid., 18.

alism and resistance.

In a letter to the King of Spain in 1570 James Fitzmaurice lamented the fact that Ireland had no king or natural leader, and therefore was weakened and divided before the English.⁶⁴ From time to time leaders had emerged for brief periods, but always they had been shortsighted individuals oriented to their own local areas rather than towards the problems of Ireland as a whole. To harness the national anti-English sentiment a potential leader had to be a man of some prestige, who possessed some background in military and diplomatic skills, and the vision to manipulate a national strategy. In previous revolts the leaders had always lacked one or more of the requisite qualities; however, in the last decade of the sixteenth century the long-sought leader emerged in the person of Hugh, Earl of Tyrone, known to the native Irish as "the O'Neill."

The future leader of Ireland got off to a rather inauspicious start in his career, becoming an early victim of the Irish system of succession. The O'Neill clan had been under the leadership of Con O'Neill until his death in 1559. At his demise the province of Ulster was plunged into chaos by a contest for succession to the English title "Earl of Tyrone," and the more prestigious Irish

⁶⁴C.S.P. Simancas, 1568-79, 521.

title "the O'Neill." According to English law the legal heir was Con's eldest son, the Baron of Dungannon. However, Shane O'Neill, a more forceful and ruthless personality, was elected tanist by the O'Neill clan, according to Celtic law. The matter was settled when Shane murdered the Baron of Dungannon, and then wisely submitted to Elizabeth in 1562.⁶⁵ In order not to provoke further violence the English took charge of the next legal heir, Hugh O'Neill, son of the murdered Baron of Dungannon, and removed him to England out of harm's way. Hugh O'Neill, therefore, spent the next six years in England living the life of a young noble attached to the household of the Earl of Leicester.⁶⁶

While Hugh was in England Shane O'Neill rebelled and was killed in 1567, and the tanist Turlogh Luinach was elected chieftain of the O'Neills. At the age of twenty-eight, therefore, Hugh O'Neill came back to Ireland, and although he could not take over as head of the clan while the new tanist lived, he immediately sought to ingratiate himself with the English. In 1573 he supported the attempt of the first Earl of Essex to establish the ill-fated Antrim colony in Ulster. As Baron of Dungannon he accompanied Walter Devereux, raising Irish troops and personally

⁶⁵C.S.P. Ireland, 1509-73, 198, 209.

⁶⁶Lacey, Essex, 223.

securing Belfast Castle.⁶⁷ The Earl was so impressed with this uniquely cultured Irishman that he wrote to the Privy Council that Hugh O'Neill was the only man to be trusted in Ulster and that his position should be advanced.⁶⁸

With the endorsement of Essex, and with the help of a natural charm which endeared him to the English, Hugh O'Neill persuaded Elizabeth and her advisors to give him ever-increasing support over the next twenty years. From 1574 to 1594, undoubtedly certain that O'Neill could be a great asset to them, the English assisted all his attempts to consolidate his rule in Ulster against the rival clans. O'Neill's professions of loyalty were so convincing that Elizabeth, normally adverse to bestowing any great titles, confirmed O'Neill's title to the Earldom of Tyrone in 1587.⁶⁹

While Hugh O'Neill courted the English, he also sought the deal with the many rival clans of Ulster, the most prominent of which were the O'Donnells and the Maguires, both distrusted by the English. The friendship of the O'Donnells was secured by the marriage of Hugh O'Neill to an O'Donnell woman, and by the marriage of O'Neill's daughter, by his first wife, to the clan leader Hugh Roe O'Donnell, the "Prince of Donegal." The Maguires proved

⁶⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1574-85, 403.

⁶⁸C.S.P. Ireland, 1509-73, 525-526.

⁶⁹Lacey, Essex, 224.

more hostile to Hugh O'Neill's pretensions, and the Earl of Tyrone began to look for an opportunity to eliminate the rival leader, Hugh Maguire. In 1593 the Maguires revolted and Tyrone joined forces with the English Marshal, Sir Henry Bagenal, and together they quickly destroyed the power of that clan.⁷⁰

Although O'Neill was a master of diplomatic balancing between English officials and anti-English clansmen, his duplicity could not endure forever, and the basic Anglo-Irish rivalry eventually began to affect his position. In 1587, his son-in-law, Hugh O'Donnell, was imprisoned in London on suspicion of treason. In 1591 the Prince of Donegal escaped and returned to join Tyrone, whereupon he was forced into the indelicate position of having to choose between his son-in-law at home and the Queen in England. Although he managed to delay the Queen's wrath until June, 1595, the presence of the "traitor" O'Donnell in his camp made relations with England increasingly strained.⁷¹

After 1587, O'Neill found that his formerly good relations with English officials were deteriorating, particularly because of his marital difficulties. In order to establish his position Tyrone had contracted three marriages. His first wife was divorced; the second wife was an O'Donnell who died; and the third marriage was to an

⁷⁰C.S.P. Ireland, 1592-96, 330.

⁷¹Lacey, Essex, 224.

English woman, Mabel Bagenal, sister of the English Marshal, Sir Henry Bagenal. Mabel had left her sister's house in the Pale, in August, 1591, and had eloped with Tyrone, much to the chagrin of her brother, who deplored the fact that his house should be mixed with the blood of an Irishman, cultured or not.⁷²

Although Sir Henry Bagenal cooperated with Tyrone in crushing the Maguires two years later, the growing hostility can be seen from the fact that in the official report following the Maguire revolt Bagenal omitted any tribute to Tyrone for the latter's assistance.⁷³ Shortly thereafter, Mabel, no longer able to tolerate Tyrone's propensity for mistresses, returned broken-hearted to her brother's house, where she died in 1596.⁷⁴ After her treatment at Tyrone's hands, Sir Henry Bagenal, one of the most influential Englishmen in Ireland, was O'Neill's implacable enemy. Sir Henry's hostility probably had some influence on the attitude of the English Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam, who became increasingly more suspicious of Tyrone's intentions following the Maguire revolt.⁷⁵

Another factor which adversely affected relations between Tyrone and the English was the renewed attempt

⁷²C.S.P. Ireland, 1588-92, 409.

⁷³C.S.P. Ireland, 1592-96, 528.

⁷⁴Falls, Irish Wars, 173.

⁷⁵C.S.P. Ireland, 1592-96, 210.

of the latter to tighten their hold on Ireland in the last years of the sixteenth century. From 1585 onward, England was at war with Spain, and the position of Ireland achieved a new importance. Like the Low Countries, Ireland offered a friendly area in which a Spanish army could be prepared to invade across the channels to England. Because of strategic considerations the English could not afford to have a hostile and unsubdued Ireland at their back.

The English fears were well-grounded. Although the Great Armada was defeated in 1588, merchants from Continental ports constantly brought word of new preparations. Indeed a Spanish invasion force, organized in 1596, was forestalled by an English raid on the port of Cadiz, while a second force was turned back by storms in 1597.⁷⁶ Rumors of a great Spanish invasion panicked the English population in the summer of 1599, while an invasion force did manage to land over 4,000 Spanish troops at Kinsale in 1601.⁷⁷

Beginning with the Fitzmaurice wars of the late 1560's, Irish rebels had besought the King of Spain for support, though with little success. After the outbreak of the English-Spanish conflict in 1585 the Irish leaders

⁷⁶Renwick, View, 239.

⁷⁷John J. Silke, Kinsale (New York: Fordham University Press, 1970), 7.

began to plead for aid and alliance. Tyrone himself, for all his protestations of loyalty, may have been in contact with Spain as early as 1588, shortly after he had been made an Earl by Elizabeth. In October of that year, Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam and one of his generals, Sir Richard Bingham, both sent a series of letters expressing their distrust of Tyrone and his possible involvement with Spain.⁷⁸

The crisis of 1588 passed, however, and Tyrone was soon praised again in reports sent back to England.⁷⁹ However, in 1592 there was renewed fear of Spanish intervention and of Tyrone's hostility, and the Archbishop of Cashel cautioned Queen Elizabeth about the discontented state of Ireland and the possibility that many Irish, including Tyrone, would join the Spanish if they landed.⁸⁰

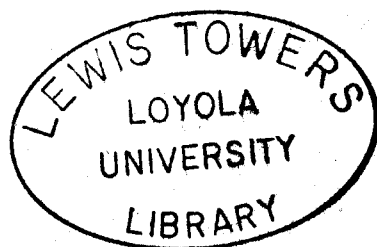
For the next two years events moved inexorably toward conflict as Tyrone became more independent and the Anglo-Irish sources of conflict intensified. In July, 1592, Queen Elizabeth sent a letter of admonition to Tyrone, condemning both his relationship with O'Donnell and the fact that the Earl had not prevented his sons from raiding and committing other "riotous acts."⁸¹ In 1593, Tyrone gave evidence of greater ambition. His cousin Turlogh,

⁷⁸C.S.P. Ireland, 1588-92, 53-55.

⁷⁹Ibid., 337.

⁸⁰Ibid., 493.

⁸¹MSS. Salisbury, vol. 4, 218-219.



who had been elected head of the O'Neill clan while Tyrone was in exile, withdrew from his position as "the O'Neill." By the law of tanistry, Hugh O'Neill was elected to succeed him. Thus, without the approval of the Queen, Tyrone had assumed a position of unique power and prestige.⁸²

By July, 1594 English observers concluded that Tyrone was "now standing on doubtful terms." Furthermore, as the Earl of Desmond had previously been "seduced" by Jesuits, so the Earl of Tyrone had fallen under the influence of a Spanish Cardinal who constantly urged rebellion while promising Spanish aid.⁸³ At the same time Hugh O'Donnell, Tyrone's son-in-law, had openly revolted against the English and had inflicted a series of minor but humiliating defeats.⁸⁴

Attempts at negotiation proved useless, although given the hostility of the chief English officials, Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam and Sir Henry Bagenal, it is doubtful whether such talks ever had reasonable chance of success. Elizabeth apparently lost all patience, for on January 7, 1595 a letter, written by Lord Burghley on behalf of the Queen, was sent to the Lord Deputy urging him to call Tyrone to Dublin on pretext of negotiating and then to cast him into

⁸²Lacey, Essex, 224.

⁸³MSS. Salisbury, vol. 5, 564.

⁸⁴Falls, Irish Wars, 182.

prison as soon as he arrived.⁸⁵

The crafty Earl never arrived, but stayed in Ulster strengthening his army. The final break came in May, 1595 when Sir Henry Bagenal marched north with 1,500 men to bring Tyrone to submission. A brief clash occurred on May 27 in which the English were ambushed by Tyrone's army, and suffered serious casualties.⁸⁶ At the same time, Elizabeth received word from Thomas Richardson, a Scot who had been in Ulster, that the King of Spain had sent an Irish bishop back to Tyrone with word that the Earl could expect an army of 3,000 to 4,000 Spanish soldiers in the near future, to assist in ousting the English.⁸⁷ Elizabeth could dally no longer with Tyrone. The time for negotiations had passed; the matter would be settled by force of arms.

In summary, the Irish Rebellion of 1595 was based on a foundation of ever-increasing hostility and mistrust throughout the Tudor period. The basic problem centered around the English attempts to make Ireland a stable and manageable society on the English model. This process of Anglicization threatened the very core of Gaelic life, affecting language, dress, law, economic structure and

⁸⁵MSS. Salisbury, vol. 5, 80-81.

⁸⁶Falls, Irish Wars, 188.

⁸⁷MSS. Salisbury, vol. 5, 186.

most importantly, religion.

The methods used by the English did much to provoke the Irish to rebellion. Enterprising and ruthless New English colonists moved into Irish areas and contemptuously ejected native Irish and Old English alike. In the sections under New English control, Anglicization was forced down the Irish throats. If the Irish resisted or rebelled they were savagely dealt with by English officials who resorted to any means, including mass starvation, to subdue them. Invariably, the rebel lands would be confiscated and the process of expansion and consolidation continued. Weakened and divided, without an effective leader, the Irish were usually unable to put up effective resistance.

In the last decade of the sixteenth century the Irish finally found a leader in Hugh O'Neill, who possessed the diplomatic skill which the situation demanded. Realizing that conflict was inevitable Tyrone sought to balance between the English, Spanish and Irish leaders until he was ready. While the English authorities vacillated in their policy toward Tyrone, he trained his men, reversed the traditional O'Neill policy of feuding with neighbors, gathered the clans of Ulster under his leadership, and gained touch with the discontented and adventurous all over Ireland. As "the O'Neill," with all the prestige that his title implied, Tyrone's cause had national appeal.

The Irish chieftains, fearing the loss of their status by the English policy of encroachment, flocked to Tyrone's standards.

CHAPTER II

WARFARE IN IRELAND

For the English, a campaign to Ireland involved certain monumental tasks, not the least of which was to recruit an army and deliver it to the Gaelic bogs. Unlike France and Spain, England did not maintain a professional standing army. Her only full-time soldiers consisted of a few hundred Yeoman of the Guard, and scattered garrisons along the Scottish border and in Ireland which, until Tyrone's rebellion, rarely numbered more than a few thousand men.¹ This disparity between English and Continental armies occurred primarily because there was no incentive to keep a large standing army, the English Channel presenting a formidable barrier to invasions. Furthermore the economy would not easily support a large standing Army. An army meant taxes, and taxes involved calling a Parliament, something which the monarchs preferred not to do.

For economic considerations the forces needed for any campaign were collected directly for the purpose and demobilized upon the conclusion of hostilities. Since the defense of England relied heavily on the small number of trained men available to the Tudors, the government was

¹Falls, Elizabeth's Irish Wars, 92-110; Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army, 1.

reluctant to send these troops abroad. The Irish campaign, and other foreign ventures, had to rely mainly on untrained volunteers or conscripts called into service.

Despite the haphazard state of military affairs throughout the Tudor reign, by 1598 the organizational structure and ranking system of the English Army had evolved along Continental lines. By the latter part of the sixteenth century the English expeditionary forces, which usually numbered from 5,000 to 20,000 men, were organized into regimental units. The regiments were composed of 750 to 1,000 men,² organized into six or seven companies, each composed of 150 men; the companies were composed of sections numbering about 20 men.³

Regarding the chain of command it should be noted that, as in most armies of the time, the key officers invariably came from the nobility. This practice was a hold-over from the Middle Ages, by which the army and the Church were reserved as the two honorable professions in which the younger sons of the nobles could, and should, engage. At the top of the command structure was the general, who, during the Tudor age, was a political appointee from the highest ranks of the nobility--usually a man of great name whose loyalty to the crown was unquestioned. The second-in-command was the Marshal of the

²C.S.P. Domestic, 1595-97, 222.

³Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army, 58.

Army, whose chief function was to supervise the management of the camp, and the administration of justice and discipline. The Marshal was assisted by the Provost Marshal, who was well-versed in military law and handled the day-to-day administration of justice.⁴

In a large army there was usually a General of the Infantry and a General of the Horse to lead the respective arms in action. For overall support the most responsible position was the Master of Ordnance, who issued weapons, ammunition and supplies to the troops, and supervised most of the supporting agencies such as the armorers, smiths and carpenters. To command the regiments were the Colonels, who led the regiment in action and who usually formed a Council of War to advise the General. The colonels and the regimental system had only recently (1580) appeared in the Elizabethan armies and thus the chief administrative and tactical position was still the Captain, the company commander.⁵

The Captains were the heart of the system, forming the administrative and tactical link between the high command and the private in the field. The captain was responsible for arming, clothing, feeding, and paying his men, as well as leading them into battle. To take care of his men the Captain was given a sum of money from the Privy

⁴Ibid., 45-47.

⁵Ibid., 54.

Council and the Treasurer at Wars, based on the number of men in his company. The primitive state of the Tudor Administrative system, and the limitations imposed by communications difficulties in the 16th century made it possible for the captains overseas to defraud the government and their own men with impunity.⁶

The Calendars of State Papers for Ireland are rife with reports of alleged fraud on the part of the captains throughout this period. In one particularly detailed series of charges in July 1598 the author accused the captains of the following crimes: substituting Irish (who accepted less pay) for English soldiers whom they encouraged to run away; making arrangements with merchants and shippers to defraud their men; and allowing their companies to degenerate into a horde of poorly clothed, underfed paupers, concerned more with surviving from day to day than with searching out and destroying their enemies.⁷

The Privy Council found it difficult to pin down these charges, and even more difficult to rectify the situation. In 1596 the Privy Council, which normally appointed all captains, gave authority for appointment of captains to the commander-in-chief in Ireland, subject to final approval by the Privy Council.⁸ The appointment of captains

⁶Ibid., 55.

⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 205-210.

⁸C.S.P. Ireland, 1596-97, 59.

was now the direct responsibility of the commander in Ireland, and it was his responsibility to appoint men of substance and character who could adapt to the unconventional conditions of Gaelic warfare. This measure, however, proved ineffective and the English armies were continuously plagued by dishonest captains.

The captain, in addition to his other responsibilities, also appointed other important individuals who made up his company structure, namely: a lieutenant, an ensign-bearer, two sergeants, two drummers, a preacher, a cannoneer, a surgeon and about six corporals. The lieutenant performed the duties of a modern company executive officer, ready to take over any time the captain was absent or incapacitated. The ensign-bearer was the equivalent of the modern-day second lieutenant, who carried the company colors and was to be the source of inspiration to the company in combat. Drawn from the ranks of the gentle classes, the ensignbearer was required to take over if the lieutenant and captain were absent.⁹

Regarding the other key personnel, the two sergeants were responsible for, among other things, drilling and marching the company properly. The corporals were in charge of their 20-man sections and watched after all facets of their men's lives. Two drummers were assigned to beat time on the march, call assembly and sound

⁹Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army, 57.

commands on the battlefield. Throughout most of the Irish Wars a cannoneer was assigned to each company, although in 1600 the cannoneer in Ireland was deleted from the organization, since his services were so seldom required.¹⁰ In the guerilla-type warfare of Ireland the appointment of one preacher and one surgeon to each company was an ideal which was seldom attained.

At the bottom of the command and administrative system was the private, who in 1598 assumed one of three tactical roles. If he were a tall and husky individual he was assigned as a pikeman to be at the front of a company formation to keep the enemy from closing in on the musketeers. If the private were small and nimble he would be made a caliverman or musketeer, in which capacity he acted as a skirmisher or protected the flanks of the company formation, dropping back behind the pikeman if the enemy threatened to reach him before he could reload. Finally the halberdier, of medium build, was stationed in the center of the company formation around the ensign-bearer, to eliminate any enemy soldiers who penetrated the company ranks.¹¹

The cavalry formed a distinct element composed of the sons of the wealthier gentry and led by the highest nobility in England. Armed with curates, open head pieces,

¹⁰C.S.P. Ireland, 1600, 275.

¹¹Cruikshank, Elizabeth's Army, 60.

long pistols, swords and sometimes lances,¹² they were the most formidable shock unit of the English armies, and would often save the infantry from disaster in their encounters with the rebels.

In Tudor England the administrative unit for military affairs was the county. All able-bodied men between the ages of 16 and 60 were liable for service. The Queen and the Privy Council decided which counties were to supply troops and how those troops were to be armed. Detailed instructions were sent to the county Lord Lieutenant, or to Justices of the Peace who sometimes acted as the commissioners of musters. On paper the system seemed sound, but in reality the caliber of individuals called to the colors was often less than desirable. Although the law stipulated that all men were liable for service, special arrangements or cash substitutes were made for Lords of Parliament, their servants, the clergy and other privileged groups.¹³

The county officials sometimes met their quota by pulling ordinary workers and farmers away from home and family; but more often they levied unemployed vagabonds whom the local authorities were only too happy to be rid of. The poor quality of these "rogues and ploughmen" was a constant source of complaint by the officials in

¹²MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, vii

¹³Cruikshank, Elizabeth's Army, 23-24.

Ireland.¹⁴ The Gaelic wars rarely attracted volunteers since service in that "moist, rotten" country was the most unpopular assignment an English soldier could have in the sixteenth century.¹⁵ An impoverished and backward land by Continental standards, Ireland offered little possibility for loot and profit as did campaigns in the rich Netherlands or expeditions against Spanish cities and ships. Ireland offered only sickness, misery, and death.

Since Ireland was a fate to be avoided at all costs, men on orders deserted at every opportunity. In March 1598, for example, 900 conscripts were mustered to go to Ireland as reinforcements. Only 612 reached their destination, the rest having disappeared enroute.¹⁶ The most critical time was in the port of embarkation where a delay in shipping would give the rank and file an opportunity to abscond in droves.¹⁷ Despite all the Crown's effort, desertion remained a constant problem in the sixteenth century, particularly when service to Ireland was involved.

Absence without leave was almost as common among officers in Ireland as it was among the privates. Captains were leaving their companies with such regularity that in

¹⁴C.S.P. Ireland, 1592-96, 386.

¹⁵C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 1.

¹⁶C.S.P. Ireland, 1596-97, 86.

¹⁷Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army, 67.

1592 Elizabeth herself had to order that all Captains absent from their companies in Ireland should return immediately.¹⁸ Her warning, and subsequent threats of discharge did little to solve the problem, and throughout the campaigns, captains continued to remain in England, collecting pay which their subordinates sent, while their companies plundered the Irish countryside.¹⁹ On one occasion some captains were so reluctant to return to Ireland that when they were brought before the Privy Council they swore that they had never commanded a company in Ireland. However all those whom the Council could prove had served in Ireland were sent back.²⁰

By the same token it was always difficult to gather replacements or reinforcements for Ireland, and sometimes the government reluctantly drafted from their garrisons on the Scot border or occasionally brought companies of veterans from the Low Countries.²¹ More often, the inexpensive expedient relied on was to fill the depleted ranks of the English from the friendly Protestant Irish in the Pale. This practice became so widespread that by 1597 Barnaby Rich in his New Description of Ireland could

¹⁸ A.P.C., XXII, 480.

¹⁹ C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 192-3; C.S.P. Ireland 1600, 272, 322, 442, 505.

²⁰ C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 255.

²¹ MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, vi-ix.

assert that it was a "special" and choice company" that did not have three Irish for every Englishman.²² There was always a danger regarding these companies that they would go over to the enemy--which they often did--and take their arms and English training with them.²³ The Privy Council became so alarmed by this proportion of Irishmen that in May 1598 the Council instructed the Irish officials to take no more Irish into the ranks.²⁴

Additionally, the captains of the companies often falsified the rolls so that they could collect and keep the pay of dead men and deserters, or part of the pay for Irishmen who were glad to serve in the Army for less pay than an English soldier. This practice, known as "dead pays," existed in nearly every company, and although it was well known to the Privy Council,²⁵ the inefficient communications and record-keeping system made it difficult to pin down offenders and stop the practice. As a result of the problems in recruiting, the English armies were invariably of poor quality and significantly below the list strength which the Queen and Council had authorized. In March 1597, for example, the Queen was paying for an army

²²Barnaby Rich, A New Description of Ireland (London, 1587), 109.

²³C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 349.

²⁴C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 156.

²⁵C.S.P. Ireland, 1596-97, 190-91.

of 2,000 men in Connaught, while the actual number present was little more than half the list figures.²⁶

Once a force had been recruited, and those not lucky enough to escape had been delivered to Ireland, the next problem was to keep it supplied. Unlike the Netherlands or France, where the fertility of the land kept forces well supplied, Ireland was a relatively barren land constantly threatened with famine. While the Irish could survive well on beef, warm milk and butter from the cattle they raised, the English were accustomed to a more diversified diet. Even a garrison of a few thousand men could be sustained only by importing stores from England. In 1595 because of Tyrone's initial rebellion the English garrison was raised from 4,000 to 7,000 men. This increase created a supply crisis in which Sir Henry Wallop, Treasurer at Wars, and the officials responsible for supplying the troops in Ireland told the Privy Council that the Army desperately required stores of meal, biscuit, wheat, cheese, salt meat and herring to see it through the winter.²⁷ The next year, Lord Deputy Sir William Russell warned the Privy Council that the food shortage might force him to withdraw his troops from the field.²⁸

The rations of the English soldiers primarily consisted

²⁶ Ibid., 252.

²⁷ C.S.P. Ireland, 1592-96, 398-400.

²⁸ C.S.P. Ireland, 1596-97, 165-66.

of bread, butter, cheese and beer. This diet was usually supplemented with oatmeal, peas, beans, dried codfish, ling and herring, whenever they could be obtained. By 1598 a typical daily ration consisted of a pound of bread, three ounces of butter, six ounces of cheese, three quarters of a pint of oatmeal,²⁹ Another variety of a week's rationing in 1598 consisted of a pound of bread daily, a half pound of butter on three days, a pound of cheese on three days, and on the seventh day, two pounds of salt beef, or two and a half pounds of fresh beef.³⁰ Accompanying either variety of rationing was beer and whiskey, an essential item, since the water was too unhealthy. The liquid ration in Ireland was a quart of beer daily, a half pint of whiskey daily, and a quarter of a pint of aquavita every second day.³¹

Of the foods available, bread and cheese had the great advantage of not having to be cooked and thus could be easily taken on a long march. Fish on the other hand was not very popular and one official asked the Privy Council to send "little or no fish, for it neither keepeth well, nor pleaseth the soldier, who by such victual hath so much to provoke his thirst and no provision to quench it."³²

²⁹A.P.C., XXIX, 272.

³⁰Ibid., 383.

³¹Ibid., 70.

³²C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 31.

The daily ration cost the private soldier half his daily wage of 8d. just for the food, while the soldier still had to buy his own drink.³³ The English food allowance would be adequate if it arrived in the quantity or variety specified. However, the amount of food ordered from England was based on the planned daily rations. Thus if food were lost or was below the quantity authorized the soldiers would immediately suffer.

The English apparently were reluctant to order great extra quantities of food because of the difficulty in keeping such foodstuff from spoiling. In the richer Netherlands and France the food problem for the Army was solved by establishing permanent stores for wheat, cheese, butter and beer. These stores were replaced at regular intervals to keep them from spoiling, and the excess foodstuffs were sold to private citizens, thus saving the Crown money.³⁴ Because of the damp Irish climate, which made it impossible to store provisions for any length of time, and because of the general scarcity of food, this system was not introduced into Ireland until after the turn of the century.

The mechanics of sending supplies from England to Ireland was as difficult as the process of sending recruits. Throughout Elizabeth's reign there was a gradual change

³³A.P.C., XXIX, 272.

³⁴C.S.P. Domestic, 1591-94, 4, 574-75.

from an inefficient freelance "victualling" by private merchants, to a fairly well-organized Crown-contracting system by the end of Elizabeth's reign.³⁵ However, it is with the supply situation in existence at the time of Essex's campaign that we are primarily concerned. During the 1590's the Crown struck a bargain with some well-established private merchants who agreed to provide a certain quantity of food by a certain date. The merchant was responsible for buying the food in England, shipping it to Ireland, and placing it in the hands of the Queen's representative in Ireland. The Crown, for its part, would assist the contractors in the buying of food, arrangement of shipping, and the provisioning of other accessories such as salt, casks for beer, horses and carts.³⁶

A contract signed in November 1598 illustrates how the provisioning system worked. In this instance a merchant agreed to deliver sixty tons of bread or biscuits, ten tons of butter, and eight tons of cheese and oatmeal. The provisions were to be sent from Chester and Bristol to Cork in Munster and delivered to the Army. As a guarantee that the merchant would meet his part of the contract, the Crown demanded a bond of £3000. The Crown agreed to pay £2000 for the supplies, and gave the merchants half the sum to use as capital as soon as these merchants had

³⁵Cruikshank, Elizabeth's Army, 90.

³⁶A.P.C., XXIX, 458-60.

signed the contract and posted their bonds. When the mayors of Bristol and Chester informed the Crown that supplies had been dispatched, the merchant would receive the other half of the £2000 payment. Finally when the supplies arrived in Ireland and were turned over to the authorities, agents of the merchants in Ireland were given receipts, which were turned in to the Crown, whereupon the merchant was given back the £3000 posted as good faith.³⁷

On the surface the system seemed adequate; however, certain provisions in the contract and failings in the administrative chain left the system open to gross abuses. Once the provisions were delivered to Ireland, the keeping and issuing of the provisions was the responsibility of the "commissaries of victuals," officials in charge of receiving and distributing food shipments.³⁸ Thus if the distribution were unsatisfactory it would be the fault of the "victualling commissaries," and the merchants would be cleared. Also, in case the supplies were lost by shipwreck or captured by enemy ships the Crown bore the total cost of the loss.³⁹ Therefore it was possible for dishonest merchants to bribe inspecting officials in either the ports of embarkation or the ports of arrival

³⁷Ibid., 273.

³⁸Ibid., 518.

³⁹Ibid., 458-60.

and arrange for either "lost" cargoes or false certification of the quality of existing shipments.

While food was the greatest single problem of supplies, uniforms and clothing also presented certain difficulties. Each county was given an allowance from the Queen to outfit the new levies.⁴⁰ The initial clothing ideally consisted of caps, cassocks, doublets, breeches, netherstocks, shoes and shirts,⁴¹ and was designed to be sufficient to get the troops from the county to the overseas assignment. The full uniform was not issued in England for fear that the levies would sell parts of it before they went abroad. While the troops were overseas, uniforms, both a summer and winter outfit, were issued and exchanged as appropriate. A typical winter uniform for a private consisted of a cassock, a doublet, cloth breeches, a hat, two shirts, three pair of stockings and three pair of shoes.⁴²

The English army of 1599 still had no official uniform, although Essex's levies of infantry were instructed to have well-lined coats of a blue color, while the cavalry dressed in "long horseman's coats of strong cloth of orange-tawny color with white lace and white lining throughout."⁴³ Officers, of course, were more elaborately

⁴⁰A.P.C., XXI, 306-07.

⁴¹MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 474.

⁴²A.P.C., XX, 37.

⁴³MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, vii.

dressed in the finest armor, in silk and lace, and all the other trappings which their station could afford.⁴⁴

Ireland presented a special clothing problem because of the climate and terrain, and the fact that decent billets were in short supply. Commanders wrote to the Privy Council that shoes and clothing sent over quickly became "unserviceable," and that they "shrink upon any wet, and our poor men do wade in their marches at least twice or thrice a day."⁴⁵ The soldier often found himself standing night guard in a damp uniform or sleeping in the open on wet ground, and in these circumstances soon fell prey to sickness.

In an overseas campaign in the sixteenth century the English troops could expect to take frightful casualties. From 1591 to 1597 the English sent almost 20,000 men on a series of campaigns to France, which was one of the most healthy places to campaign. Yet almost half the troops sent to France died on active service, mostly from sickness.⁴⁶ Ireland took an even greater toll. In Shane O'Neill's rebellion from 1562 to 1567, the entire English garrison in Ireland never numbered more than 1500 at any one time;⁴⁷ yet the rebellion took 3500 English lives from

⁴⁴C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 376.

⁴⁵Ibid., 93.

⁴⁶Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army, 15.

⁴⁷Falls, Elizabeth's Irish Wars, 47.

enemy action and sickness, and the replacements barely kept pace with the casualties.⁴⁸ Losses were heavier in the Desmond war of 1579-81, while all the previous totals were dwarfed by Tyrone's war of 1595-1603.⁴⁹ For the Essex campaign the Queen agreed to send 2000 reinforcements every three months, to fill out the ranks.⁵⁰ Battle casualties would not be expected to account for anything close to 2000 men every three months, but disease would more than make up the difference.

The chief cause of death in Ireland was the "Irish ague" and the "flix," which apparently were forms of dysentary and marsh fever arising from the damp climate, unclean water, and the generally unhealthy and weak physical condition of the poorly nourished troops.⁵¹ An official writing from Dublin in July 1598 stated that after only two months in Ireland, an infantry company would begin losing men to the inevitable sicknesses, and that by the third month the disintegration of the company was usually well advanced.⁵²

The disease itself was dangerous enough; however, the primitive state of medicine and of the medical services

⁴⁸Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army, 16.

⁴⁹Falls, Elizabeth's Irish Wars, 47.

⁵⁰C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 28.

⁵¹C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 251.

⁵²Ibid., 200.

resulted in untold numbers of unnecessary deaths. Medicine was just emerging from the Middle Ages, and many dreadful practices were still employed by surgeons. There was much disagreement as to what was a viable cure, and surgeons experimented with their own ideas, making potions composed of such bizarre ingredients as boiled dog and earthworms purified in white wine. Others recommended that gunshot wounds might be cauterized with boiling oil.⁵³ With such a mentality on the part of medical officers a wounded or ill private was sometimes more fortunate if he were left alone.

The medical service in the English Army had risen from having only one surgeon for an Army in 1346 to a point where there was, in theory, a surgeon and an assistant for each company of 100 men in the Elizabethan armies of 1594.⁵⁴ The term "surgeon" can be misleading since the physicians of this time came from the Company of Barber-Surgeons of London, a liaison which would seem to indicate something about the level of expertise in both professions. Like other Englishmen, surgeons hated to be drafted to Ireland and used every opportunity to buy their way out by bribing the company Captains, or by having themselves replaced by a fairly unskilled substitute.⁵⁵

⁵³Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army, 177.

⁵⁴Ibid., 174.

⁵⁵Ibid., 175.

What made the medical situation particularly bad in Ireland was the total lack of medical facilities. In the Netherlands or France, where the country had many spacious and well-built private homes, the Army made certain owners responsible for looking after a number of ill men. In Ireland, however, the facilities were not available in anywhere near the numbers required.⁵⁶ Thus Captain John Baynard, veteran of two years in Ireland, wrote to the Privy Council.

...there is no provision extraordinary for sick and hurt soldiers, but that either he dieth, or seeketh in his misery to get away, or else continueth in the country long sick; and so generally, they are kept so weak and out of heart, that they are not able to stand up against the rebels, which to perform that country service, do consist only upon strength of body. For I myself have seen such lamentable spectacles both of sick and hurt soldiers, that have died in open streets, merely, for want of some succor.⁵⁷

The captain went on to state that soldiers who survived one attack of dysentery were worth three raw recruits. For this reason alone it would be profitable to convert churches and abbeys into hospitals and set up independent institutions to meet the medical needs of the Army. He ended with the same observation that the wars in Ireland would be ended sooner by using a few "well kept, clothed and victualled" troops, rather than a large ill-supplied army.⁵⁸ What was needed in Ireland was a massive government

⁵⁶Ibid., 180.

⁵⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 350.

⁵⁸C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 350.

effort to provide hospital facilities. But since this would involve great expenses, in a war which was already financially disastrous, the English continued to solve their casualty problem by sending home any sick men who were lucky enough to reach Dublin, while allowing the unfortunate casualties in the outlying provinces to fend for themselves.

Another technical aspect of sixteenth-century warfare in Ireland which deserves consideration is the subject of weaponry. By the time of Tyrone's rebellion, the traditional English longbow, which was still part of the standard company organization as late as 1589, had been completely replaced by firearms, halberds and pikes. When the Privy Council deliberated on the new tactical organization of the company it was concluded that the ideal company should consist of 60 firearms, 30 pikes and 10 halberds.⁵⁹ This proportion was generally kept throughout the subsequent Irish campaign.

During Tyrone's war the guns used by both sides were matchlock calivers and muskets. The caliver was a light weapon weighing twelve pounds, which fired a one-ounce ball for an effective range of about 80 yards. The musket was a twenty-pound weapon which fired a two-ounce ball for a range of 150 yards. The musket had to be fired from a rest and was a fairly cumbersome weapon for the guerilla

⁵⁹Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army, 114-15.

warfare of Ireland, while the lighter caliver was more ideally suited for the Irish area. Consequently both sides maintained a proportion of calivers over muskets which sometimes approached a ratio of 5 to 1.⁶⁰ The weapons were slow in loading and of uncertain dependability, but these firearms had revolutionized warfare and made their possession a necessity for any army of that time.

Ammunition, however, remained a particular problem because of the strange and troublesome practice of having the soldiers pay for powder and ammunition out of their own meager wage. Since the men had to pay for each round they fired they were understandably reluctant to shoot up their subsistence allowance, particularly since the Captain often cheated them out of their daily wage. The result was that men went to the field with very little powder and were loath to fire it at the enemy unless they were in imminent danger. This practice was reputed to be responsible for several English defeats in Ireland.⁶¹

Weaponry, like everything else, was subject to the general corruption and lack of tight supervision prevalent in Ireland. When a man died or deserted his weapons disappeared and invariably went into the hands of the rebels. In fact on several occasions the captain reported that the men had sold their weapons outright to

⁶⁰G. A. Hayes-McCoy, "The Army of Ulster, 1593-1601," Ir. Sword, 1 (1951), 114.

⁶¹C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 251-53.

Irishmen.⁶² The captains, however, excused this behavior by telling the Privy Council that this was the only way the men could get money for food.⁶³

As the reader may have inferred, the discipline in the Queen's armies of this period was haphazard at best. The English had not yet developed that deep-seated feeling of devotion to the national state or to regimental tradition which would later characterize the British soldier. Instead the short-term draftees were kept on the line, sometimes by personal loyalty to their commander, but more often by fear. Whenever the threat from the enemy became more immediate than the threat of some not-so-immediate court martial, and when the officers and sergeants did not exhibit a dynamic and inspired kind of leadership, the units were inclined to panic and break in combat.

A campaign in Ireland was made especially challenging by the problems encountered in marching and transporting troops and supplies over the Irish terrain. The sixteenth-century army moved slowly as it was, normally ten miles a day, and seldom as much as fifteen a day. The cavalry could move more quickly, but the bulk of the army moved at a walking pace. Such carts as were available were used to carry stores, equipment, and the wounded. The progress

⁶²Ibid., 138.

⁶³Ibid., 148.

necessarily depended upon the roads available, and in Ireland the English found a situation in marked contrast to the well-developed communications of France and the Netherlands.

If we are to believe sixteenth-century writers it would seem that almost the whole surface of Ireland outside the Pale was bog or wood. Actually, the provinces of Leinster and Munster were fairly wealthy and well-developed, dotted with castles and towns linked by a passable road network,⁶⁴ although local tradition at the time insisted that a squirrel could have hopped from Killarney to Cork by leaping from bough to bough.⁶⁵ The terrain, however, seemed to be fairly open and adaptable to the English methods of warfare. Consequently rebellions in Leinster and Munster were traditionally crushed by English armies systematically making towns and castles submit, and crushing any Irish force which dared to meet them on the field.

In the Midlands area and Connaught across the Shannon River the country became more difficult. Sean O'Domhnaill estimates that perhaps one-fourth of the total area was virgin bog, while the remainder was largely marsh, woods and mountains.⁶⁶ There were developed areas at

⁶⁴G. A. Hayes-McCoy, "Strategy and Tactics in Irish Warfare, 1593-1601," in I.H.S., 11 (1941), 267.

⁶⁵Margaret MacCurtain, Tudor and Stuart Ireland (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan LTD., 1972), 92.

⁶⁶Sean O'Domhnaill, "Warfare in Sixteenth-century Ireland," in I.H.S., V (1946), 40.

Galway, Sligo, Tulsk and Limerick which could be used as operational bases for campaigning in Connaught, although the actual movement was difficult.

Ulster, on the other hand, was a veritable wilderness, a maze of bog, woods and bush, practically devoid of roads in the normal sense. Ulster was virtually sealed off from the rest of Ireland by a line formed by the Erne River, Lock Erne, the mountains of Slieve Gullion, and a bog area stretching toward the east coast. So formidable and restrictive was this geographical barrier that the eastern portion of Ulster, Tyrone's area, could be invaded only by an army coming through Mowry Pass on the one road from Dundalk to Newry! Even the Mowry Pass was only a broken causeway, with bogs on either side, and with thorned thickets lining both entrances.⁶⁷ The western portion of Ulster, controlled by the O'Donnalls, could only be invaded by an army which forded the Erne on the short stretch of river between Balleys Shannon and Lock Erne.⁶⁸ Even when the English forced one of the entrances into Ulster they had no industrial area or critical stationary objective at which to focus their campaign. Instead, they were reduced to the frustrating pattern of plowing through the bush trying to force the elusive Irish to stand and fight. The effect of the bogs was

⁶⁷MacCurtain, Ireland, 98.

⁶⁸O'Domhnaill, "Warfare in Sixteenth-Century Ireland," 43.

to nullify the advantage of the English cavalry whose heavier horses could not negotiate the marshy areas. English cannon and wheeled vehicles could operate with only the greatest difficulty, while pursuit of the enemy force was impossible for conventional troops laden with baggage and carts.

The poorly developed dirt roads and tracks, which became almost impossible mud bogs with the rain, presented the English with a further difficulty in the use of horses. The lighter type of horse, called garrons, which were found in Ireland, were not strong enough to pull the carts and wagons of the period over any poor roads. Instead the English were dependent on the powerful English-type carriage horses, of which only a few were available in Ireland, being owned by some Palesmen.⁶⁹ Therefore in any sizable campaign, particularly to Ulster, the English would have to gather and transport carriage horses to Ireland. Without these powerful animals no army of any size could march and sustain itself.

The terrain in Connacht and Ulster also made it impossible to ease the supply situation by establishing garrisons and magazines at critical points. The English periodically attempted to plant garrisons in Ulster, notably at the Blackwater River beyond the Mowry Pass, at Sligo and by sea at Derry; however these garrisons soon

⁶⁹Henry, "The Earl of Essex and Ireland," in Institute of Historical Research, Bulletin, XXXII (1959), 7.

became a liability. The country was too poor for the garrisons to sustain themselves, while the lines of communications were not sufficiently developed to bring up supplies easily.⁷⁰ In fact, because of the terrain and Tyrone's army it would often take the Queen's entire mobile army to escort supplies to the isolated garrison on the Blackwater. It was on one of these resupply missions in 1598 that the English relief force was ambushed and destroyed. Even the sea communications were uncertain and in 1567, for example, Colonel Randolph's garrison of 1000 men at Derry in Lough Foyle, after seven months of suffering and considerable loss of life, had to be evacuated because shipping could not be sent through the seas with any regularity.⁷¹

Added to all the above difficulties, which had existed for every Irish campaign, the task of Essex and his successor Lord Mountjoy, was made even more difficult because Tyrone had brought the rebel armies to a peak of efficiency never previously attained. Before Tyrone, the Irish armies were a ragtag conglomeration of Irish cavalry, Irish light infantry and Scots mercenaries. Although the Irish cavalry were traditionally the elite of the community, composed exclusively of the ruling classes, they were not

⁷⁰O'Domhnaill, "Warfare in Sixteenth-century Ireland," 43.

⁷¹Falls, Elizabeth's Irish Wars, 96-97.

a particularly effective part of the Irish Army. They were useful, it is true, for reconnaissance and foraging, but because of their equipment they were never able to stand up to the English horse. The Irish horseman of the sixteenth century rode without stirrups and his saddle was merely a large pillion secured to the horse by a surcingle and straps around the animal's breast and hind-quarters. Consequently the Irish horseman carried his spear aloft and sought to strike the enemy with overarm motions. The English however, rode with stirrups and orthodox saddle, with their lances couched in knightly fashion, thereby providing the maximum shock effect. Since the Irish cavalry were never able to stand up to a well-seated English charge, the Irish horse were limited to harassing tactics which never proved decisive.⁷²

The Scots Gallowglasses and Redshanks were heavy infantry mercenaries, described as "picked men of great and mightie bodies" who wore shirts of mail, usually chain mail, and a helmet. Their favorite weapon was a two-handed battle axe, six feet long.⁷³ Towards the end of the sixteenth century some of the Gallowglasses began to adopt the pike, a weapon extremely popular on the Continent; however, their main weapon remained the axe. The

⁷²G. A. Hayes-McCoy, "Irish Cavalry in the Sixteenth-century," in Ir. Sword, 1 (1953), 316-17.

⁷³John Dymmok, "A Treatise of Ireland," in Tracts Relating to Ireland, 11 (London: 1889), 7.

Scots therefore were the only element of the Irish armies before Tyrone who could meet the English on open ground and still give a good account of themselves.

The Irish light infantry, or "Kerne," were free peasants, so poor that they were armed with only a bow or three darts made of wood and tipped with iron, or a sword and a shield of wood.⁷⁴ Unlike the Scots, the Irish kerne had no armor, but simply wore the same outfit whether fighting or herding cattle. The Kerne were unable to meet the English on open ground with any prospect of success. However, they were well-suited to Irish warfare because they could operate on terrain where other troops dared not venture.⁷⁵

Because of the existing social system the Irish lords were not able to make the maximum use of their manpower resources. In the Irish communities there was a clear distinction between those who were free and those who were unfree. The latter were those peasants who tilled the lands of the lords and who owned no land of their own.⁷⁶ These unfree peasants and poor workers comprised a substantial, perhaps a majority, of the population.⁷⁷

⁷⁴Ibid., 7-8.

⁷⁵Henry Morely (ed.), Ireland Under Elizabeth and James the First (London, 1840), 92-96.

⁷⁶O'Domhnaill, "Warfare in Sixteenth-century Ireland," 37.

⁷⁷Hayes-McCoy, "The Army of Ulster," 108.

Since tradition forbade the unfree from carrying arms, an important source of manpower was lost to the Irish lords. The Irish leaders were so reluctant to tamper with the social system, that before Tyrone's reorganization only one chieftain, Shane O'Neill, dared to defy custom by arming the unfree peasants.⁷⁸ Because of social restrictions, Irish armies throughout most of the sixteenth century were rarely very large, and the Irish writers refer to an army of 1000 men as "a very large host."⁷⁹ Of course, English officials and deputies invariably exaggerated the number of Irish rebels facing them, and even the Irish themselves exaggerated their own numbers when seeking to impress foreign princes whom they asked for aid. However, contemporary research has shown that before Tyrone, Irish armies rarely numbered more than a few thousand men.⁸⁰

The prosecution of a war on the scale envisaged by Tyrone required a great increase in the strength of the army. The Scots mercenaries were incapable of expansion on a very great scale. Additionally, the Scots were reluctant to adapt themselves to the changing conditions of warfare, notably the increased use of firearms by the

⁷⁸O'Domhnaill, "Warfare in Sixteenth-century Ireland," 31-34.

⁷⁹Ibid., 32.

⁸⁰Ibid., 32-36.

latter 1500s, and were less effective than in earlier years.⁸¹ Furthermore, the new Scot mercenaries, who crossed into Ireland on a seasonal basis, could not necessarily be counted on for extended support in a long war. King James I of Scotland, who had acquiesced in allowing his Scots subjects to cross into Ireland to fight the English, was becoming increasingly more concerned with securing the throne of England when Elizabeth died. Therefore, in his efforts to solidify good relations with the aging Elizabeth, James I, despite his sympathy for Tyrone, was in a position at any time to attempt to restrict the flow of mercenaries to Tyrone. For all these reasons, Tyrone turned away from dependence on Scottish mercenaries, and sought to build a national army primarily with the native Irish material available.

The problem of securing the needed numbers was solved by following Shane O'Neill's example and enlisting the unfree peasants and workers into his army to such a degree that Dr. Hayes-McCoy refers to O'Neill's army as the first representatives of a national militia in Ireland.⁸² Tyrone's most significant achievement in the reorganization of the Irish armies was to introduce a formidable new element in Gaelic warfare, the Irish mercenaries. Men at arms had been maintained by various lords to serve for pay

⁸¹ Hayes-McCoy, "The Army of Ulster," 108-09.

⁸² Ibid., 109.

and maintenance under a system known as "coyne and livery."⁸³ Tyrone modernized this medieval right of a lord to billet fighting men, and indulged in a wholesale recruitment of men from all classes to enlist in his army for pay and maintenance.⁸⁴ Thus in February or March of each year Tyrone's recruiters went to the churches and other public places, announcing rates of pay and other terms of service. In this way soldiers were gathered for the coming campaigning season.⁸⁵ By 1598, therefore, most of the men of military age within Tyrone's confederacy were soldiers. The social gulf between the fighting classes and those formerly forbidden to bear arms was correspondingly eliminated as even churls, horseboys and the working classes were trained in the use of weapons.⁸⁶

One of the immediate problems Tyrone faced was how to train this new army to be able to adopt the new weapons of warfare and to meet the Queen's army on equal footing. To solve the training requirements Tyrone initially relied on the Queen's own officers! During the time of his seeming loyalty to the English, up to the year 1594, he secured the services of six English captains to train six 100-man

⁸³Morley, Ireland Under Elizabeth, 70.

⁸⁴Hayes-McCoy, "The Army of Ulster," 109-110.

⁸⁵C.S.P. Ireland, 1592-96, 215; C.S.P. Ireland, 1596-97, 247-48.

⁸⁶C.S.P. Ireland, 1592-96, 308-19.

companies for action against any other northern Irish lords who should become enemies of the Queen. However, the Earl rotated men through his companies as rapidly as possible, so that far more than the envisaged six hundred men were trained in arms by the time of his rebellion.⁸⁷ The English influence was so pronounced that when Tyrone took the field in 1595 and fought his first major battle at Clantibret, his army was divided like the English into battalions, companies and sections.⁸⁸ The English Lord Deputy wrote back to Lord Burghley in shocked amazement that Tyrone even had 300 musketeers dressed in red coats like the Queen's soldiers.⁸⁹

In addition to the six captains assigned to Tyrone's army by Queen Elizabeth the Earl also received aid from trained men who periodically deserted from the Queen's army.⁹⁰ The queen had consistently used Irish soldiers to supplement her English armies to such an extent that usually more than half the Queen's army was composed of "friendly" Irish.⁹¹ Whenever the Queen attempted to reduce the size of her army in Ireland by disbanding friendly

⁸⁷Ibid., 322.

⁸⁸Ibid., 319-20.

⁸⁹Ibid., 322-23.

⁹⁰ Hayes-McCoy, "The Army of Ulster," 112.

⁹¹ O'Domhnaill, "Warfare in Sixteenth-century Ireland," 50.

Irish companies, the English commanders invariably protested that the newly unemployed Irish soldiers would simply join the Irish rebels.⁹²

Another source of trained recruits was The Netherlands, which in the latter part of the sixteenth century witnessed the most intensive warfare in Europe as the Spanish tried to crush the Dutch Republic. An Englishman, Sir William Stanley, had raised an Irish regiment in 1586 to fight on the Protestant Dutch side against the Spanish. However, Stanley was a Catholic from Catholic Lancashire, and in 1587 he deserted with the majority of his regiment to join forces with the Spanish Commander, the Duke of Parma. Thus, from 1587 until 1610 there was an Irish regiment in Flanders, fighting on the side of the Catholic Spanish.⁹³ These Irish veterans from the Lowlands exerted a healthy influence on Tyrone's forces.⁹⁴ Finally, Tyrone was assisted by Spanish officers from the Lowlands and by survivors of the Spanish Armada, part of which was wrecked on the Irish coast. The Spanish apparently did not influence Irish tactics, but were helpful in training the Irish in the use of arms and the employment of field fortifications,

⁹²Cyril Falls, "The Growth of Irish military strength in the second half of the sixteenth-century," in Ir. Sword, II (1955), 105.

⁹³Brendan Jennings, O.F.M., "Irish Swordsmen in Flanders: Stanley's regiment," in I.H.S., XXXVI (1947), 402-10.

⁹⁴Falls, "Growth of Irish military strength," 105.

for which the Spanish had long been famous.⁹⁵

Although Spain and England were constantly at odds, Spanish aid to Ireland never approached the volume needed to be decisive. At the most, Spanish soldiers helped train the Irish armies, while Spanish gold was particularly useful for purchasing supplies from Scotland.⁹⁶ However direct military intervention of any permanence depended upon control of the sea, and this the Spanish could never firmly establish, and the two attempts by Spain to organize sizeable expeditions to Ireland before 1600 ended in failure.

While the levying and training of troops progressed satisfactorily, the problem of equipping and supplying his army with arms and ammunition was a task which Tyrone never really surmounted. Because of the relatively primitive state of northern Ireland, Tyrone could not supply the guns and powder his army required. By 1596 Tyrone did have Scots gunsmiths in Dungannon making muskets, calivers and pistols, but not in enough quantity to meet the needs of his army.⁹⁷ The biggest problem was the manufacturing of gunpowder. Of the ingredients needed, charcoal was in ample supply, saltpetre was available in limited quantities, but sulphur had to be imported.⁹⁸ Therefore,

⁹⁵Hayes-McCoy, "The Army of Ulster," 112.

⁹⁶C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 142, 190.

⁹⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1596-97, 75, 86, 362.

⁹⁸C.S.P. Ireland, 1592-96, 487.

Tyrone had to seek outside aid to keep his army in munitions, and this aid came from a variety of sources. He received some arms from the Queen's troops deserting to his army, and later on from arms captured from defeated royal forces.⁹⁹ Powder came from as far away as Danzig, while the Spanish increasingly sent more supplies, once to the extent of one thousand guns and large quantities of lead and powder.¹⁰⁰ The Irish towns in the south, and even in the Pale, sold him powder whenever they could get away with it;¹⁰¹ and occasionally enterprising merchants from Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham smuggled him arms and equipment which they concealed in hogsheads and dryfats.¹⁰²

While the above sources were helpful, they were rather haphazard in delivery and limited in the amount they could supply. Tyrone's main source of supply, and the critical factor in his being able to keep a well-gunned army in the field, was his supply channels with Scotland. The Lowland Scottish burghs sent a steady stream of powder, match, calivers and muskets across the narrow stretch of sea into Lough Foyle, a protected inlet able to accommodate Scottish craft and Spanish sea-going ships.

⁹⁹Falls, "Growth of Irish military strength," 104.

¹⁰⁰C.S.P. Ireland, 1600, 239.

¹⁰¹Rich, New Description of Ireland, 110.

¹⁰²C.S.P. Ireland, 1596-97, 323.

By making judicious use of all his sources, Tyrone was able to field a well-armed army by 1595. In that year it was reported that his total force consisted of four thousand "shot," one thousand pikemen, and one thousand horse.¹⁰³ And by 1596 an English observer reported that Tyrone was so well supplied with guns that his Kerne had been converted into musketeers and calivermen, while the Gallowglasses had been formed as pikemen to protect the musketeers in the Continental fashion.¹⁰⁴ But despite his achievements, powder always remained a worry and his supply lines from Scotland through Lough Foyle remained in a precarious state. As a final problem in weaponry Tyrone never developed artillery. No doubt artillery would have been an encumbrance in the type of warfare the Irish engaged in. However, this deficiency made it practically impossible for Tyrone to take a fortified town or outpost, no matter how small the garrison, while English artillery doomed any Irish castle to inevitable seizure.¹⁰⁵

Regarding food supplies Tyrone's army was initially in a much better position than the English, although eventually the Irish would be subdued by famine. Their chief source of food supplies were herds of cows which supplied the Irish with beef, milk and butter. The English had

¹⁰³C.S.P. Ireland, 1592-96, 236, 299.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 486.

¹⁰⁵C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 98.

long understood the importance of destroying this mobile food source which invariably accompanied every Irish army and acted accordingly. In 1574, for example, the Earl of Sussex, the Queen's Lord Deputy, sought to subdue Shane O'Neill by slaughtering 4000 of the Irish lord's cows.¹⁰⁶ Additionally Tyrone's forces also were supplied with corn which was raised in the more remote regions of Ulster. The Irish leader even established mills in Dungannon to grind the corn, and built up magazines in hidden storage areas. Since Tyrone's army generally lived off the land, food-stuffs presented no problem as long as the land defenses to his areas remained intact.¹⁰⁷

The end result of Tyrone's effort was a well-trained, amply supplied army of 7,000 men, not up to Continental standards, but more formidable than any force heretofore encountered in Ireland. By 1596, Sir Henry Wallop, the Treasurer at Wars and an observer in Ireland, wrote to Sir Robert Cecil in great alarm that Tyrone's troops could now confront the royal armies in the open plain, instead of as formerly only in defiles and forest.¹⁰⁸ While deficiencies in cavalry and artillery, along with vulnerable supply lines to Scotland, left Tyrone's army with crucial defects, it was still the most potent rebel force the

¹⁰⁶O'Domhnaill, "Warfare in Sixteenth-century Ireland," 41.

¹⁰⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1596-97, 19, 365, 375, 384.

¹⁰⁸C.S.P. Ireland, 1592-96, 381-82.

English had ever faced.

The improvements made by Tyrone in the organization and equipment of the Irish armies did little to change Irish tactics, but rather made the traditional Irish tactics more effective. Tyrone never attacked an English force which had halted and fully deployed for battle. Instead he kept to the time honored tactic of ambushing English troops on the march, and having his skirmishers fire at the English from the bush. Since the Irish consistently refused to close, matters seldom came to a push of pikes or hand-to-hand combat. Thus the English were forced to reply in kind, and the conflict invariably degenerated into an exchange of fire by skirmishers.

In summary, the English soldier in Ireland was a draftee, often a vagabond who found himself operating ill-fed and ill-supplied in an unhealthy climate. Basic equipment was sometimes lacking and food commodities were frequently rancid by the time they arrived. If the company were stationed at an outpost, the difficulties of transportation caused the system to break down completely, leaving the soldiers to fend for themselves, while corruption and inefficiency in the Elizabethan administrative channels inevitably destroyed whatever morale was left. Without any real training the English soldier encountered an enemy who rarely met him face to face, but

who knew every inch of country and could move through forest and bog at will. Skirmishes were infrequent, the Irish always managing to outmarch their adversaries and to avoid combat except on favorable terms. When engagements did occur they were brisk, confused and merciless. Savagery usually begets savagery and in the Irish wars both sides discarded any rules of warfare, treating prisoners and non-combatants alike with unbridled cruelty. In this situation, the English units were whittled away. Unless they fell victim to a rare disaster the companies disintegrated from fever and dysentery until they were disbanded or reinforced with a new batch of sullen conscripts.

CHAPTER III

THE APPOINTMENT OF ESSEX

Considering the circumstances of warfare in Ireland, one might marvel that a great lord would bring himself to seek out and accept the command of an army in Ireland. Indeed, the selection of Essex as the English Viceroy charged with the task of suppressing the revolt was no simple matter; on the contrary, it was the end result of a complicated series of intrigues by those political factions vying for ascendancy in Elizabethan England, intrigues which can best be understood by examining the situation in Elizabeth's court at the end of the sixteenth century.

The style and tone of the Elizabethan court was determined by the caprices of the Monarch, whose personality Neville Williams analyzes in his impressive work Elizabeth, the Queen. Elizabeth fed on admiration and demanded the choicest flattery from the men around her. To her courtiers she was the "Sun Queen" and all others were expected to play the part of satellites. Her dealings with Parliament and her attitude toward most great problems--marriage, foreign policy, succession--were unpredictable and defied description.¹

¹Neville Williams, Elizabeth the First (New York:

The Court was basically a masculine society since a woman of her vanity would consider any sort of female competition unwelcome. The officers of state found that attendance at court was mandatory, although they were given permission to visit wives and families on certain holidays.² Court gallantry was carried to absurdity and men drew their swords on the slightest provocation.

Since Elizabeth was unmarried, her reign witnessed a constant stream of suitors, many from within the kingdom as well as those from without. Through most of her reign she had not one favorite, but three or four at a time, who rose or fell depending upon the Queen's mood.³ While there were many courtiers, only a few gained her favor and confidence to the point where it could be a danger to her Crown.

The Earl of Leicester, Sir Christopher Hatton and Sir Walter Raleigh all gained ascendancy over rival courtiers at one time or another. But none had any sort of mass support which would permit him to follow a course independent of his monarch's wishes. Leicester was a Puritan, and relatively unpopular with the masses, who ruined himself in 1578 by marrying Lettice Knollys without the

E. P. Dutton and Company, 1968), 214.

²Ibid., 216.

³Ibid.

Queen's knowledge or consent.⁴ Hatton was a young lawyer who never allied with any court faction, while Raleigh was feared and distrusted by populace and Court alike.⁵ Elizabeth, therefore, remained in control of her favorites for most of her reign. Those with a mind toward independent action had neither the power nor the support to oppose her.

Along with her courtiers whom Elizabeth kept around for her personal edification, she recognized the need for capable administrators to see to the very complex task of governing a rising national state. She found her most faithful and trusted servant in the person of Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley. Their relationship stretched back before the Queen's accession to the throne. In 1550, when Elizabeth's future was often in jeopardy, Sir William Cecil administered her estates and became her financial advisor.⁶

In the early days of her reign Elizabeth weathered many plots by Catholics, Pope Pius V and northern lords to place Mary, Queen of Scots, on her throne. In the Northern Rebellion of 1569, many of her nobles were involved in the conspiracy. She felt she could only trust Lord Burghley implicitly and turned more and more to him.⁷ In

⁴Ibid., 185.

⁵Ibid., 188.

⁶Ibid., 29.

⁷Ibid., 175.

addition to being her "Spirit," as Elizabeth called him, he was a capable administrator who made his position as Principal Secretary the most important post in the realm.

As he grew older, Lord Burghley began to turn the responsibilities over to his no less capable son, Sir Robert Cecil. Sir Robert was an unprepossessing person, a hunchback from birth, and an introvert who had no hope of competing with the more flamboyant courtiers surrounding the Queen. Instead, closely schooled by his father, Robert Cecil made himself an indispensable administrative assistant--the only logical successor to his father's responsibilities when the latter would pass on in 1598. Like his father, Robert Cecil was a man of keen perception, shrewd ambition and sure political insight. Together they formed a formidable faction, maintained in an almost unassailable position next to the person of the Queen. The opposition, always present in the Tudor courts, formed no serious threat until a young nobleman made his first appearance at court in 1587.

When Robert Devereux came to London he brought with him a distinguished Norman surname and an ancient lineage. His ancestors originally resided in the vicinity of Everux in Normandy. In 1066, the Count of Rosmar and Mantelake sent two sons, Edward and Robert D'Evereux, with William, Duke of Normandy, to assist in the conquest of England. Edward settled in Wiltshire and took the surname

de Salisbury, from Salisbury where his principal manor was located. Robert secured estates in the Marches of Wales and retained the family name. The Devereux were constantly at the side of kings, receiving titles and honors from King John and Edward IV. In Tudor times they rose steadily to prominence in national affairs securing further holdings in Staffordshire and Ireland, and fighting under Henry VIII in his Continental wars.⁸

Robert's father, Walter Devereux, married Lettice Knollys, second cousin to Elizabeth,⁹ daughter of Sir Francis Knollys, a firm supporter of Protestantism in England. Walter was exiled during Queen Mary's reign, but he returned in greater stature under Elizabeth, who elevated him to the earldom of Essex in 1572 for his support in suppressing the rebellion of the Catholic earls of the north. For the next few years, Walter sought to establish his fortune by colonizing eastern Ulster, but his colony failed and his health was broken.¹⁰ In 1576 he died in Ireland leaving the Devereux titles, honors and estates to his nine-year-old son and heir.¹¹

The day before Walter Devereux died he wrote to the

⁸Vernon F. Snow, Essex the Rebel (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), 1.

⁹Conyers Read, Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth (London: Jonathan Cape, 1960), 467.

¹⁰Lacey, Essex, 11-12.

¹¹Snow, Essex the Rebel, 2-3.

Queen's Secretary, Lord Burghley, asking him to be the guardian of his son, and to bring Essex up in his household.¹² Since Lord Burghley held the title of Master of the Wards, he had legal control over the estates of all minors, such as Essex, who had come into their inheritance before their majority. But Lord Burghley took a special interest in Essex, who subsequently spent considerable time in Cecil's household.¹³ While under Lord Burghley's protection Essex began his long acquaintance with Burghley's son, Robert Cecil, who was three years older than young Essex.

Although the young earl was under Burghley's influence, the dominating force on his life seemed to be his widowed mother Lettice. She was a beautiful woman, "forceful and flirtatious," who married Walter Devereux and then took several lovers. Robert Lacey, Essex's latest biographer, evaluated Lettice as a "wilful and impetuous" woman, insistent on always having her own way, who dominated her son in his youth and then dogged his footsteps in court. In 1578 she charmed Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicestershire, the Queen's favorite courtier, into marrying her; and thereafter her relationship with Elizabeth was understandably strained.¹⁴

¹²Read, Lord Burghley, 467.

¹³Lacey, Essex, 17.

¹⁴Ibid., 15.

Essex received the best possible education, attending Trinity College, Cambridge at the age of ten and taking his Master of Arts' degree in 1581 at the age of fourteen. He plowed through a curriculum of theology, civil law, the philosophy of Aristotle and Plato, mathematics, geometry, astronomy, rhetoric, Greek, French, Latin and Hebrew. The only book on his reading list in the English language was an edition of Holinshed's Chronicles.¹⁵ Essex was particularly well-versed in Latin and his subsequent writings are liberally punctuated with Latin phrases.

After graduating from Cambridge in 1584, Essex was groomed for court life by his stepfather, the Earl of Leicester. In 1587 Leicester resigned as Master of the Horse, a position in close attendance upon the Queen, so that the eighteen-year-old Essex could take his place.¹⁶ The next year the Earl of Leicester died and Essex was accepted as the leader of the Leicesterians, a faction whose support came from the Puritans and young soldiers at Court. Essex did not cultivate Leicester's Puritan ties, although he still had their support, but he did eagerly take charge of the Earl's military following.¹⁷

Handsome, dashing and dramatic, Essex was the idol of the adventurous younger sons who looked on warfare as a

¹⁵Ibid., 20.

¹⁶Read, Lord Burghley, 467.

¹⁷Ibid., 468.

glorious profession. He made a spectacular military debut by distinguishing himself in a brief campaign to the Netherlands where he was knighted in late 1587.¹⁸ The Queen was no less impressed than the younger nobles, and she took to Essex immediately. Since the death of her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots, whose execution Elizabeth had ordered, the Queen had been in a state of acute depression. Only Essex could cheer her, and they would often stay up together playing cards until dawn.¹⁹

Although there are many romantic legends concerning Essex and Elizabeth, the fact is that in 1587 Essex was only twenty years old, while Elizabeth was fifty-four, a very advanced age in the sixteenth century. Indeed, not even in his most extravagant boastings did Essex ever suggest that his relationship with Elizabeth was anything more than platonic. The reality of the situation seems to be that Elizabeth used Essex, as the personification of English charm and masculinity, to bolster her own insatiable ego, while Essex sought to use his influence with Elizabeth to enhance his prestige and financial position.

Upon his arrival at Court in 1587 Essex already had accumulated some £23,000 worth of debts.²⁰ The great nobles of England lived, and indeed were expected to live,

¹⁸Handover, The Second Cecil, 52.

¹⁹Williams, Elizabeth, 294.

²⁰Lacey, Essex, 72.

extravagant lives. Great sums were spent in maintaining and improving estates, gambling, making gifts to the Queen or outfitting expeditions as the need arose. Since those who adventured to rise to the top in Elizabeth's eyes had to spend lavishly, Essex was constantly immersed in debt.²¹

His motives were fairly evident from the beginning. In May 1587, his servant Anthony Bagot wrote to his father: "When she is abroad, nobody near her but my Lord Essex, and at night, my Lord is at cards, or one game or another with her, that he cometh not to his lodging till birds sing in the morning." And while he played cards the Earl was advancing his own fortune. His servant continued: "he told me with his own mouth that he looked to be Master of the Horse within these ten days."²² And indeed, on June 18, 1587, Essex received the appointment, which brought with it a sum of £4,500 a year.²³

Essex achieved his greatest financial triumph in 1590, when Elizabeth awarded him the "Farm on Sweet Wines." This granting of a monopoly--a common practice in Tudor England--allowed Essex to levy all duties in sugary wines imported from the Mediterranean, and represented a substantial portion of the national tax office. The "Farm" was

²¹Ibid., 72-75.

²²Walter P. Devereux, Lives and Letters of the Devereux, Earls of Essex (London: 1853), I, 185.

²³Lacey, Essex, 23.

the basis of Essex's financial ascendancy, and in 1597 it was producing sufficient revenue to eliminate an estimated £10,000 of the Earl's debt.²⁴ The only ominous note in Elizabeth's generous grant on sweet wines was that the lease was made payable for a ten-year period beginning in 1590. In 1600 therefore it would once again be the Queen's privilege to terminate or renew the lease as she saw fit.²⁵

Although Essex greatly impressed the fifty-four-year-old Elizabeth, he immediately began to alienate other court members. In the cut-throat atmosphere of Tudor-Stuart England, once enemies were created, reconciliation was seldom possible. Grudges were borne an interminable length of time, and the desire for vengeance was particularly strong. Offended parties would wait years, if necessary, for the opportunity to settle the score for real or imagined grievances.

The first of many enemies Essex created was Sir Walter Raleigh. This renowned adventurer, soldier, poet and philosopher had become a great court favorite by 1587, and was considered one of the most promising personalities in England. But Devereux, fifteen years his junior, immediately replaced him in the Queen's favor, and by so doing embarked on a feud which would last until Essex's

²⁴MSS. Salisbury, vol. 7, 283.

²⁵Lacey, Essex, 76-77.

death.²⁶

Raleigh was in a position to recover his lost role in 1590 when Essex secretly married Frances Walsingham, since Elizabeth took it as a personal affront. The storm passed quickly and Essex did not lose much ground.²⁷ Raleigh had had an excellent opportunity at the time of Essex's marriage, but he ruined it by seducing Bess Throgmorton, a maid of honor to the Queen. Such indelicate behavior sent Raleigh and his maid to the Tower for three months' confinement. Sir Walter never again came back to full favor and thereafter allied himself with Sir Robert Cecil.²⁸

Essex was soon back in his element, leading an expedition to France in July 1591, as Lord General, in which the fortress of Rouen was captured.²⁹ He celebrated the capture by conferring knighthood on twenty-four of his followers, a practice usually reserved for heads of state. Lord Burghley warned him in a letter that he would be incurring the Queen's wrath.³⁰ Indeed Elizabeth, like all the Tudors, was frugal with money and titles alike.

²⁶Handover, The Second Cecil, 52.

²⁷Williams, Elizabeth, 315-16.

²⁸Ibid., 319.

²⁹George B. Harrison (ed.), The Elizabethan Journals (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1965), I, 49.

³⁰Read, Lord Burghley, 477.

Throughout her reign she restored or recognized only eighteen titles, and from 1572 on she created only three earldoms. Even after the defeat of the Armada, she considered bestowing six earldoms, but soon reconsidered and belatedly ennobled only the English commander, Lord Howard.³¹ Therefore it was a bit perplexing to have titles and honors created wholesale by one of her generals. But Essex, headstrong and stubborn, desirous of popularity, would persist in creating honors for his friends at every opportunity throughout his career.

In Tudor-Stuart England, strength and influence depended upon being physically present at the royal Court. A courtier who absented himself too long would come back to find his reputation damaged by slanderous tales and his position undermined. Honors and positions were generally acquired when a rival was away. Essex was taught this lesson in 1591, when he left for France. One week after his departure, Sir Robert Cecil, already an antagonist, was sworn in to the Privy Council.³²

But Essex recovered quickly by way of his military exploits over the next two years and was himself admitted to the Council in February 1593.³³ In that year also, the first of many books was written, dedicated to the young

³¹Williams, Elizabeth, 330.

³²Read, Lord Burghley, 477.

³³Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, I, 163.

Earl. Doctor Matthew Sutcliffe wrote The Practice, Proceedings and Laws of Arms, which discussed the great military leaders of ancient and modern times. The Epistle noted that all men's eyes were on Essex, who had acquitted himself so well in the Low Countries, Portugal and France.³⁴

As Essex rose in popularity, numerous persons sought to attach themselves to his star. Such a person was Francis Bacon, a brilliant young lawyer in poor financial condition, whose father had been Lord Keeper. He befriended Essex, apparently in the hope that the Earl would place him in some secure governmental post. Essex was flattered at the attachment, since he recognized and admired Bacon's intellectual talents.³⁵

In 1593 the office of Attorney-General became vacant, and Bacon, heavily in debt, besought Essex to secure the position for him. Essex spent much time and effort in arguing Bacon's case to the Queen.³⁶ In Tudor England, the ability of a Lord to secure an office for a friend was a very real kind of credit. One's influence with royalty would be worth money, either given or at least borrowed. Even an Earl of Essex's stature was constantly in need of money, and even Kings were not safe from the creditor's

³⁴Ibid., 219-20.

³⁵Catherine Drinker Bowen, The Lion and the Throne (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1956), 77-78.

³⁶Ibid., 77.

grasp. Therefore Essex had a strong interest in securing as many positions as possible to enhance the reputation of his influence.

However, the Attorney-Generalship, the highest legal office in the land, was also sought by Sir Edward Coke, a friend of the Cecils, who had practiced law for fifteen years and had considerably more experience than Bacon.³⁷ Furthermore, Coke already held the post of Solicitor-General, the second highest legal post, and was therefore the logical successor to the vacant Attorney-Generalship. Essex's pleas were to no avail, as the Queen chose Coke, backed by the Cecils, over Bacon. Additionally, the Queen appointed Thomas Egerton, another Cecil supporter, to the office of Master of the Rolls, the second highest office in the Chancery Court.³⁸

In desperation, Essex and Bacon sought the latter's appointment to the Solicitor-Generalship. However, Elizabeth refused to appoint Bacon to any position. Bacon had some years before argued in Parliament against the right of the Queen to secure a triple subsidy. Whether this militated against Bacon is difficult to discern, but the fact remains that Bacon, even after changing sides and working for the Cecils, was never appointed to a permanent position under Elizabeth.³⁹ Essex was furious at the

³⁷Ibid., 76.

³⁸Ibid., 81.

³⁹Ibid., 77, 83.

refusal, since his reputation was at stake, and sought to compensate Bacon adding: "Master Bacon, you are ill because you have chosen me for your mean and dependance. I die if I do not somewhat towards your fortune: you shall not deny to accept a piece of land which I will bestow on you."⁴⁰ The overall effect of the dispute was to set Sir Edward Coke firmly in Cecil's camp, particularly since he was allowed to keep both offices for fifteen months while Elizabeth tried to decide on a successor.⁴¹

Elizabeth was not oblivious to the Cecil-Essex dispute and in true Tudor fashion sought to keep the factions balanced off. She apparently understood Essex and sought to protect him against himself. In July 1594, when Essex begged to accompany an expedition against Brest, the Queen refused, saying she wanted him by her side and did not wish to hazard his person. She gave him £4000 to console him and added: "Look to thyself, good Essex, and be wise to help thyself, without giving thy enemies advantage, and my hand shall be readier to help thee than any other."⁴²

The Earl could not be held back indefinitely, and when, in 1596, it was decided to send an expedition to Cadiz "to singe the beard" of the Spanish King, Essex secured the position of co-commander along with Sir Charles

⁴⁰Ibid., 82.

⁴¹Ibid., 85.

⁴²Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, I, 247.

Howard. As a result, Essex created another formidable enemy in the great Lord Admiral Howard, the hero of the Armada victory of 1588.⁴³ When learning of Essex's appointment as co-commander, Howard complained: "my commission, in being joined with the Earl is an idle thing, for I am used but as a drudge."⁴⁴ Howard's prophecy proved true as Essex dominated the expedition. Sir Walter Raleigh also joined the venture, but was relegated to the post of Rear Admiral.⁴⁵

Outwardly, the attack was successful in that Cadiz was sacked and Spain humiliated. By not acting quickly enough, however, forty Spanish merchantmen had time to be scuttled rather than risk capture. Furthermore a Spanish West Indies fleet was due to arrive in the near future, but the expedition, upon the urging of Howard, did not wait for it.⁴⁶ A recent article by L. W. Henry which examines the Cadiz expedition, shows that the ill-success of the venture was due not to any failing on Essex's part, as his enemies alleged at the time, but rather to the uncooperative attitude and lack of initiative on the part of Howard and Raleigh. While Essex personally led an inspired

⁴³Williams, Elizabeth, 303.

⁴⁴Quoted in Handover, The Second Cecil, 135.

⁴⁵Charles G. Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1966), 253-54.

⁴⁶Ibid., 276-77.

ground attack which captured the city of Cadiz, Howard and Raleigh, leading the naval forces, refused to close on the Spanish merchantmen, and thus gave the Spanish an opportunity to destroy their own treasure-laden ships.⁴⁷

Upon arriving in England, the Earl received a tumultuous reception from the populace. Essex returned to the Court of Elizabeth undoubtedly expecting the Queen's enthusiasm to be no less than that of the masses. Instead, embarrassing statistics were presented by Robert Cecil and his father which showed that the expedition, which had cost £50,000 to finance, was returning only £28,000 to the Crown after the expenses of Essex and his men were deducted.⁴⁸ Elizabeth, ever conscious of finances, could hardly be enthusiastic when it was pointed out that rich merchant ships had been sunk instead of captured and that the returning West Indies fleet had not been intercepted. As a final blow, Essex was informed that while he was away at Cadiz, Sir Robert Cecil, upon the recommendation of Lord Burghley, had been sworn in as Principal Secretary to the Queen,⁴⁹ an unmistakable indication that Sir Robert would follow in his father's footsteps when the latter passed on.

⁴⁷See L. W. Henry, "The Earl of Essex as a Strategist and Military Organizer, 1596-7," E.H.R. LXVIII, 363-93.

⁴⁸Handover, The Second Cecil, 145.

⁴⁹Ibid., 137.

The Earl's position seemed weakened and members of his faction cautioned him to tread softly. Francis Bacon tried to convince Essex to rest on the laurels of the Cadiz expedition--after all, the masses thought it was a great success. If Essex persisted in antagonizing so many people, Bacon counseled, then he, Bacon, might possibly have chosen the wrong patron.⁵⁰

The year 1597 brought new rumors of a Spanish invasion and an expedition was organized to forestall it by attacking the Spanish Azores Islands. Essex secured sole command and with 5,000 experienced troops, went off to search for the enemy. The expedition experienced problems with ocean gales which forced it to turn back without success. The only notable achievement was by Sir Walter Raleigh, second in command, who briefly took the island of Fayal. This action was taken without Essex's permission, and he later forced an infuriated Raleigh to apologize before the war council.⁵¹

Essex returned from the "Islands voyage," his ships battered by storms, on October 24, 1597, to face a disappointed Queen, who blamed him for spending great sums of money without accomplishing anything.⁵² The day before Essex got back, his old enemy, Lord Charles Howard, was

⁵⁰Williams, Elizabeth, 329.

⁵¹Handover, The Second Cecil, 207.

⁵²Ibid., 200.

created Earl of Nottingham. Because of Howard's other offices as Lord of Effingham, Lord Admiral, and Lord High Steward pro tempore, Essex had to yield to Nottingham in the House of Lords. Indeed, Howard now outranked all the nobility except the hereditary Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Oxford.⁵³ As a further annoyance, Robert Cecil had himself appointed as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster during Essex's absence, thus eliminating another office Essex had sworn to acquire for his friends.⁵⁴ But if the Earl was disappointed in the Court, the general populace loved him even more. The same storm which battered Essex upon his return, forced the new Spanish armada to turn back.⁵⁵ Panic over invasion rumors subsided and gave way to renewed glorification of Essex, to whom the people attributed their deliverance.⁵⁶

The year 1597 ended with Essex adding Lord Cobham to his growing list of enemies. Cobham, who would later be on the jury at Essex's trial,⁵⁷ sought to be installed as the Warden of the Cinque Ports of Kent, a lucrative position. Essex violently opposed his bid and managed to delay the appointment until August 29, 1598, when pressure

⁵³Ibid., 204.

⁵⁴Ibid., 210.

⁵⁵Ibid., 200.

⁵⁶Ibid., 209.

⁵⁷Bowen, Lion and Throne, 141.

from Robert Cecil and Lord Howard forced it through.⁵⁸

Cobham was intransigently in the ranks of Essex's enemies thereafter, often protesting his hatred for the Earl.⁵⁹

In addition to creating enemies, Essex's uncompromising nature caused many of his supporters to change sides. In 1598 he became suspicious of the favors bestowed on Lord Thomas Grey by Elizabeth. Essex thereafter called on Grey to publicly state whether he supported the Secretary or himself--there could be no neutrality. Grey stated that he would not be dependent on Essex and that Essex had no right to monopolize the advancement of men from war as he had been doing, since this was the Queen's prerogative. Finally, Grey explained that he liked the favor of Sir Robert Cecil, and would never be dishonest or ungrateful.⁶⁰

That disputes with the Cecils continued over every issue was probably caused by the difference in orientation of both parties, particularly regarding the question of warfare. The Cecils were administrators who sought the efficient running of a growing bureaucratic structure. Warfare, particularly if it brought no treasure, merely interfered with the effective running of the ship of state. But to Essex war was his mettle and his means of

⁵⁸Handover, The Second Cecil, 206.

⁵⁹Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, I, 420.

⁶⁰Ibid., II, 41.

advancement. The war with Spain had dragged on without profit for too many years. The Cecils therefore sought an end to an uneconomical venture.

When the issue of peace with Spain took concrete form in April 1598, Essex violently protested that he would never consent to a treaty or peace. Upon this Lord Treasurer William Cecil answered that all Essex thought of was war, slaughter and blood. Burghley then pulled out a psalm book and pointed to a verse which read: "Men of blood shall not live out half their days."⁶¹

Two months later, Essex wrote a letter explaining why peace with Spain should not be made. In the same letter he made a passing reference to the Irish war, which had dragged on intermittently for years, referring to that conflict as a "beggerly and miserable" war which held no prospect of glory as compared to the war against the Spanish king.⁶² Yet before the passing of another year, Essex would find himself mired in the Gaelic bogs.

By early 1598 Essex's military reputation had reached its zenith, and his fame was renowned throughout Europe.⁶³ The King of France, Henry IV, wrote to Essex with "affection" and offered his good will,⁶⁴ while the King's sister,

⁶¹Sir William Camden, Historie of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth (London: 1630), 126.

⁶²Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, II, 33.

⁶³MSS. Salisbury, vol. 8, 222.

⁶⁴Ibid., 356.

Catherine de Bourbon, wrote to him as her "cousin and dear friend."⁶⁵ His fame at home was unexcelled. The Bishop of Carlisle called him "a Joshua unto us in fighting His battles,"⁶⁶ while a layman referred to him as "the Scipio and sword of England."⁶⁷ When Essex was appointed Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, Sir Thomas Cartwright congratulated the Earl in a letter, and concluded: "Let the chronicles of our land be perused, and I think it will be hardly found that there hath been any subject, especially of those years that your Honour has yet come into, clothed with so much honour, and girded with so much authority as you are."⁶⁸

By late 1598, however, there were indications that Essex's position at Court was on a downward course. Sir Robert Cecil had consolidated various posts in the administrative field and was continually strengthening his position. Although Essex was regarded as the greatest military leader of the realm, his relationship with Elizabeth was becoming increasingly more strained. Into this conflict the Irish problem emerged, offering Essex an opportunity to reassert his ascendancy.

⁶⁵Ibid., 73.

⁶⁶Ibid., 66.

⁶⁷Ibid., 561.

⁶⁸Ibid., 370.

The situation in Ireland was badly deteriorating by June 1598 as Hugh O'Neill remained defiant and unpunished. The last Lord Deputy, Lord Burgh, had died in 1597, and Elizabeth had still not appointed a successor. Neither Cecil nor Essex had wished to send any of their supporters to that island. In fact, both men concentrated on convincing Elizabeth that a member of the opposition should go.⁶⁹

The climax came on July 1 in a conference in which Elizabeth and the Council tried to finally resolve the appointment of a governor for Ireland. Essex had strongly recommended that Sir George Carew, one of Cecil's supporters, should be sent to Dublin. Elizabeth, however, announced that Sir William Knollys, Essex's friend and uncle, should be appointed Deputy. The Earl, in a rage, contemptuously turned his back on the Queen, who responded by rising out of her throne and cuffing him on the ear. Impetuously Essex whirled and laid his hand on his sword, swearing that he would not take an insult like that from Henry VIII himself. Lord Admiral Howard restrained his hand, whereupon the Earl stormed out of the chamber, to remain absent for many weeks.⁷⁰ The issue of a new Viceroy for Ireland still remained unsettled.

Such conduct at the July 1 meeting is reflective of

⁶⁹Handover, The Second Cecil, 58.

⁷⁰Camden, Historie, 126.

Essex's personality. He was passionate, spoiled, quick to anger, and unlike other men of his time, he was unawed by the position of monarch! While other great men in Tudor England tended to consider the Queen as sacrosanct and as a personage on a higher plane altogether, Essex tended to treat her like an ordinary human being, who, while outranking him, did not command his total adoration. During his brief self-imposed exile after the meeting, Essex wrote to one of his court friends that he was no lackey or slave of Elizabeth, whom he considered to be only an earthly power.⁷¹ Such a sentiment was heresy in an age where the notion of the divine right of monarchs was generally accepted throughout Europe.

Essex's presumptive actions, such as creating titles whenever the opportunity presented itself, or insulting the Queen as no other subject ever dared, reflects the peculiar independence he was allowed. This unusual license was the Queen's own doing. Because of her fondness over the years for Essex she pampered him shamelessly and indulged his every whim. This indulgence from the beginning only encouraged Essex to become even more spoiled and independent.

On August 14, 1598 Sir Henry Bagenal, Marshal of the English Army in Ireland, gathered all the mobile forces at his disposal, 3500 foot and 500 cavalry, and invaded

⁷¹Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, II, 462.

Ulster to relieve the small English fort on the Blackwater. As he approached the Yellow Ford over the Callan River, his force was ambushed by Tyrone's Army, which slew over 2000 of the English Troops, including the Marshal himself and thirty of his best officers.⁷² The catastrophe instantly thrust Ireland into the forefront of English politics, and debate continued for some time on what course of action should be taken.⁷³

When Essex heard the news from "younder cursed country of Ireland," he wrote to the Queen:

... when I apprehended how much your Majesty would be grieved to have your armies beaten and your kingdom like to be conquered by the son of a smith, duty was strong enough to rouse me out of my dearest melencholy.⁷⁴

This letter of August 26 was the first indication that Essex might be considering personally to undertake the pacification of Ireland.

In any case, after blocking Knollys' appointment, even though Knollys wanted the position, Essex subsequently objected to the Queen's and the Council's intention to appoint Lord Mountjoy to the post of Lord Deputy.⁷⁵ By his dissatisfaction with such proposed Council nominations

⁷²C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 228.

⁷³Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, II, 47-48.

⁷⁴MSS. Salisbury, vol. 8, 318.

⁷⁵Sir John Harrington, Nugae Antiquae (New York: Ams Press, INC., 1966), I, 241.

Essex was making his own appointment as Lord Deputy an inevitability.

His subsequent investment as Lord Deputy was still no straightforward appointment; rather, it was to be a drawn-out bargaining procedure, involving bitterly disputed proposals and counterproposals, lasting from August 1598 until March 12, 1599! On September 10, after recovering from several weeks of sickness, Essex returned to a warm welcome at Elizabeth's court.⁷⁶ By November it was generally believed in Court circles that Essex would lead a great campaign to Ireland in the following spring.⁷⁷ However, Essex, the Queen and the Council could not come to agreement on numerous points in Essex's commission--- namely, the size and composition of his army, the position of his subordinates, the military and political powers he should have, the title that should be conferred upon him and the financial arrangements for the campaign. Concerning the last item Essex had insisted that the Queen forgive many of the debts he had accumulated in organizing past expeditions for the Queen.⁷⁸

On December 8 Sir John Chamberlain wrote to English officials in the Netherlands:

Essex's journey is uncertain, because the

⁷⁶Lacey, Essex, 216.

⁷⁷MSS. Salisbury, vol. 8, 448-50.

⁷⁸C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 168.

proportions for his enterprise are daily diminished. The number of troops was at first set down to be 14,000 with full allowance of victual and money, but these rates are diminished and Essex is displeased.⁷⁹

Two days later, however, his appointment seemed certain and Sir Robert Cecil wrote to the Irish officials: "I think Her Majesty is now resolved of her General to be the Earl Marshall (Essex) and he shall have there a good army of 12,000 to 14,000 foot and 1,000 horse."⁸⁰ But on December 20 Sir John Chamberlain wrote that the Earl of Essex's journey to Ireland "is dashed." Chamberlain explained:

Till Sunday the Earl was to go, but there came a sudden alteration, the reason of which is kept secret. Some say the Queen had promised to forgive him his fathers debts of 12,000 £, and she says she meant forbearance of it during his absence. ⁸¹

As for the relationship of Essex and Cecil, Chamberlain commented, "He (Essex) and Mr. Secretary ply the tables hard in the presence Chamber, and play so round a game as though Ireland were to be recovered at Irish."⁸²

Finally, on January 3 Chamberlain reported that "The disgust that stayed the Earl's going are removed, and now he is preparing for Ireland."⁸³ Apparently by this time,

⁷⁹Ibid., 129.

⁸⁰C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 401.

⁸¹C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 134.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid., 147.

Elizabeth had finally agreed to discharge Essex of £10,000 worth of debts so that he could meet the expenses of the campaign.⁸⁴ In any case the greatest difficulty had been resolved and Essex could turn his full attention toward preparing the expedition. There were still other difficulties which would arise and his full commission was not agreed upon until January 31, and not signed until March 12.⁸⁵

Essex's final commission, dated January 31, represented the most far reaching powers any Viceroy had yet had in Elizabeth's reign. Instead of the usual designation of Lord Deputy, Essex was granted the more prestigious title of Lord Lieutenant, an honor which had been granted only to Sir Philip Sidney in 1567. Under his Commission Essex was empowered in addition to his prerogatives as Governor, also to pardon treasons, to restore traitors, to grant lands, to displace martial officers, to make knights, to command ships appointed for Ireland, and to dispose of the Queen's treasure with the advice of the Irish Council, as long as he did not exceed the sums authorized.⁸⁶

Essex, as is evident, had made many enemies in his rise to power, and more recently in his quest for appoint-

⁸⁴Lacey, Essex, 217.

⁸⁵C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 156, 168.

⁸⁶Ibid., 168.

ment as Lord Deputy. Aside from the obvious opponents of the Cecil faction Essex had eroded his support within his own circle. Sir William Knollys, Essex's uncle who had wanted the position as Lord Deputy, was reported as being "not well pleased" that Essex had blocked his appointment.⁸⁷ Sir John Harrington, as he prepared to follow Essex to Ireland, was cautioned by a Court observer, Robert Markham, that Essex "hath so many showing friends, and so many unshowing enemies."⁸⁸ Markham told Harrington that Lord Mountjoy had sent two or three of his relations with Essex's army "to report all your conduct to us at home."⁸⁹ As a precaution Markham counseled Harrington:

I say, do you not meddle in any sort, nor give your jesting too freely among those you know not: obey the Lord Deputy in all things, but give not your opinion; it may be heard in England.⁹⁰

Harrington would follow Markham's advice, keeping a diary as Markham also had suggested, and attempting to keep a noncommittal position in case things did not go well in Ireland.

Essex's own state of mind at the time of his

⁸⁷Harrington, Nugae Antiquae, 242.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid., 241.

⁹⁰Ibid., 242.

appointment and his attitude toward the task ahead have been the subject of much speculation. The general opinion has been that he was enthusiastic at first, but quickly became defeatist in outlook. Indeed after his confirmation was finally settled on January 3, 1599, Essex wrote to Sir John Harrington with great exhilaration: "I have beaten Knollys and Mountjoy in the council, and by G-d I will beat Tyrone in the field; for nothing worthy her Majesties honor hath yet been achieved."⁹¹

At the same time, Essex wrote a very detailed analysis of his position to his friend, Lord Willoughby, the Governor of Berwick, on January 4, 1599. After discussing some technical problems concerning the employment of troops from the Berwick garrison, Essex devoted the remainder of his letter to his own personal situation, and began:

Now for myself. Into Ireland I go. The Queen hath irrevocably decreed it; the Council do passionately urge it; and I am tied to my own reputation to use no tergiversation. And as it were indecorum to slip collar now, so were it "minime tutum," for Ireland would be lost, and though it perished by destiny, yet I should only be accused for it, because I saw the fire burn, was called to quench it, and yet gave no help. I am not ignorant what are the disadvantages of absence; the opportunities of practicing enemies when they are neither encountered or overlooked: the constructions of princes under whom "magna fama" is more dangerous than "mala" and "suscus minus quam nullus," the difficulties of a war where the rebel that hath been hitherto ever victorious is the least enemy that I shall have against me; for without an enemy, the disease of that country consumes our armies, and if they

⁹¹Ibid., 246.

live, yet famine and nakedness makes them lose both heart and strength. And if victuals be sent over, yet there will be no means to carry it. And yet all those were better endured than to have a Hanno at Carthage or a Cato at Rome, barking at him that is every day venturing his life for his country abroad. All those things, which I am like to see, I do now foresee. For the war is hard; *pulchra que difficilia*: the rebel successful that only makes him worthy to be undertaken: the supplies uncertain; it is safer for me to perform as much as shall lie in me or depend upon me, and to show the world that my endeavors were more than ordinary, when the state that set me out must conspire with the enemy against me. Too ill success will be dangerous; let them fear that who allow excuses, or can be content to overlive their honour. Too good will be envious; I will never forswear virtue for fear of ostracism. The Court is the centre; but methinks it is the fairer choice to command armies than honorers. In the meantime enemies may be advanced; so I show who should be, let fortune show who be. These are my private problems and nightly disputations, which from your lordship, whom I account another myself, I cannot hide. Use them according to their nature and their author's purpose, that is, to commit them to no other eyes than your own.⁹²

While some authors have inferred a defeatist attitude on the part of Essex,⁹³ this author considers his analysis a very realistic evaluation by an experienced soldier and politician. Instead of being defeatist, Essex had a healthy respect for the military problems connected with an Irish campaign, along with a prophetic insight, borne from past experience of the political consequences which his absence from Court would engender. In any case, with

⁹²MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 10-11.

⁹³See comments in Introduction.

his appointment made certain, Essex could now turn to the tactical and organizational considerations which a great foreign expedition would entail.

CHAPTER IV

PLANS AND PREPARATION

The strategy which the English forces employed to subdue Ireland was fairly well determined by the political situation and the geographical realities. Throughout the Irish wars of the sixteenth century, the rebels were invariably on the defensive, holing up in their mountains, forest and bogs, and putting the onus on the Queen's troops to march in and enforce her authority. Tyrone's war was no exception to the pattern, for although he did have a better army than his predecessors, Tyrone basically fought the same defensive war. Indeed, the fortified posts of the English, the lack of Irish artillery, English sea power, and the great disparity between English and Irish logistical production rendered a truly offensive strategy impossible for Tyrone. Additionally, the Irish leader had built up a precarious alliance of independent-minded Irish chieftains, many of whom were less than enthusiastic over Tyrone's sudden preeminence,¹ and one serious defeat could shatter the loosely knit coalition.

In view of the Irish methods of warfare the English were forced to adhere to an offensive strategy. Since

¹C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 166.

Tyrone was the heart of the rebellion the major effort would be directed toward neutralizing him. The ideal procedure for dealing with revolt in Ulster was to invade that country from the two natural overland entrances: in the west by an army from Connaught going through Ballyshannon; in the east by an army moving through the Mowry Pass to the Blackwater. Further, it had long been recognized that the key to subduing Ulster lay in isolating the area from outside support by cutting off the sea-entry lane at Lough Foyle. By a sea-borne operation, a garrison could be planted at Derry which would not only sever Ulster's lines of supply to Scotland, but would place Tyrone's home base in imminent danger.

The above basic strategy for dealing with revolt by the O'Neills was developed during Shane O'Neill's rebellion from 1562 to 1567. In 1566 Colonel Randolph established a garrison of 1,000 foot at Lough Foyle in October of that year, to operate in conjunction with Lord Deputy Sidney's overland invasion through Connaught.² However, the country around Lough Foyle was particularly desolate³ and a garrison was forced to depend on outside supply. In Colonel Randolph's expedition the garrison was immobilized for lack of supplies, and through the winter the supply system broke down completely, leaving the garrison

²C.S.P. Ireland, 1509-73, 308-09.

³C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 23.

to starve.⁴ Finally in May 1567 the survivors were withdrawn, having tied down Shane O'Neill to a degree, but being otherwise ineffective due to lack of support.

With Tyrone's rebellion of 1595-1603 the Irish and English faced basically the same strategic situation as in Shane O'Neill's rebellion. In 1597 Lord Deputy Burgh planned to subdue Tyrone with a similar strategy. Forces in the east would garrison the Blackwater fort area to prevent Tyrone from slipping past the English forces and into the Pale. In the west, the Governor of Connaught, Sir Conyers Clifford, would attack through Ballyshannon; while most importantly, a garrison would be placed at Lough Foyle in Tyrone's rear.⁵ Regarding the Lough Foyle aspect of the plan, Sir Henry Wallop, the Treasurer at Wars for Ireland, wrote to the Privy Council that he hoped Her Majesty would send 1,000 foot and 100 horse to Lough Foyle, with supplies to last six or eight months, and concluded:

The Place, being withal well fortified will more annoy the Earl (of Tyrone) and O'Donnell than an army of 10,000 men, making journeys into their countries without provision or means to enable them to continue in the field longer than has been accustomed.⁶

In July 1597, however, rebel threats to the Pale

⁴C.S.P. Ireland, 1509-73, 317-18.

⁵C.S.P. Ireland, 1596-97, 373-75, 357-58.

⁶Ibid., 357.

caused Lord Deputy Burgh to shift the men and supplies intended for Lough Foyle instead to reinforce the troops guarding the Pale.⁷ While Lord Burgh was cancelling his Lough Foyle plans, Sir Conyers Clifford's invasion force was defeated in early August and turned back at Ballyshannon by O'Donnell's army.⁸ The entire project thereupon collapsed and the plans instead would be held in abeyance until the forces and supply magazines could be replenished.⁹

At the same time that Lord Burgh's plan was meeting with disaster, the Earl of Essex was in Plymouth preparing to leave on his Islands Voyage. On August 12, 1597, Essex wrote a letter to the Queen in which he commented on several matters, including the state of affairs in Ireland. Unaware of Lord Burgh's recent difficulties, Essex stated:

...as for Ireland (thanks be to God) your Majesty's affairs do every day mend; the last Deputy [Sir William Russell] ended well and this [Lord Burgh] begins well. If your Majesty's garrisons towards Ulster of the Newry, Dundalk, the Blackwater and Armagh be kept strong and Sir Conyers Clifford build up Ballyshannon and by that means free Connaught from the incursions of Tirconnel, you shall keep these countries [the Pale and south Ireland] that have ever yielded you profit and remained in obedience: and whensoever you shall be at leisure to attempt the utter extirpation of the traitor Tyrone and his Sept by landing on his back at Loughfoile and fortifying and planting garrisons along the river Liffer, as at the

⁷Ibid., 358.

⁸Ibid., 373-77.

⁹Ibid., 377.

Castle of Liffer and Derrie, it will be an easy work.¹⁰

Thus as early as August 1597 Essex, while not yet remotely connected with Ireland, demonstrated that he understood the strategy necessary to subdue that island, and in particular the decisive importance of the Lough Foyle expedition.

The emphasis on the Lough Foyle expedition increased throughout the next two years and is evident in almost all the strategic recommendations for subduing Ulster. In July 1598, the Earl of Ormonde, Lord Lieutenant General of the forces in Ireland, and leader of the allied Protestant Irish, recommended that 1,200 foot and 100 horse be sent to Lough Foyle.¹¹ In reply Queen Elizabeth and the Privy Council, who usually sought to cut down any troop request because of the expense, voluntarily increased the proposed expedition to 2,000 foot and 100 horse, with provisions for six months.¹² However, before this expedition commenced Sir Henry Bagenel suffered his disastrous defeat in August 1598 and all of Ireland seemed in danger of falling to Tyrone. Once again the Lough Foyle project was shelved as the troops and supplies intended for that operation were diverted to Dublin in order to shore up the

¹⁰B. M., Hulton MSS., 150.

¹¹C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 11.

¹²Ibid., 202.

defenses of the Pale.¹³ Preparation for the Lough Foyle expedition were so advanced in 1598 that the Earl of Ormonde feared that news of Bagenel's defeat would not reach England in time to countermand the order to sail.¹⁴

In December 1598, Sir Geoffery Fenton, Commissioner for the Affairs of Ulster, and Connaught, wrote to Sir Robert Cecil, emphasizing the necessity of occupying Lough Foyle with at least 2,100 men.¹⁵ And in January 1599, Captain Thomas Reade, an experienced company commander in Ireland, upon hearing of Essex's appointment as Lord Deputy, wrote an analysis of the Irish situation for the Earl. The strategy he recommended was to occupy Ballyshannon, Lough Foyle and the Blackwater area, and to devastate Tyrone's country in a series of coordinated attacks from three directions. Captain Reade further recommended that Essex ought to conduct the Ulster operation until October 1599, and then withdraw to the south, thereafter conducting a winter campaign in Leinster, when the Irish would be at their weakest.¹⁶ The only change which Essex recommended in the above strategy was to increase the proposed garrison at Lough Foyle to 4,000 foot

¹³Ibid., 239.

¹⁴Ibid., 243.

¹⁵Ibid., 426.

¹⁶Ibid., 450-51.

and 100 horse.¹⁷ Essex also planned to accompany the occupation of Lough Foyle by a direct overland thrust into the center of Ulster, planting garrisons in Tyrone's country. Any other course of action was, by agreement of Essex, the Queen and the Privy Council, "but waste and consumption."¹⁸ Tyrone was the center of resistance; once he was crushed the rest of the island could be easily subdued. The strategy which Essex and succeeding deputies should follow was generally recognized and agreed upon by all the principal personalities concerned with the project.

However, the Lough Foyle landing and a coordinated overland invasion was a particularly difficult strategy for a sixteenth-century English army, and could be easily upset if any one element of the operation failed. As we have seen, English defeats on the overland routes had ruined the strategic plan before the Lough Foyle expedition was even undertaken. Even if the enemy caused no interference, the overall strategy hinged on two crucial prerequisites, shipping and horses. The Lough Foyle operation depended on the availability of shipping to transport men, horses and supplies for six months. While England had a respectable navy and merchant marine, gathering and coordinating this fleet for specific projects was a colossal undertaking. The overland expeditions,

¹⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 19.

¹⁸Ibid., 106.

particularly with a large army, required numerous horse to transport the supplies that the army must take to sustain itself. Captain Reade, in his advice to Essex in January 1599, made a special note of the necessity of having "very many" of the powerful carriage horses to pull the supply carts across the rugged Ulster terrain.¹⁹

Since the strategy Essex would use was practically a foregone conclusion by the time of his appointment on January 3, 1599, the new Lord Lieutenant had as his principal task the gathering of men and material to implement the strategy. Essex therefore spent the next three months in England supervising the assembly and transporting of ships, men, horses and supplies; and it is this important effort which we shall now consider.

By 1599 the Earl of Essex was probably the most experienced man in England when it came to organizing and leading an overseas campaign. In 1585 he had begun his military career by recruiting and equipping 700 gentleman and 1585 common soldiers for the Queen's Netherlands campaign,²⁰ which lasted two years. In 1592 he played a prominent part in the English expedition which raided Portugal and threatened Lisbon.²¹ Previously in 1591, he

¹⁹C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 451.

²⁰Lacey, Essex, 35.

²¹Ibid., 64-70.

had organized and led an English force of 4,000 men into France to assist Henry IV against the Spanish.²² Five years later, in 1596, Essex had achieved his greatest triumph in organizing and leading the expedition which had sacked Cadiz. After the Cadiz experience Essex wrote a paper in which he called for major reforms in the English military system. Instead of continuing a large, inefficient militia to conduct campaigns, he asserted that England should create a small, efficient standing army of 6,000 men, organized on a regimental system.

In 1597, Essex had attempted to implement his ideas in preparing the expedition to the Azores Islands. The result, according to C. G. Cruickshank, the foremost authority on the Elizabethan military establishment, was that Essex's army for the Islands expedition "formed probably the most efficient force to leave England in Elizabeth's reign."²³ It is in the context of Essex's military experience and proven organizational ability that we should view the problems and conflicts which arose as Essex made his preparations for the Irish expedition.

Essex's first area of concern was the composition of his army. Regarding the force which he had at his disposal, his contemporaries were lavish in their praise. Lord Chamberlain Hunsdon articulated the national sentiment

²²Ibid., 82-89.

²³Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army, 204.

when he subsequently stated that with the Army Essex had, he should have been able to march through Spain itself,²⁴ while later historians have echoed similar judgments. (For a more extensive judgment see the comments in the Introduction.) From the writings of contemporary observers and historians the reader may be tempted to picture Essex gathering a powerful and cohesive army of 16,000 foot and 1,300 horse in England, and leading them over to Ireland to deal with Tyrone. The facts of his Army's composition, however, are not nearly so impressive.

On December 8, 1599, while Essex's ultimate appointment was still in doubt, Sir John Chamberlain, a member of the Privy Council, wrote to the Crown's representative in the Low Countries concerning the estimated composition of the army intended for Ireland. The number of troops was set at about 14,000, an estimate confirmed two days later by Robert Cecil, but that number was to include those troops already in Ireland!²⁵ A more specific breakdown was given by Chamberlain on January 3, 1599, when he wrote that Essex's force was to consist of "500 or 600 horse" and "not more than 2,000 from here (England), 2,000 from the Low Countries, and 10,000 are said to be there already."²⁶

²⁴Anthony Bacon, The Earl of Essex's Vindication of of the War with Spain (London, 1729), 60.

²⁵C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 129.

²⁶Ibid., 147.

The Essex force, therefore, was not to be a whole new army, but a combination of soldiers already in Ireland, 2,000 raw levies from England, "strengthened with the old soldiers of the Low Countries."²⁷ By February 25, 1599 Essex succeeded in having the army increased to 1300 horse, organized into 26 bands, and 16,000 foot organized into 160 companies, by persuading the Queen to levy about 2,000 more men from England.²⁸

The bulk of Essex's "great army" consisted of 10,000 troops who were in Ireland by January 3, 1599. Of this army, officials in Ireland wrote back of its dilapidated state caused by the corruption of the company captains. The Earl of Ormonde wrote in October 1598 that the captains, claiming that they had received little money, had only paid their men two months of their pay in the last eight months, and had not supplied "hose or shoes, or almost any apparal" for the winter.²⁹ Furthermore, the captains had replaced many of their English soldiers with Irishmen, who served for less pay, or had discharged men altogether, but were still collecting money as though they had full companies.³⁰

When word of the defeat at Yellow Ford reached England,

²⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 389.

²⁸Ibid., 483.

²⁹Ibid., 334.

³⁰Ibid., 63, 138.

the Queen had immediately attempted to bolster the Army's strength. The force scheduled for the Lough Foyle operation was diverted to the Pale, while on August 26 a new levy of 1,700 men was ordered. The assembling of this force of levies caused numerous problems since many men deserted,³¹ and 400 Londoners drafted for Ireland mutinied on the road to Chester.³² Eventually, Sir Richard Bingham managed to get 700 men to Ireland by the end of October, but they were in a mutinous mood.³³ On October 28 a further levy of 2,000 men was ordered, and all these troops, divided into three contingents, reached Cork, Kinsale and Waterford by December 9, 1598.³⁴

At the end of 1598 Sir Robert Cecil wrote some "Observations" on the condition of Ireland and noted the corruption of captains, and emphasized the need for a general reform of the demoralized army.³⁵ The bulk of Essex's army, therefore, consisted of men who had already been defeated in the field by Tyrone, who were cheated of money and supplies by their captains, and whose main concern was to avoid starving to death in the winter at hand.

The second part of the army was originally to consist

³¹Ibid., 276.

³²Falls, Elizabeth's Irish Wars, 326.

³³C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 411.

³⁴Ibid., 399.

³⁵Ibid., 444.

of not more than 2000 levies from England; however, the number of levies was increased to about 4000 by the end of March.³⁶ These levies were of the usual reluctant character, despite the fact that Essex applied enough pressure on the officials to insure that the troops were all present and well supplied. On December 10, an advance guard of 1000 men under Sir Arthur Savage was designated to go to Ireland. Sir Robert Cecil wrote to Sir Conyers Clifford of Connaught that this force was "sent you before my Lord of Essex came, ...to put you into some life... whereby you may know that you are not neglected."³⁷ Unfortunately, the process of assembly, preparation and embarkation was so cumbersome, that it was not until January 31 that this first small contingent reached Dublin.³⁸

As for the remaining 3000 levies, Essex's plans stipulated: 2600 men, 200 cavalry horse, and "a great number of carriage horse" were to assemble and embark at Chester; 450 men, 100 cavalry horses, and 50 carriage horses were to assemble and embark at Milford; and 100 cavalry horses were to be sent from Bristol.³⁹ Essex found that the mustering, equipping and transporting of these troops took up

³⁶C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 147; Falls, Elizabeth's Irish Wars, 227.

³⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 402.

³⁸Ibid., 473.

³⁹A.P.C. XXIX, 527, 531.

most of his time for the next few months. On January 5, immediately after the final approval of his commission, Essex sent the Privy Council a list of all the men and support he would need for the Irish expedition and then began work on the details.⁴⁰

By the end of January the plans for the assembly and embarkation for the troops was drawn up,⁴¹ and on February 5 Essex sent very detailed instructions to Captain John Goite and Captain Robert Davies on how they were to proceed to gather the shipping to get the troops to Ireland. Goite was to go to Bristol and gather all shipping "especially such as will serve to transport horses" for the troops which were to leave from that port. After that Goite was to travel to all ports from Bristol to the Cape of Cornwall and gather whatever shipping was available. In the meantime, Captain Davies would have the task of supervising the assembly of ships for the main force assembling at Chester. If Davies found himself short of shipping then Goite would send him what he needed from Bristol or Milford.⁴²

The process of gathering ships proceeded slowly and on February 26, 1599 Essex and the Privy Council directed that the mayor of Barnstable send seventeen ships, known

⁴⁰C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 449.

⁴¹A.P.C. XXIX, 527.

⁴²Ibid., 529-31.

to be in his port, to Chester immediately to assist the shipping of troops.⁴³ By March 21 shipping was fairly well assembled to take the bulk of the troops, although the horses and the last contingent of 800 men still did not have sufficient shipping to allow them to accompany Essex.⁴⁴

The difficulties in the gathering of shipping was equalled by the problems of levying men and getting them to the port of embarkation. The slowness of the communications systems, and the difficulties of communicating only by letters caused maddening delays. On November 29, 1598 the Privy Council sent a notice of levy for 400 men to the Archbishop of York, and the letter did not reach the north country until January 28, 1599!⁴⁵ Yet on February 9, the Earl of Stanhope wrote to Essex stating that specific instructions had not yet been received; among other things, the officials in York wished to know whether they should arm the men in York, or send them to Chester with the money to buy arms there. In any case they insisted that no further progress could be made until the other instructions from the Privy Council had arrived.⁴⁶

On February 2 the Sheriff of Lancashire received the

⁴³Ibid., 615.

⁴⁴Ibid., 700.

⁴⁵MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 46.

⁴⁶Ibid., 67.

the Queen's letter of January 16 levying 200 men "to go into Ireland according to direction to be received;"⁴⁷ the directions, however, were not as yet received and therefore the Sheriffs and Justices of Lancashire reported, "we cannot proceed in the work for want of your directions."⁴⁸ Even when instructions were received and understood the problems continued. Sir John Cocke in London was ordered to deliver 100 men to Halifax for shipment to Ireland, and to send their equipment by carts to West Chester. On February 16 Sir John wrote to Sir Robert Cecil to explain the delay by saying he could not hire carts because it was seed-time, and the owners refused to rent them out. Sir John asked that Sir Robert Cecil obtain a warrant so that he could commandeer as many carts as were needed.⁴⁹

Most obstacles were eventually overcome and the main contingent of 2600 levies was assembled at Chester by the middle of March.⁵⁰ Upon inspection by the Mayor of Chester and Sir Arthur Chichester it was found that all the troops were well prepared "except eleven of the men raised in Norfolk, whose coats were coarse, who wanted altogether both hose and shoes, and of whom some had no sword."⁵¹ All but

⁴⁷Ibid., 69.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., 72.

⁵⁰Ibid., 113.

⁵¹Ibid., 108.

23 of these men were safely embarked for Dublin on March 21 and 22, a remarkable performance compared to previous efforts to ship levies to Ireland.

While the new recruits were comparatively well armed and well equipped, they still possessed all the unfortunate characteristics of raw levies serving in Ireland for the first time. Essex therefore was relying on the third part of his army, the Low Country contingent, to provide the resolution and experience which the other elements lacked. In short, the Low Country contingent was to be the backbone of the army. Essex's plan, as approved by the Queen, was to have 2000 new levies in England organized into companies with their officers, and sent as whole units to the Lowlands. In exchange, 2000 English veterans serving in the Lowlands, also organized into companies along with their own officers, would be transferred directly to Ireland to serve as the hard core of Essex's army.⁵²

The reaction of the States General of Holland to Essex's plan was immediate and negative. Prince Maurice of Nassau, upon hearing of the plan, wrote to the Earl of Essex on December 26, 1598, voicing his displeasure at the proposal. Prince Maurice pointed out that his country had spent much effort in training the English soldiers in the methods of service used in Holland and in bringing the

⁵²Ibid., 65.

4000-man contingent to the point where it was the "chief reliance" of the Dutch army. Now, if Essex's plan were implemented, and if half of their veterans were replaced by "novices," the Dutch would have to completely rebuild this contingent for the coming spring campaign season.⁵³

In addition to Prince Maurice's objection, the chief opponent of the Essex plan was Sir Francis Vere, an English nobleman who had brought a regiment to serve in Holland. Vere had first come to prominence through Essex's patronage and assistance on the Cadiz expedition in 1596.⁵⁴ After that expedition, when Sir Walter Raleigh and Lord Admiral Howard had sought to denigrate Essex's performance, Vere presented a forceful and incontestable justification of the conduct of Essex in the presence of Elizabeth and the Court.⁵⁵ Thereafter Sir Francis Vere, ostensibly a great friend of Essex, went to the Netherlands war where he made a great reputation for himself, and established a promising future in the service of States General.

By January 1599 the States General had appointed Vere to be general of all English in the field, while his personal sentiment seemed to be "wholly addicted unto the States and their proceedings."⁵⁶ To retain his position,

⁵³Ibid., 502.

⁵⁴Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army, 269.

⁵⁵Lacey, Essex, 203.

⁵⁶MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 123.

according to one observer, Sir Francis Vere was willing to betray "your Majesty's special service into Ireland, the Council's determination in England, and my Lord of Essex's intended journey."⁵⁷ In any case it was both in the States General's interest and in Sir Francis Vere's interest to maintain the best army possible in Holland, despite the Queen's directives showing the need for trained troops to go with Essex to Ireland.

When news of Essex's appointment as Lord Deputy and his intended journey to Ireland reached Holland, Sir Henry Docwra, a commander of the English army in Holland, immediately wrote to Essex to offer his services.⁵⁸ Sir Henry was an antagonist of Sir Francis Vere, with whom he had often quarreled, and he now sought to join Essex's expedition to be away from Vere.⁵⁹ Since Essex was fully preoccupied in organizing the new levies in England and because Sir Henry Docwra was an experienced and willing solicitor, Essex placed Docwra in charge of the project of supervising the transfer of troops between Holland and England. As a result, from January to March 1599 Sir Henry Docwra fought a running battle with Sir Francis Vere and the States General of Holland in an effort to try to have Essex's plan implemented. Although Vere and States

⁵⁷Ibid., 124.

⁵⁸MSS. Salisbury, vol. 8, 499.

⁵⁹Ibid., 507.

General could not ignore Elizabeth's orders altogether, they did contrive to insure that the transfer would be of maximum benefit to Vere's forces.

Elizabeth had appointed Sir Thomas Knollys to lead the 20 companies of new levies from England to Holland, and on January 22 he arrived at Flushing with his contingent of 2000 men.⁶⁰ From then until February 9 Sir Thomas Knollys tried in vain to have the transfer of troops proceed as Essex had instructed; finally in despair, Knollys wrote to Essex in order to appraise him of the status of the Low Country contingent. To make up the 2000 men which had been promised to Essex, Sir Francis Vere had appointed only "broken companies," and his officers chose only the "worst men and worst furnished that were in the companies." This lot of rejects was sent to Zeeland for shipment, "without a captain or any other officer to conduct them to Ireland."⁶¹

The commanding officer in The Netherlands, Sir Francis Vere, refused to send one man from his own well trained regiment.⁶² On the other hand, the troops from England who had arrived in company organizations were disbanded and distributed to Vere's officers, while Sir Francis Vere personally assigned 400 of the new men to his

⁶⁰MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 36.

⁶¹Ibid., 65.

⁶²Ibid., 36.

own regiment to bring it up to strength. All the officers from England, with the exception of Sir Thomas Knollys himself, were summarily dismissed by Vere.⁶³ In this position the newly unemployed officers volunteered for service with Essex in Ireland.⁶⁴

The problems brought on by such a cumbersome communication and administrative system are strikingly illustrated in Essex's attempt to implement the plan for the use of Low Country troops. In an age when a simple telephone call can do much to solve a crisis or eliminate confusion it is perhaps difficult for us to appreciate the administrative handicap under which Tudor officials worked, in that they had to disseminate all instructions and solve all problems through the tedious processes of sending letters or messengers across land and water.

The most serious administrative handicap was that reaction time was agonizingly slow. If orders sent out by the Privy Council were lost or misinterpreted, or if the recipients chose to violate the orders, it would be weeks, and even months, before official inquiries or the personal representatives of the Privy Council could sort out the difficulties and determine who was responsible for not complying with instructions. In preparing for the Irish campaign of 1599, and in dealing with Sir

⁶³Ibid., 64-65.

⁶⁴Ibid., ix.

Francis Vere and the States General of Holland, Essex had little or no reaction time.

Essex's appointment as Lord Deputy was not made certain until January 3, 1599, and since the situation in Ireland was critical it was expected that Essex should depart as soon as possible. Essex had apparently hoped to be in Ireland by February, but problems in organizing the expedition forced him to delay his intended departure date until March.⁶⁵ By February 15, the Queen's Secretary in Ireland was writing to Sir Robert Cecil that it was "high time" Essex were in Ireland to control the deteriorating situation.⁶⁶ Despite the pressure, Essex remained in England until April 5, supervising the setting up of supplies and the embarkation of his raw levies, the main contingent of which finally sailed on March 25. It is in the context of this three-month period--from January 3 to April 5--that Essex's dealings with the Low Country contingent must be viewed.

In early January, Essex had set out confirmation of Sir Henry Docwra's appointment, along with instructions for handling the Low Country troops. On January 12, Captain R. Morison, a Privy Council observer sent over to Holland in December 1598, wrote to Essex about the cooperative attitude of the States General, who were readying

⁶⁵C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 151.

⁶⁶C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 480.

their companies for transfer to Ireland as instructed.⁶⁷ On the same date, Docwra wrote to Essex, acknowledging receipt of the Earl's letter, and assuring Essex that his instructions were being followed. He added, however, that Essex might not receive the caliber of soldiers which he was expecting from Sir Francis Vere. Essex immediately wrote back that if men or equipment were lacking, Docwra was to make up the deficiencies by taking men and equipment from Sir Thomas Knollys' contingent of new levies which was being sent to Vere.⁶⁸

The first really ominous note did not appear until Sir Thomas Knollys arrived at Flushing, the Lowland port of embarkation, on January 22. Sir Thomas wrote back that he found all things "unready" at the port of embarkation.⁶⁹ But on January 23, Docwra wrote to Essex and indicated that there might be some problems; however, he did not wish to discuss "the Particulars of them until" he had "waded further in the business." Docwra further concluded by stating that he was carefully following the instructions of Essex and that the Earl would most certainly be satisfied with his service.⁷⁰

On January 25, Sir William Brown wrote to Essex and

⁶⁷MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 22-23.

⁶⁸Ibid., 42.

⁶⁹Ibid., 36.

⁷⁰Ibid., 38.

mentioned that Sir Francis Vere was sending him men from "broken companies" without officers, but that Sir Henry Docwra had written to Sir Francis Vere about the problem.⁷¹ On the same day Sir Henry Docwra also wrote to Essex, telling him that he had arrived at the port of embarkation, and after observing defects in the number of men and equipment he was in the process of making up the deficiencies as Essex had instructed. Docwra concluded that he and the troops were preparing to sail from Holland with the first good wind, which they expected to be about January 31. Docwra's last letter from Holland was written on February 6, in which he stated that he expected to depart any day, and that he was still having difficulties making up the deficiencies from Sir Francis Vere.⁷²

The full extent of the situation was not made known to Essex until Sir Thomas Knollys wrote to Essex on February 9, reporting the full scope of Vere's betrayal in no uncertain terms.⁷³ On the same day, three captains, Nicholas Saunders, George Laycester, and Francis Maddisen, officers under Knollys, also wrote to Essex confirming the true state of the Low Country contingent.⁷⁴ Essex received these reports in the middle of February, and had the Privy

⁷¹Ibid., 40.

⁷²Ibid., 59.

⁷³Ibid., 64-65.

⁷⁴Ibid., 67.

Council send out a scathing letter to Sir Francis Vere insisting that he comply with instructions.⁷⁵ The Privy Council's letter did not arrive at The Hague until early March, by which time it was far too late, since Docwra, catching a good wind, had sailed for England with the forces he had in hand, and had arrived in Ireland on February 28, 1599.⁷⁶

When Sir Thomas Knollys questioned Sir Francis Vere about the problems of the Low Country contingent, Sir Francis remained outwardly friendly, while placing the blame on Count Maurice of Nassau.⁷⁷ The Count, in turn, "pleadeth ignorance," maintaining that "he never understood, either by the Queen's letters or the lords of the Council of England that there was any intent ever specified whereby whole companies should be drawn from hence, but only in exchange of 2000 men that should be supplied out of England."⁷⁸ Since it would be impolitic to call Count Maurice a liar, Essex had no alternative but to accept the fait accompli presented to him by Sir Francis Vere in the name of Count Maurice.

Essex had expected a well-armed, well-trained corps of veterans, organized into company units under officers

⁷⁵A.P.C. XXIX, 621.

⁷⁶MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 93.

⁷⁷Ibid., 65.

⁷⁸Ibid.

who had served with their companies for considerable time. Instead he received a leaderless collection of castoffs who immediately placed a burden on the supply system to make up their deficiencies in equipment.⁷⁹ If Essex had been able to go to the Low Countries personally, such a deception could not have occurred. But Essex had too many tasks in England, and had to rely on his subordinates, the good faith of Sir Francis Vere and Count Maurice, and the communications and administrative channels of the period.

Aside from the garrisons in Ireland and the Low Countries, the only other source of trained men in England were the Berwick bands and Scottish bands. These troops, about 1100 in number, were stationed principally at Berwick on the Scottish border, in order to protect the northern English counties from any Scottish incursions.⁸⁰ Essex had requested that Queen Elizabeth allow him to draft these well-trained men from Berwick, and send newly drafted levies to take their place, on a pattern similar to that of the Low Country troops. Yet Queen Elizabeth, who had already approved the same basic plan regarding 2000 troops in the Low Countries, objected to this new proposal of switching levies with veterans, stating that the transfers, "being a double work must needs be a double

⁷⁹Ibid., 36.

⁸⁰Ibid., 43.

charge." The apparent reason for her sudden opposition to such a sound course of action was that by January 1599, when Essex had made this Berwick request, the staggering cost of the expedition was becoming obvious, and Elizabeth was unwilling to pay for any other "unnecessary" moving of troops.⁸¹

Even if Elizabeth had approved the Berwick plan, it may well have failed, since the Berwick band members, like most English soldiers, were totally unenthusiastic about the prospect of service in Ireland. When news of Essex's proposal reached Berwick, an official wrote to Sir Robert Cecil as follows:

We have been at great charges of training and furnishing them, and they were promised when chosen that they should never be pressed to any foreign service. I assure you there is not one man of them but, before he will go to Ireland, will give his captain £20, £30, or £40 to put another in his room. [Berwick band members were generally the sons of the richest farmers and freeholders, and could well afford such a sum.] What a charge and discontentment that would breed here you can well conceive. I hope you will make a stay if any such matter be attempted; or that if companies must go from this shire to Ireland, such men as are fittest may be pressed, but our trained bands may be kept for the purpose for which they were first chosen.⁸²

The officials need not have worried since Elizabeth had already disapproved the plan, but the sentiment expressed by the above written note is indicative of the provincialism, lack of national allegiance, and general fear of

⁸¹Ibid., 10.

⁸²Ibid., 43.

Irish service prevalent in England at this time.

A final element in Essex's army, unique to the Irish wars, was the presence of many "gentlemen volunteers." The Lord Lieutenant's great reputation among the martial-oriented nobility of England, resulted in many young noblemen, eager for adventure, to apply for positions in his army. Essex could not find places of importance for all the applicants, and so a group of about fifty young gentlemen followed along in his personal retinue, or occasionally accompanied some of Essex's subordinate commanders.⁸³ These enthusiastic volunteers, by their gallant, and sometimes reckless example, provided a well-needed spark to the generally uninspired disposition of the Army rank and file.

The overall situation of the Army in Ireland was not encouraging. In January 1599, the Earl of Ormonde had written to the Queen that as a result of forgery in connection with the musters by the Captains, "the strength certified is far greater than they are in deed."⁸⁴ Ormonde's charge was confirmed by Sir Geoffrey Fenton, who, as "Surveyor of the Queen's possessions in Ireland," conducted a careful survey of the entire Army strength during the months of February and March 1599. The returns were completed on March 7, 1599 and Sir Geoffrey reported

⁸³C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 505.

⁸⁴C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 455.

that of 14,000 men who were supposed to be in Ireland by March 1, 1599, only 10,000 were present, concluding that Her Majesty was being defrauded "to pay shadows and not men."⁸⁵ Essex had insured that the new levies and the Low Country contingents were close to full strength; therefore, the 4000-man shortage came almost entirely out of the 10,000 men "already there" at the time of Essex's appointment, an indication of how greatly the rolls were falsified in Ireland.

Sir Geoffrey Fenton sent his report to Sir Robert Cecil on March 13, 1599,⁸⁶ hoping that this report would reach Essex in time to arrange to make up the deficiency before he left England. However the report did not arrive before the end of March, by which time Essex had already started his journey to the port of Chester. And by the time Essex saw the report, it was too late for him to do any more than notify the Privy Council of the Army's state, which he did. On March 14 when confirmation of this was made, Captain Thomas Reade wrote to Sir Robert Cecil that the 2000 men who came out of the Low Countries "do much decay, for there are many of them sick, and they do die apace." He concluded that Essex would be "much deceived" of the strength of the army of Ireland, when he

⁸⁵Ibid., 488.

⁸⁶Ibid., 489.

mustered it.⁸⁷

The other tasks which kept Essex occupied from early January to late March were the problems involved in laying the logistical groundwork for his campaign. In Tudor England there was no established governmental machinery to gather an army, send it overseas and keep it supplied. After the county officials had gathered their quota of men and had sent them off, responsibility for the men and all the other accoutrements which made up an expedition fell directly upon the Privy Council and the general in charge. In practice the general personally had to coordinate and insure the availability of the items which would be needed on his campaign, particularly, money, shipping, horses and supplies.

One of the critical problems faced by Essex was the financing of his campaign. The late sixteenth century was a time of rising national states and rising inflation which culminated in a great depression in 1622. In 1597 the purchasing power of the average weekly wage fell to a point lower than at any time between the thirteenth century and the present day. At the same time, from 1591 to 1603, the government had to levy four times as much taxation as had been levied in the previous thirty-four years of Elizabeth's reign.⁸⁸ Although Elizabeth was extremely

⁸⁷Ibid., 492.

⁸⁸Joel Hurstfield, Elizabeth I and the Unity of

frugal in her expenditures, the cost of running the government in a normal year was up to £300,000 by the last decade of the sixteenth century. With Tyrone's rebellion overall cost skyrocketed from 1595 onward. In the year and a half before Essex arrived the cost of the Army in Ireland amounted to £250,963, while the cost of Essex's campaign was set at £277,782 in February 1599.⁸⁹

In order to finance the coming campaign the Queen levied subsidies, and even borrowed £20,000 from the city of London. By December 1598, in dire need of money, the Queen sought to borrow another £150,000 from the merchants and aldermen of London, offering to mortgage £5,000 of her land, and the customs duties of the city for repayment.⁹⁰ The citizens were annoyed at this forced loan, and in January the Queen let it drop after £100,000 had been paid in.⁹¹

Throughout his preparation and campaign Essex was constantly at odds with the Queen and the rest of the Privy Council over funds. Once the contracts and salaries had been provided for, the main point of controversy was over how much money Essex would be allowed to take with him for "extraordinary expenditures," which included cost

England (London, 1960), 184; E. A. Abbott, Bacon and Elizabeth (London, 1877), 34.

⁸⁹C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 483.

⁹⁰C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 130.

⁹¹Ibid., 134, 147.

of transportation by sea and land for men, horses, munitions, and victuals.⁹² "Extraordinaries" would also include the cost of maintaining a headquarters and paying for any emergency necessities. The Council, rightly noting that there was "no superfluity in England,"⁹³ agreed to give Essex £5,000. The Earl on the other hand pointed out that the previous administration in Ireland, which had far fewer troops, had spent over £6,000 on extraordinaries. But the Council remained adamant and refused to increase the £5,000 allowance.⁹⁴

At the same time, because of the generally known corruption in Ireland, particularly on the part of the Irish Treasurer at Wars, Sir Henry Wallop,⁹⁵ Essex sought to sever his accounts from the administration which had gone before, by having his accounts start afresh as of March 1, 1599. When Sir Geoffrey Fenton heard of this plan he wrote to Robert Cecil, stating that while he admired Essex's intention to eliminate corruption and start anew, the Crown owed much back pay both to the army and the towns which could not be written off without "several clamors" being raised by those who were owed money.⁹⁶

⁹²C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 66.

⁹³Ibid., 13.

⁹⁴Ibid., 94.

⁹⁵Ibid., 13.

⁹⁶C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 489.

Essex's efforts to get this situation rectified were fruitless and as late as April the Privy Council refused to pay any back debts to the soldiers until Sir Henry Wallop's records were sent over and examined. Unable to receive satisfaction on the state of financial affairs in Ireland Essex prevailed upon the Queen to dismiss Sir Henry Wallop in March, and to appoint Sir George Carey to the post of Treasurer in Ireland. The Privy Council, however, still refused to pay any back debts to the army until it had examined all of Wallop's records,⁹⁷ a process which would take months to complete.

Arranging for victuals and clothing was also an immediate concern of Essex. On January 5 he sent proposals to the Privy Council to have Commissary officers sent to Bristol, Milford and Chester in order to look after the gathering of levies and supplies.⁹⁸ On January 12 he and the Privy Council signed a contract for the shipping and delivery of victuals with a London merchant, John Jolls, who agreed to deliver the supplies to the Irish ports of Dublin, Newry and Cork.⁹⁹ After contracting for victuals Essex next sought to contract for the supply of winter and summer uniforms which the army would desperately need. On January 16 it was resolved to contract with two prominent

⁹⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 13.

⁹⁸Ibid., 449.

⁹⁹Ibid., 452.

merchants of London, Ury Babington and Robert Bromley, for the supply of uniforms. The total sum, amounting to £45,000 was to be given to the new Irish Treasurer at Wars, Sir George Carey, who in turn would pay the merchants when the uniforms were delivered.¹⁰⁰

The task of trying to gather men, horses, money, ships and supplies was a tedious and involved process which took the months of January and February, and still left many problems unresolved. On March 1, 1599, John Chamberlain wrote:

The Earl of Essex is crazed either in mind or body. New difficulties daily arise about his commission, about the time of his abode, his entertainment, and the disposing of offices, and he is so discontented as sometimes to question whether he will go.¹⁰¹

In addition to the problems in England, Essex had by this time received ominous reports about the state of affairs in Ireland.¹⁰² To resolve these problems which were delaying his Army's departure to Ireland and jeopardizing his expedition, Essex called an emergency meeting of the Privy Council at his house on March 8, 1599. Out of the discussions which took place in this meeting one may gather a clear picture both of the critical problems still facing Essex after two months of preparation, and also of an uncooperative and irresolute attitude on the

¹⁰⁰C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 151.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 165.

¹⁰²MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 93.

part of the Privy Council.

As the meeting of March 8 opened, the first point made by Essex was that not enough money had been appropriated to pay for the maintenance of the army in Ireland. The Privy Council however deferred any motion to appropriate more money until they had received the next set of certificates from Ireland, enumerating the state of supplies and finances. Essex next brought out the fact that the original victualing contract was only to sustain an army of 10,000. His force was expected to number 17,300 and required a great increase in foodstuffs. Here the Council agreed to license merchants to transport more victuals to points designated by Essex.

Essex had received word about the shortage of uniforms in Ireland. He now asserted that half the troops in Ireland had not received uniforms, although the two merchants, Babington and Bramley, allegedly had already delivered 10,000 uniforms. The Council informed Essex that 2,000 uniforms had been delayed on the way and that 1,000 more were due to be sent. They also assured Essex that 10,000 more summer uniforms would be delivered by June 10. The Earl further inquired as to how the Council proposed to make good the deficiency in troops from the Low Country contingent. The Council assured Essex that they would request that the Queen raise men from Kent, Surrey, Sussex and London. After that, however, Essex would be respon-

sible for arming, clothing and transporting the contingent to Ireland.

The next two items were absolutely crucial to the campaign, and concerned the availability of carriage horses and shipping for the Lough Foyle operation. Regarding the carriage horses Essex reported that there were few available in Ireland. Furthermore, in the poorly tracked country of Ireland and particularly in Ulster, an army could not march or live without the big carriage horses to pull their transport. The Council authorized Essex to raise a further 100 horses, thereby bringing his total number of carriage horses authorized to 200, enough to pull transport wagons for a force of 1,000 to 1,500 men, but still far below the requirements for an army of 17,000.

Finally, Essex inquired about the want of shipping to transport the troops to Lough Foyle. Shipping had been authorized in order to get his forces to Ireland, but as of March 8 he lacked enough shipping to get all his troops and supplies across, let alone to conduct a separate amphibious operation to the north of Ireland with 4100 men. The Council's reply was that they would defer judgment on the issue, and consider it further at a later time. In such an atmosphere of uncertainty regarding key issues, the March 8 meeting ended.¹⁰³

Understandably frustrated, Essex spent the next few

¹⁰³C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 167-68.

weeks supervising the last stages of the embarkation proceedings for his 3000 levies at Chester and Milford. On March 27 he set forward from London to Chester, as crowds thronged the streets to see him off,¹⁰⁴ while a measure of the popular devotion and expectation was expressed in William Shakespeare's play, Henry V, which opened soon after Essex's departure:

Were now the general of our gracious empress
As in good time he may -- from Ireland coming
Bringing rebellion broached on his sword
How many would the peaceful city quit
To welcome him.¹⁰⁵

And from Ireland, the Justice of Munster, James Goold, wrote to Essex and expressed the joy of the English Establishment at the prospect of the Lord Lieutenant's arrival, and added his hope that Essex's "famous victory in mighty Spain shall not be subject to receive blemish in miserable Ireland."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴Lacey, Essex, 218.

¹⁰⁵Bowen, Lion and Throne, 67.

¹⁰⁶C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 4.

CHAPTER V

THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN

In his own journey to Ireland, Essex experienced an ominous indication of the problem in communication with which his expedition would have to contend. After leaving London on March 27, Essex journeyed northwest to Chester, arriving at the port on April 4.¹ For the next several days the sea voyage was delayed by "contrary winds" and "mists so great that all the pilots of Christendom could not tell how to carry a ship out of the river."² Unable to tolerate further delay, Essex ordered the two ships which would carry his party to move out and hug the coastline until they reached Beaumaris, on the northwestern coast of Wales, from whence it was hoped a more favorable wind could be caught. In the meantime Essex and his officers rode over the mountain from Chester to Beaumaris, where they met their ships on April 11.³

The next day Essex sailed for Ireland and arrived at a point about eight miles north of Dublin at midnight on April 13.⁴ As the Earl went ashore, the two ships, which

¹C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 2.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., 10.

⁴MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 134.

still had their sails "up and full," almost collided. According to Sir George Carey, the collision would have sunk the two ships, and perhaps the campaign as well, since the entire treasure to finance the campaign was being carried on the "Popinjoy."⁵ The next day Essex went to Dublin, and on the 15th he took "the sword and sway of this unsettled kingdom," after a "grave" sermon preached by the Bishop of Meath.⁶ Sir Anthony Standon, one of Essex's officers, in describing the magnificence of the ceremony, stated: "it passed all the service that I ever saw done to any prince in Christendom."⁷ Despite the hazards and near catastrophes of the journey, the Earl with his inevitable flare for the spectacular, had made an impressive beginning.

Despite the confident appearance engendered by the majestic ceremonies of his inauguration, Essex was deeply troubled by the unsettled state of affairs at home and in Ireland. From the time he left the Court on March 27 his letters immediately reflected his concern for supplies of victuals, apparel, men and money, which apparently were still in an uncertain state, despite Essex's many conferences with the Privy Council.⁸ While at Chester, Essex

⁵C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 12.

⁶MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 134.

⁷Ibid., 144.

⁸C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 1, 4-5, 6, 9, 10.

had received two dispatches from Ireland which confirmed his worst fears about the state of the Army. The first dispatch dealt with the sufferings caused by lack of provisions, while the second related "idle and miserable journeys" the commanders in Ireland had recently been conducting with the troops, whereby Essex would find many of the men "weak and unserviceable" when he arrived.⁹

Another source of immediate concern to Essex was the caliber of his subordinates. A general's success is in many ways dependent on the performance of his subordinates, and this was particularly true in Elizabethan Ireland. Because of the difficulties in travel and communications, the Lord Lieutenant could not easily travel to any area of crisis, analyze the situation, and give timely guidance. He needed commanders and representatives in the provinces who could make sound decisions, use their initiative, and carry through independent actions with a minimum of supervision. In this respect Essex was severely handicapped.

The English officials in Ireland contained no personalities of great stature. The Irish Council, who were to advise Essex, were a weak-willed and cowed group of individuals who would repeatedly demonstrate their mediocrity. In Munster, the President, Sir Thomas Norreys, had neither the means nor the disposition to pursue an active campaign

⁹Ibid., 10.

on his own. Additionally, he was suffering from an illness which would take his life in July 1599. In Connaught, Lord Governor Sir Conyers Clifford was an enthusiastic and capable politician and administrator, but he had military failings which had already led to one setback in Connaught and would soon lead to another. Even the Earl of Ormonde, though a dependable personality, was more concerned with protecting his immediate estates in Kilkenny and the Pale, and preferred not to venture out of his area.¹⁰

As for the officers in his army, the Lord Lieutenant had many enthusiastic hot bloods, but few men of sophisticated military background. Prominent individuals, who in the past had demonstrated their military ability--Lord Mountjoy, Sir Walter Raleigh, Lord Admiral Howard, Sir Francis Vere--remained apart from the Irish enterprise because of their rivalry with the Lord Lieutenant.

In Essex's circle, the only persons in whom he had confidence were the Earl of Southampton and Sir Christopher Blount, and Essex would experience considerable difficulty in attempting to utilize their services. Southampton was appointed General of the Horse, a position suited to his dynamic personality, but unfortunately he had displeased Queen Elizabeth by making her lady-in-waiting, Elizabeth Vernon, pregnant, and then marrying the girl against

¹⁰C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 258.

the Queen's wishes.¹¹ When Elizabeth found out about Southampton's appointment she ordered Essex to send him home.¹² The Lord Lieutenant, needing this very talented officer, avoided this directive of the Queen's, and in fact managed to keep Southampton with him until the end of the campaign, despite periodic warnings from Elizabeth.

Regarding Sir Christopher Blount, Essex had asked the Queen to appoint him Marshal of the Army, the second most important post in the Army. At first the Privy Council wrote back that Elizabeth had refused, whereupon Essex complained that he was being sent out "mained before-hand."¹³ The Queen eventually relented in regard to Blount's appointment, but refused to make him a member of the Irish Council, because as the Privy Council explained, "we conceived it rather to be a thing fixed in Her Majesty's mind...that she doth not very well approve the gentelman's sufficiency to do her service."¹⁴ This hostile attitude on the part of the Queen was undoubtedly prompted by the fact that Blount had married Essex's widowed mother Lettice, who had incurred the Queen's hatred by taking the Earl of Leicester away from Elizabeth. Even after much further haggling Blount was not admitted to the Irish

¹¹Lacey, Essex, 217.

¹²C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 62.

¹³Ibid., 1.

¹⁴Ibid., 29.

Council, and was thereby placed in the awkward position of commanding officers who were honored with Council membership.¹⁵ When Blount was incapacitated at the end of August, Essex wrote to the Privy Council, "I have with me none fit to succeed him, but must myself do his office and mine own."¹⁶

Equally distressing was the spectacular success achieved by Tyrone and his rebels during the months after the Yellow Ford, and during the time Essex was preparing his campaign. Although Tyrone had been unable to follow up his victory on the Yellow Ford, due to his deficiencies in munitions, the Irish leader had made great progress in all parts of Ireland. Ulster had been saved from invasion and, except for the towns of Carrickfergus, Newry and Carlingford, the province had been abandoned by the English survivors who now cringed in the Pale around Dublin expecting Tyrone's new offensive at any time.¹⁷

In Leinster, Tyrone's allies, the O'Mores, took Philipstown and Athy, while one of Tyrone's captains, Redmond Burke, seized the Earl of Ormonde's castle of Cruminagh on the Shannon River. In Munster, Tyrone had set up James Fitzthomas as the new Earl of Desmond, and the Geraldine subjects rallied to their new and handsome

¹⁵Ibid., 5.

¹⁶Ibid., 137.

¹⁷Silke, Kinsale, 53.

leader. A number of gentlemen in Munster, principally Edmund Fitzgibbon, Lord Mountgarret and Lord Cahir had joined the rebel forces. Together they swept away all the New English settlers, including the noted poet Edmund Spenser, who had been settled on confiscated Geraldine land since the great rebellion of 1584. By the time of Essex's arrival the English held only strongpoints in Munster, with Sir George Carew in Mallow, Sir Thomas Norris at Cork, and the Earl of Ormonde defending Kilkenny and Tipperary.¹⁸

At the same time, Hugh O'Donnell, Tyrone's principal ally, kept up an unceasing series of raids in Connaught, climaxed by the taking of Ballymote Castle. North of Galway the English held only garrisons at Boyle, Tulsk, Roscommon and the castle of Sligo, as O'Donnell threatened to break the precarious English line of strongpoints and open a western passage down to Munster.¹⁹ The total rebel strength, according to the Earl of Ormonde and the Irish Council, exceeded 20,000 fighting men, distributed as follows: in Ulster, 8,922; in Leinster, 3,230; in Munster, 4,555; in Connaught, 3,290.²⁰ The exactness of the estimates is suspect; however, it does seem to accurately

¹⁸Ibid., 52-54.

¹⁹Ibid., 53-54.

²⁰C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 14.

reflect the relative distribution of Irish forces. With the exception of Tyrone's personal army in Ulster most of the rebels were indifferently armed, but nonetheless still posed a formidable threat.

For the two weeks following his arrival Essex consulted with the Irish Council and appraised himself of the details of the army's situation. On April 28, having arrived at certain conclusions, Essex sent his first detailed report to the Privy Council. This letter, representing the official position of Essex and the Irish Council concerning the state of affairs in Ireland, decisively influenced the course of the entire campaign, and therefore deserves detailed consideration.²¹

The principal assertion of Essex and the Irish Council was that an invasion of Ulster at this time was prevented by certain insurmountable difficulties. In Ulster there was no grass or forage to be had for horses, nor would there be any available "till summer be further advanced." By the same token, the army would have to take a great number of "beeves" along with it to have a mobile supply of meat. However, the cattle were still weak and lean from the winter and, like the horses, would be unable to find forage in the northern province. The alternative to taking cattle along would be to have the army sustain

²¹Contents of the following letter are taken from C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 17-20.

itself entirely with "dry victuals," pulled in carts by the huge carriage horses over the poor roads. A survey of carriage horses indicated that there were not even half the number present to carry the three-month's supply of food which an invading army would require. Essex had raised 200 carriage horses in England before he left, but had to leave them behind because of insufficient shipping. At the time of his writing they had still not arrived in Ireland because, as he supposed, "of the contrariety of the wind."

In view of the difficulties with horses and beeves, the Irish Council estimated that the Army would not be able to move north "before the midst of June, or the beginning of July next." In the meantime, Essex intended to move into Leinster and "prosecute" the rebels there, in order to bring back under English control this richest part of Ireland. Then after dealing with Leinster the Earl intended to go on to Waterford in order to meet with Sir Thomas Norreys, the President of Munster, and confer with him on the action to be taken in that province.

Another crucial factor affecting the Ulster strategy was the lack of shipping that Essex would need to implement the Lough Foyle expedition, which he and the Privy Council had agreed upon. He requested that the Privy Council send him "competent shipping to transport thither [Lough Foyle] 4,000 foot and 100 horse, with their victuals,

munitions and all other necessaries." It would be necessary to transport almost the entire force at once since intelligence reports indicated that Tyrone labored "to give some impediment to their landing." Since the shipping was not now available, the Lough Foyle expedition also would have to be held in abeyance; however, Essex expected that the Privy Council would have the shipping ready by June.

Turning from strategy to the immediate problems of maintaining the Army, Essex's first concern again focused on the lack of carriage horses, the importance of which he emphasized at three different points in his report. The country, he stated, was "unable to furnish carriage-horses for this present journey of Leinster, and far more unable to supply the great expedition to Ulster." He therefore requested that "200 carriage horse at the least," in addition to the 200 horses already on the way, be gathered and sent from England so that Essex could move his army and its supplies. He also requested that the Privy Council take care to insure that the first batch of 2,000 reinforcements reach Ireland in June as scheduled, so that they would be available for the Lough Foyle expedition.

Essex reminded the Council to send out the supplies of victuals and money, "according to the conditions agreed upon between such of your Lordships as were Commissioners, and me." Specifically the Council was to send a three-

month advance supply of food and money; but now, two of the three-months' supply of victuals--starting on March 1, 1599-- had expired and he had still not heard of the impending arrival of the next three-months' supply. Furthermore, the Privy Council had only signed contracts for the provisioning of 10,000 men, and he urgently requested that the Council amend those contracts to provide for an army of at least 14,000.

The final subject of the dispatch was the strength of the Army. Essex found upon his arrival that the list strength, for which the captains drew pay, numbered 19,000 men. However, on examination Essex concluded that the real number was only 16,000 and therefore he cashiered certain captains and redistributed their men to other companies.

Along with the above formal report, which Essex and the Irish Council sent to the Privy Council, Essex also sent a private letter to Sir Robert Cecil, deploring the state of affairs in Ireland and complaining that he "found all things so in confusion as it hath been an extreme toil to bring things to that pass at which they are."²² The lack of shipping was keeping many men and horses from coming over to Ireland. He had "displeased multitudes" of captains and officers by examining the list strength of the Army and forcing captains to reflect accurately the

²²C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 20.

number of men in their units. But as for the present Essex promised:

...when I have given some direction to Munster, and settled Leinster in some reasonable state, I will into Ulster, if you supply me out of England according to the agreements, which you know was (sic) to have three months victual and treasure still beforehand; for with a less proportion we cannot go thither.²³

Regarding strategy, with the original plan forestalled, Essex chose the better of several options. One alternative was to simply wait in the Pale until the arrival of the ships and carriage horses, which would not take place before June at the least, and which, based on past experience could take even longer. Another alternative was to take whatever troops could be supported by the carriage horses available, and invade Ulster immediately. Since the 200 carriage horses and the available lighter horses could only support a mobile force of about 1500 or 2000 men, Essex would be forced to try to seek out and confront Tyrone with a much diminished force. Furthermore without the Lough Foyle expedition, which would force Tyrone to fight or be crushed between two converging forces, the Irish leader could resort to his old tactic of avoiding combat altogether while Essex's force wore itself out. Without a secondary effort at Lough Foyle to tie down Irish forces, Tyrone, if he so desired, would also be free to concentrate his entire Army along Essex's route of

²³Ibid.

advance. The outcome of any battle would have been uncertain at best, considering the untrained state of the new English levies, the demoralized condition of the old Irish veterans, and the unsavory nature of the Low Country contingent.

The third alternative, which Essex chose, was to garrison the Ulster borders to keep Tyrone pinned up, place other garrisons in the weakly-held rebel territories in Connaught and the Pale, take all the troops which could be supported by the supply horses available, and then sweep through Leinster and northern Munster. When the horses and shipping arrived in June, Essex could then pursue the original attack on Ulster with an army which had gained some cohesiveness and combat experience. As a final justification, Essex received word that Tyrone was considering an invasion of Munster with 3000 or 4000 men in the near future to render assistance to his ally, Edward Gybon, the White Knight.²⁴ Therefore a journey through Leinster and Munster at least offered the possibility of stopping the invasion of Munster and of eliminating several of Tyrone's allies in the south.

Having decided upon his course of action Essex distributed his forces to implement his strategy. By April 28, when Essex sent a detailed strength report to the Privy Council, the Army in Ireland was located as follows:

²⁴Ibid., 8, 20.

in Connaught, Sir Conyers Clifford had 3000 foot and 175 cavalry; in Leinster, the Earl of Ormonde commanded some 2500 foot and 100 horse; while in Munster, Sir Thomas Norreys disposed of 3450 foot and 200 horse. In order to keep Tyrone secured in Ulster, and to protect the northern approaches into the Pale, Essex placed over 2000 more troops in the following areas: in Carrickfergus, Sir Arthur Chichester had four infantry companies and one cavalry company; Sir Samuel Bagenal, brother of the English Marshal slain at the Yellow Ford, occupied Newry and the surrounding area with eight infantry companies and one cavalry company; Dundalk on the northern boundary of the Pale was garrisoned by Lord Crumwell with four infantry companies and one cavalry company; and further south Ardee was held by one infantry company under Captain Bingley. After placing one other foot company in Dublin, Essex was left with 4950 infantry and 450 cavalry for his campaign into Leinster.²⁵

However, between April 28 and May 9 Essex decided that no more than 3000 foot and 300 horse could be sustained on the southern campaign by the number of supply horses available. Essex therefore disposed of a further 1950 infantry and 150 horse as follows: Sir Henry Harrington took five infantry companies and one cavalry company

²⁵MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 143-46; C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 32.

into Wicklow; Ardee was reinforced with two foot companies and some cavalry under Sir John Shelton; while the remaining fourteen companies were distributed throughout the Pale border areas.²⁶

In the meantime the Privy Council was writing letters of its own to Essex, crystallizing their position and replying to the Earl's first dispatch. The first letter of the Privy Council was sent on April 17, two days after Essex arrived in Ireland. It began with an ominous statement: "The main points and pillars that must uphold this service [the Irish Campaign], at least for anything to be provided for by us, are these five: men, munition, apparel, lendings [money], and victuals."²⁷

In this statement the Council was defining the areas for which it would accept responsibility. Significantly absent from the Council's list were two critical items necessary for the prosecution of the campaign: shipping and horses. Essex had tried to get the Council to give him affirmative support on the shipping for Lough Foyle, but in his emergency meeting on March 8 before he left for Ireland, the Council's only answer was to say that shipping for Lough Foyle was "to be further considered of."²⁸ Now, in this letter of April 17 the council was implying

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 13.

²⁸C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 168.

that shipping and horses were Essex's problems, which he would have to solve.

As for the five items which the Council considered their responsibility, they discussed each point and showed their determination to meet their obligation, asserting that all the agreed-upon supplies of munitions, money, apparel and victuals had been provided for. Regarding the first batch of 2000 reinforcements, the Council suggested that Essex try to recruit the English and Anglo-Irish who had been ejected from their homes by the rebellious Irish. Such a recruitment would save a great deal of money. Finally, the Council promised that they would do their utmost to root out corruption from their areas of responsibility.²⁹

The Privy Council did, in fact, take measures to stop corruption. On April 24 they sent orders to the Treasurer at Wars, the Master of the Ordnance, the Mustermaster in Ireland and the Comptroller of the Victuals, directing those key individuals to send a report every two months, accounting for every item received or used, and the status of the overall supply system.³⁰ To discourage corruption the Council made an example of Sir Henry Wallop, the previous Treasurer in Ireland, who died on the day Essex arrived, and who had apparently stolen at least £14,000

²⁹C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 14.

³⁰Ibid., 15.

during his tenure.³¹ As punishment, the Council resolved to have his lands and goods seized, despite the pleas of his son, who complained that the family and many servants would be ruined.³² The Council therefore intended to cover itself and meet its obligations so that, as they announced in their letter, "not one man living" would "be able to cast one spot of just imputation on them," if deficiencies arose in their areas of responsibility.³³

On May 8, the day before Essex left for the Leinster campaign, the Council drafted a reply to Essex's first dispatch, a reply which left little doubt as to the sinister attitude of the Privy Council. The Council stated that Her Majesty, in view of the circumstances, approved his distribution of forces and the proposed campaign in Leinster.³⁴ But as to his request for 2000 reinforcements, there was a difference of opinion as to when they would be due. Essex assumed that since his official tenure began on March 1, 1599, and since the Queen had agreed to send 2000 men every three months, the first batch of reinforcements should arrive on June 1. The Council, however, had received Essex's certificate of April 28 of Army strength which showed a list strength of 16,000 men. Therefore

³¹Ibid., 7.

³²Ibid., 23-34.

³³Ibid., 14.

³⁴Ibid., 28.

since Essex had the full strength of 16,000 men on April 28, the Council did not feel obligated to send the 2000 reinforcements until three months after April 28, which would be July 28. Even this levy would not be authorized until the Privy Council had heard if Essex had been able to recruit volunteers from within Ireland.

Regarding Essex's request for shipping to transport the 4000 foot and 100 horse to Lough Foyle, the Council asserted that "his Lordship cannot be so unprovided with barks in Ireland, as to be driven to fetch all shipping from England for such a service."³⁵ The Council reminded Essex of the great sums Her Majesty had spent in transporting the Army and horses to Ireland. Therefore, if the Earl could procure some proportion of the shipping in Ireland, the Council "might" then provide the rest from England. After all the difficulties which Essex had experienced in attempting to gather shipping for 3000 levies from England, difficulties which delayed his initial departure for over a month, it was an insidious suggestion on the part of the Privy Council that Essex should try to gather shipping in Ireland to transport 4000 men to Lough Foyle.³⁶ This is especially true because contemporary naval records, which were available to the Privy Council,

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

revealed that few ships were in Ireland at the time.³⁷

In any case, in view of the cost of hiring ships, the Council would not make final arrangements for contracting transport vessels until the Leinster rebels had been suppressed and concrete preparations made for Lough Foyle.³⁸

As to Essex's request for horses, the Privy Council expressed surprise that the Earl was asking for an extraordinary allotment of 200 more carriage horses, in addition to those already promised, without having scored any success against the rebel. The Queen was expecting a return for her great investments and nothing had so far been achieved, and yet Essex was asking for further expenditure. The Council reluctantly agreed to his request, commenting, "if it be so necessary, and cannot otherwise be supplied, we will then move Her Majesty that they may be provided and the charge borne by the checks."³⁹ Unaware of the Privy Council's answer to his requests, which would not arrive until the end of the month, Essex moved out on his Leinster campaign on May 9, 1599.

Essex's original plan was to march inland from Dublin to Carlow, relieving the fort of Maryborough on the way. From Carlow he would march south to Waterford,

³⁷Henry, "The Earl of Essex and Ireland," 9.

³⁸C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 28.

³⁹Ibid., 29.

confer with the President of Munster, and then march back up along the coast through Wicklow to Dublin. The entire journey was expected to take about three weeks.⁴⁰ From the beginning, however, there were problems with the horses and the cavalry force was made up of only those horses, drawn from all the troops, which appeared fit to survive the journey. Carriage horses, and even lighter pack horses, were in such short supply that only one half of the Army's provisions could be carried at one time! Thus the carriage horses had to make two trips from Dublin to the Army's first stopping point at Naas.⁴¹ From Naas the Army moved towards Athy, leaving behind two companies at Naas to guard one half of the victuals which could not be transported by the horses.

Rebel Irish soldiers showed themselves as soon as the march started; but despite intermittent skirmishing which occurred, they did not prevent Essex from reaching Fallacory, a short distance from Athy, on the 11th of May. There Essex met the Earl of Ormonde, who joined the Lord Lieutenant with 700 foot and 200 cavalry, and two captured rebel leaders, Viscount Mountgarrett and Lord Cahir. The two rebels humbly submitted to Essex on their knees, confessing their faults and begging Her Majesty's forgiveness. After admonishing these individuals, Essex forced them to

⁴⁰MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 212-13.

⁴¹C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 37.

accompany his army to Athy. At the approach of Essex's army, James Fitz Piers, who commanded the rebel-held castle of Athy, surrendered to Essex, and was turned over to the Provost Marshal. On the 13th and 14th of May the army waited in the vicinity of Athy until supplies could be brought up from Naas. So far the progress was moving according to plan, but the lack of carriage horses was causing great inconvenience. In order to move faster after taking Athy, Essex had to order his men to carry the next four days' provisions on their backs, while the horses were used to carry relief supplies into Maryborough fort.⁴²

After seizing the castle of Athy, Essex started distributing his force to secure his line of march, sending 350 men to Carlow, 750 men into Offally, 350 horse and foot to garrison O'Dempsey's castle, and 500 foot, 50 cavalry, 150 horses and great quantities of supply to Maryborough. Essex accompanied the relief force into Maryborough whereupon the commander of the fort presented Essex with an important prisoner, Captain Nugent, one of Tyrone's best subordinates. The rebels offered Essex £2,000 sterling to spare Nugent's life, but Essex declined the offer and turned Nugent over to Sir Francis Rush, the commander, instructing that Nugent be executed and his

⁴²Ibid.

head set above the gate.⁴³

By now the rebels were showing themselves in great numbers and attempting to draw the English into a skirmish in the woods. Some of the gentlemen volunteers were only too happy to accept the taunting Irish challenges, and Essex had to order these hotheads not to leave the Army formation. On May 16, in one such skirmish near Ballyknocken, Lord Grey disobeyed his superior, the Earl of Southampton, and charged right up to the treeline, endangering his life and those who followed him. For this indiscretion, Grey was sentenced to one night's imprisonment by Essex, a humiliating experience for a member of the nobility. After the incident, Lord Grey was the implacable enemy of Essex and the Earl of Southampton, and would later play a significant part in the intrigue surrounding Essex's trial.⁴⁴

With the Irish so close and in such numbers, Essex had to continue his advance in tactical formation. At the very head of the army marched a reconnaissance group, aptly named the "forlorn hope," which consisted of 40 musketeers and 20 calivers. Following them was the vanguard composed of a regiment of infantry. Next in order were the baggage train and part of the cavalry, the main "battle" of regimental strength, the bulk of the cavalry, a

⁴³Ibid., 38.

⁴⁴Harrington, Nugae Antiquae, 271.

rearguard of a few foot companies, and finally a detachment of 30 cavalry called the "forlorn rear."⁴⁵ To protect the flanks were wings of musketeers, supported by pikemen and calivermen who would relieve the musketeers if the enemy got too close.⁴⁶ In this formation Essex approached the pass of Cashel on May 17, held by "great multitudes" of Irish rebels, who were determined to stop the Army's advance. The pass was about 500 yards long, wooded on both sides, with a hill on one side, a bog on the other, and an enemy entrenchment across the far exit.

Essex debated as to whether they should go around the mountain or force the pass, and concluded that "it was necessary to teach the world that Her Majesty's army could and would in all places make way for itself."⁴⁷ A force of 500 musketeers, supported by pikes and calivers, assaulted straight into the pass. At the same time wings of shot and pikes held the pass on either side and secured the woodlines as the main assault force advanced. One section of the vanguard attacked and captured the trench on the far end of the pass, while other sections secured the sides of the exit of the pass. The cavalry thereupon charged straight through and seized a hill on the far side. In the meantime the baggage sections moved into the pass

⁴⁵Ibid., 273.

⁴⁶C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 39.

⁴⁷Ibid.

covered by the rear guard. The Irish attacked from all sides, and on all sections of the Army, including the rear guard, but were repulsed on every quarter as the Army methodically cleared the area. None of the English battle formations were broken during the operation and the total loss amounted to two officers and four men killed and two officers and seven men wounded. The rebel loss was "far greater," and their force scattered and fled, "glad to trust to their lightness and swiftness."⁴⁸

After the encounter at Cashel pass Essex's army continued unopposed, although the enemy hung about on all sides and occasionally skirmished with the cavalry. On May 18 the Army approached another tight pass leading to Ballyragget Castle but the enemy offered no resistance, and Essex occupied this important strategic position without incident. After placing 100 men in the castle the Earl then pushed on towards Clonmell, where he settled his Army down for a much needed rest from the "foul marches" which they had endured on this first phase of the Leinster journey. Essex himself, however, went on to Kilkenny, where he summoned the President of Munster to meet him, and from where, on May 20, he sent a journal of his proceedings and a personal letter to the Privy Council.⁴⁹

The first ten days of his march had been a sobering

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., 36.

experience, and a rude introduction to the nature of the problem he faced. In his letter he concluded that the war was no ordinary rebellion which could be lightly and quickly snuffed out; instead the rebellion was "like to exercise both our faculties that do manage it, and Her Majesty's patience that must maintain it."⁵⁰ Essex's recent confrontation with the Irish fighting men led him to conclude:

...this people against whom we fight hath able bodies, good use of the arms they carry, boldness enough to attempt, and quickness in apprehending any advantage they see offered them. Whereas our new and common sort of men have neither bodies,⁵¹ spirits, nor practice of arms, like the others.

Essex further explained that the English advantage in cavalry and orderly formations was lost when the rebels retreated into woods and bogs. The English "men of quality," however, had great courage and spirit, too much at times, and it grieved Essex to see them hazard their lives against "rogues and naked beggers."⁵² The volunteer men of quality were now the very heart of the Army and Essex intended to husband their lives with all care.

After dwelling on the circumstances of the last ten days, Essex next discussed his future plans. Originally he had intended to spend only three weeks on the southern journey, but now circumstances convinced him to carry

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

the campaign further into Munster. The President of Munster and his Council had informed Essex of the strength and pride of the rebels, who possessed a well-organized Army and had fortified several castles. The English forces assigned to Munster were incapable of taking the castles, or conducting a campaign to confront the main rebel force under the new Earl of Desmond. After considering the situation, Essex decided that since he was now in the area it would be best to seek to eliminate the southern rebel forces completely. Thereafter, "with more strength and less distraction of mind," he would be able to pursue "the main service"⁵³ of invading Ulster.

Considering the situation which Essex found upon approaching Waterford, his decision to continue the campaign into Munster seemed to be the most sensible course of action. The rebel force numbered a cohesive army of 4000 men in Munster, while the English army there was militarily weak and morally intimidated. If Essex had adhered to his original plan and returned directly to Dublin, he would certainly have had to leave numerous garrisons and detachments to guard against the Munster rebels. On the other hand if now he could pursue the campaign into Munster and defeat the rebel forces, then only a minimal number of troops would be needed to hold that province while the bulk of the Army invaded Ulster. On the one hand, there

⁵³Ibid., 37.

was a probability that the rebels might not fight, but there was also an equally good probability that an invasion by the Lord Lieutenant would cause the rebels to submit when confronted by the Army. Having concluded his conferences with the Munster officials, and having decided on this new course of action, Essex rejoined his Army at Clonmell on May 23.⁵⁴

The objective of this new extended campaign was to sweep through Munster by way of Waterford, Limerick, Cork and then back to Waterford again. In addition to the prospect of confronting and defeating the main rebel force, the route of march offered Essex the opportunity to accomplish several secondary goals. In marching from Waterford to Limerick Essex would be able to attack Cahir castle, reputed to be the strongest fortress in Ireland, and the cornerstone of rebel strength in Munster. At Limerick, the natural meeting place for Munster and Connaught officials, Essex intended to meet with Sir Conyers Clifford, the President of Connaught, to discuss and plan their joint operations for the invasion of Ulster in July or August. Finally, by traveling down to Cork and then back up the Coast to Waterford, Essex sought both to examine the coastal defenses and also to strengthen the area against any threatened Spanish landing, rumors of which were ever-present.⁵⁵

⁵⁴Harrington, Nugae Antiquae, 275.

⁵⁵MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, xviii-xxiv.

To assist in the campaign, Sir Thomas Norreys, President of Munster, was instructed to join Essex with all the forces available, about 1000 men, along with additional supplies of food and munitions which the new campaign would require.⁵⁶ Accordingly, on May 25 the two forces linked up a short distance from Waterford, and began the march to Cahir castle and Limerick. The march would be slower since many supply horses had been used to sustain garrisons, like Maryborough, and much of the remaining supplies would have to be carried by the men themselves or by porters! Particularly troublesome were two artillery pieces, a cannon and a smaller culverin, which Sir Thomas Norreys had been instructed to take along for the attack on Cahir Castle. Weak bridges, lack of draught horses, and wet roads often made it necessary for the men to manhandle the two weapons in order to get them from Waterford to their objective.⁵⁷

On May 29 Essex's army approached Cahir castle. The fortress was situated on a rock in the middle of the Suir river, and was protected by strong walls and great towers, a fortress in which "40 men might easily" hold "out against 4000."⁵⁸ Essex had taken Lord Cahir along with him as hostage, since that Irish peer had promised in his original

⁵⁶MSS. Carew, vol. 3, 301.

⁵⁷Henry, "The Earl of Essex and Ireland," 11.

⁵⁸MSS. Carew, vol. 3, 303.

submission to turn the castle over to the English. The Earl apparently had little faith in Lord Cahir's influence, since he went to such trouble to bring the cannon along, but nonetheless when he reached Cahir castle, he gave Lord Cahir an opportunity to induce those within to surrender. Essex sent Sir Henry Davers and Lord Cahir to parley with the rebel garrison, commanded by the latter's brother. Davers reported back that the rebels were confident and resolved to hold the castle to the end, adding that "Cahir himself was insolently and disgracefully used by those who came out to parley."⁵⁹ The confidence of the garrison was undoubtedly bolstered by the presence of the main rebel army of Munster, now numbering some 5000 men, which remained in the immediate vicinity across the Suir river.⁶⁰

Essex thereupon placed the castle under siege, moving the cannon and the culverin within 50 paces of the wall, and preparing four veteran companies with ladders and scaffolds to make the assault. The cannon methodically blasted "great breaches" in the walls all day on May 30 and the assault was scheduled to take place the next morning. Cut off from all aid, and apparently no longer confident about their ability to stand off the impending attack, the 100-man garrison sought to sally out at night to

⁵⁹Ibid., 302.

⁶⁰Ibid.

cut their way free through Essex's lines. Their surprise attack failed and most of the rebels were killed, while the castle was immediately occupied by two alert English captains and their men. The next day Essex placed a garrison of 100 men in the castle, commanded by Captain George Carye, who had been wounded "in the face."⁶¹

With the rest of the army, Essex continued the march unopposed, arriving at Limerick on June 4. For the next four days Essex rested his troops and conferred with Sir Conyers Clifford about the state of affairs in Connaught and plans for the future prosecution of the war in that province and in Ulster.⁶² Essex and Clifford apparently made the initial decision to conduct an amphibious operation by moving men and supplies from Galway to Sligo. From Sligo a major assault would be mounted on Ballyshannon, the key fort and passage leading into the O'Donnell part of Ulster.⁶³ After the conference Clifford was dispatched back to his province to begin his preparations, while Essex resupplied his army from the city stores.

On June 8, Essex continued his journey, moving out of Limerick towards Askeyton, an English garrison which needed to be resupplied. The Irish rebels under the pretended Earl of Desmond boasted that they would block his

⁶¹Ibid., 303-04.

⁶²Moryson, Itinerary, 238.

⁶³Henry, "The Earl of Essex and Ireland," 12.

passage, and at Adare Desmond's army, "betwixt 2000 and 3000 men, with five or six ensigns flying," emerged from the bogs and woods and challenged the English forces. When the English advanced, the Irish faded back into the woods and let the army pass. The next day, while Essex's force moved through another wooded pass, a fierce skirmish occurred, causing 26 English casualties and 100 Connaught "Bonnaughts" to be slain.⁶⁴ The slow and tedious march continued as Essex moved down to Cork and back along the coast towards Waterford. The Irish skirmished constantly with the cavalry and flank guards as the Army moved along. They taunted the English and "breathed out great vaunts of wonders they would do," but they refused to close for any decisive clash.⁶⁵

By the end of May, the wet climate and harsh living conditions both on the march and in garrison were beginning to have an effect. In the field, the troops subsisted on water and raw meat from the cattle which they had brought along, slept on wet ground in the same damp boots day after day, and began to fall sick in great numbers from "heat and colds."⁶⁶ Those who remained stationed in garrisons fared little better than the troops with Essex. On May 28 Sir George Carey reported to the Privy Council

⁶⁴MSS. Carew, vol. 3, 304.

⁶⁵Ibid., 305.

⁶⁶Harrington, Nugae Antiquae, 258-59.

that over 300 sick men had already been sent back to Dublin from the outlying garrisons.⁶⁷ Those who could not get back to Dublin to recuperate simply died, as in the garrison of Roscommon in Connaught, where, out of a force of 150 troops, some 60 men died of sickness, "some as lusty men as any came out of England."⁶⁸

With the days slipping by and his army suffering from dysentery, which afflicted the Lord Lieutenant as well as his men, Essex decided that he could delay no longer in Munster. On June 18 at Youghal, Essex called a conference of Munster officials to ascertain what forces would be required for the defense of Munster and what plans should be followed in his absence. Regarding forces, the President of Munster estimated that he would need 800 foot and 50 horse added to his men to prosecute the war. Essex thereupon assigned him 900 foot and 50 cavalry, "all chosen companies commanded by able and gallant commanders."⁶⁹

The Earl thereupon ordered the President of Munster to make Youghal, because of its central location between Cork and Waterford, his main headquarters to prosecute the rebels in Munster and to guard against Spanish landings. Furthermore Norreys was to "place a garrison in every walled town" and to place any rebels who submitted

⁶⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 43.

⁶⁸Harrington, Nugae Antiquae, 258.

⁶⁹MSS. Carew, vol. 3, 307.

directly under the supervision of the nearest garrison commander. Finally, Norreys was to conduct a campaign to deprive the rebels of food, by destroying everything which could not be defended by the Government forces.⁷⁰ With Norreys so instructed and greatly reinforced, Essex left Youghal on June 20 and continued his journey along the coast via Waterford and Wicklow to Dublin.

With the garrisons and reinforcements which Essex had left along his march, and with the casualties due to battle and sickness, Essex's original force was now reduced to 1200 men. However, while his fighting men had dwindled, the camp followers increased until they numbered well over 3000. These were composed of horseboys, porters and many other "unserviceable people," who had joined Essex's forces for protection, and whom the Earl felt a responsibility to look after.⁷¹ Consequently, while the army was considerably smaller, it could not march any faster due to the increased number of refugees. As for the rebel forces in Munster, once Essex had passed through Waterford he saw little of Desmond's rebel army, which stayed back in Munster to harass Norreys' forces at Youghal.

While Essex's army plodded up the Irish coastline, meeting little opposition, one of his subordinates, Sir

⁷⁰Ibid., 307-08.

⁷¹Ibid., 309.

Henry Harrington, suffered a disastrous defeat in Wicklow. Before Essex had left Dublin for his Leinster journey, he had appointed Sir Henry Harrington, a member of the Irish Privy Council who had governed the county of Wicklow, to take a force back into that county and defeat the rebels under Phelim McFegh, and their allies the O'Tooles. Originally Harrington was to have had 700 foot, of whom 300 were to have been Low Country veterans,⁷² and a force of 50 cavalry under his nephew, Sir Charles Montague. Additionally Harrington was to have had Sir Alexander Radcliffe, an experienced soldier, to be his second-in-command. However, as Essex prepared for the Leinster journey he resolved to take all the experienced soldiers with him, including Radcliffe. Sir Henry Harrington was left with only 550 foot, composed of four "new" companies of raw recruits, and one company of foot who were all Irish, "most of them lately come from the rebels."⁷³ The only dependable group were the fifty cavalymen under Montague.

With this uncertain force Harrington moved back to his government in County Wicklow, determined to suppress the rebels and Phelim McFeagh and the O'Tooles and "other rogues of their consort."⁷⁴ Arriving at Wicklow, Harrington settled his troops into garrisons and conducted some

⁷²C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 68.

⁷³Ibid., 81.

⁷⁴Ibid., 68.

limited training for the next few weeks. On May 28, Harrington suddenly moved out of Wicklow and ventured toward the rebel area for a distance of about five miles. His purpose, as he later explained, was to give his recruits some practice in setting up camps and conducting marches, to "refresh them" from the boredom of being cooped up in Wicklow, and finally, to give them some experience against the enemy.⁷⁵ As the men set up camp near a bog and woods, Harrington's scouts came back to report that a great number of rebels, who always seemed to have good intelligence regarding English troop dispositions, were gathering against him. The guard was doubled and the men spent an anxious night, as the rebels, hidden by the darkness, periodically fired volleys into the English camp.⁷⁶

The next day Harrington ordered his recruits, nervous and tired from a sleepless night, to begin the march back to Wicklow. As Harrington began his retreat the forces of Phelim McFeagh emerged from the woods with banners flying, and for the next three miles hung on the English flanks and rear. Despite the pressure, the English officers and sergeants held the ranks steady until Harrington's force approached a ford, which some of the rebels had occupied. As Harrington and his recruit companies fought their way across, the main force of the rebels suddenly

⁷⁵Ibid., 82.

⁷⁶Ibid., 83.

converged on the rear English element, which was the "Irish" company commanded by Captain Charles Loftus.

As the Irish closed in, Lieutenant Piers Walsh, the company executive officer, suddenly grabbed the unit banner from the ensign and galloped off toward Wicklow. At this, the pikemen, whose function it was to keep the enemy at bay while the "shot" reloaded, likewise broke ranks and fled after the lieutenant. Without the security provided by the pikemen, the musketeers fired one volley at the oncoming Irish, dropped their weapons and ran. The men from Loftus' company fled into the ranks of the recruit companies which were crossing the ford behind them, and a general panic ensued. Sensing their opportunity the Irish crashed against the English troops, who were too panicked to defend themselves. As the Irish followed the English across the ford, Captain Montague's cavalry which had been leading the way toward Wicklow, turned back and charged the rebels. The charge stopped the Irish, and Montague reformed and charged again, whereupon the rebels gave ground.

Instead of using this breathing space to reform, Harrington's recruits took the opportunity to divest themselves not only of their weapons, but of their armor and heavier clothing.⁷⁷ The officers tried to halt this cowardly behavior, but they were not particularly effective.

⁷⁷Ibid., 82-86.

In this state of panic the main body streamed into Wicklow as the Irish slaughtered all the stragglers. To a rebel force which barely matched the English in numbers, Harrington had lost almost half of his force of 600,⁷⁸ and more importantly, an inestimable amount of prestige.

Essex received news of the debacle a few weeks later as he arrived in Waterford from Cork. On June 25, he wrote to the Council that he would make straight for Wicklow in order to "seek some revenge on those rogues who, in my absence, had the killing of our base, cowardly, and ill-guided clowns."⁷⁹ As for the conduct of the officers and men in Harrington's force Essex stated: "I purpose, by God's grace, to do such justice as shall be for Her Majesty's honour, and make other men hereafter know that the justice of a martial court is no less terrible than the fury of all the rebels in this kingdom."⁸⁰

One might be tempted to criticize Essex for not having left at least one veteran company to stiffen Harrington's force. However, it should be noted that the Leinster journey was the main effort, and there were few dependable veteran companies to be had. Furthermore, Harrington was not expected to encounter much resistance and had even indicated to Sir Alexander Radcliffe that he

⁷⁸Ibid., 69.

⁷⁹Ibid., 65.

⁸⁰Ibid.

intended "to do nothing" until Essex returned from Leinster with reinforcements.⁸¹ Later, Harrington and his captains all wrote reports describing the battle from their viewpoints, attempting to justify their actions and placing all the blame on Captain Loftus and Lieutenant Walsh of the Irish company.⁸² Despite their efforts at self-justification, the facts of the battle, and the extent of the panic would seem to indicate that the English leaders, with the exception of Captain Montague, were, at best, uninspired.

While at Waterford, Essex also wrote a letter directly to Queen Elizabeth in which he evaluated the overall state of affairs in Ireland. He had been through Leinster, Munster, and on the frontier of Connaught, and what he had observed led him to conclude that the war would indeed be "great, costly, and long."⁸³ Essex then discussed the specific problems in subduing Ireland and recommended certain courses of action, which, incidentally, would later be implemented by Lord Mountjoy in his three-year subjugation of Ireland from 1600 to 1603.

Essex's principal suggestions were to garrison the towns, stop their trade with the rebels, cut the rebels off from Scotland and Spain, waste the countryside, destroy

⁸¹Ibid., 69.

⁸²Ibid., 81-86.

⁸³Moryson, Itinerary, 238.

the Irish herds of cattle, and starve the Irish into submission. Essex concluded his letter by noting that it was common talk in the army and amongst the rebels, that many in England--Lord Cobham, Sir Walter Raleigh and others whom he could not mention "for their places sake"--wished to see the ill success of this "most important action," and the destruction of Her Majesty's most faithful servants.⁸⁴ After sending both letters off and resting his forces, Essex prepared to move off on the final lap of his journey back to Dublin. Essex moved north from Waterford along the coast, and by June 29 was in the vicinity of Arklow. Since leaving Waterford not one rebel had been seen, but now Essex suddenly confronted a rebel force of 800 foot and 40 horse determined to give battle.⁸⁵ The rebels tried to ambush Essex's vanguard under the Earl of Ormonde, and at the same time sought to cut off his supply horses from the rest of the army. Essex reacted by sending all his cavalry under the Earl of Southampton, and 300 of his "lightest foot" to attack the rebels on their flank and rear. The result was a severe defeat for the rebels, who scattered into the bogs after sustaining numerous casualties.⁸⁶ Phelim McFeagh, the Irish rebel leader, sent word on the conclusion of the engagement

⁸⁴Ibid., 238-43.

⁸⁵MSS. Carew, vol. 3, 309-10.

⁸⁶Ibid., 310.

that he desired a conference with Essex. The Earl replied that he would confer with McFeagh only if the latter came in as "a repentant rebel, to tender his absolute submission."⁸⁷ McFeagh thereupon withdrew into the woods, while Essex moved through Wicklow and on towards Dublin.

On July 1, with his southern journey almost completed, Essex sent off to the Queen a journal of his proceedings in Leinster and Munster from June 22 to July 1. His report, as Essex said in a letter which accompanied the journal, was indeed a "plain and true text" of the events in the southern campaign, without any attempt to gloss over the shortcomings of the campaign. However, in his private letter to the Privy Council, which accompanied his journal, Essex claimed that he was forced to work with "a weak and inefficient Council" in Ireland which provided few trustworthy subordinates.⁸⁸

More seriously, Essex again charged that the Privy Council in England was undermining his service, and stated: "I was provided for this service with a plastron and not a curate; that is, I am armed on the breast, but not on the back."⁸⁹ Furthermore, the rebels were aware of his difficulties with the Privy Council at home; they knew that he was "wounded in the back, not lightly, but to the heart."⁹⁰

⁸⁷Ibid., 312.

⁸⁸C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 76.

⁸⁹Ibid., 77.

⁹⁰Ibid.

But Essex promised that when he returned to Dublin, and after he had settled his "distempered brains" from the Munster journey, he would reorganize his forces and continue the mission. Two days later he arrived in Dublin.⁹¹

The southern campaign was over. The objective of the journey had been to present a strong show of force, capture certain strong points, intimidate the rebels into submission, and leave behind pacified provinces in Leinster and Munster. Based on the conduct of past Irish wars and rebellions, it was a common occurrence for local Irish leaders, when confronted by an English army in their province, to make a submission to Her Majesty and be forgiven in return.⁹²

Indeed, when Lord Mountjoy arrived in Ireland in 1600 and viewed the situation, he wrote back to the Privy Council that Essex's course of action, considering the time of the season and resources available, was the only sensible course which could have been followed.⁹³ In this respect, both Essex and Mountjoy initially underestimated the impact of Tyrone's influence and the determination of the rebel Irish chiefs. After the experience of several weeks in Leinster and Munster Essex reevaluated his opinion of the problem he faced, but by then it was too late.

⁹¹MSS. Carew, vol. 3, 312.

⁹²C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 150.

⁹³Moryson, Itinerary, 289.

Aside from winning some minor skirmishes and the taking of Cahir Castle, the Lord Lieutenant had made little impression on the enemy.

At the same time his Army returned to Dublin "weary, sick and incredibly deminished in number."⁹⁴ Instead of leaving secure areas behind him and being able to concentrate all his strength on Ulster, Essex had left behind over 3000 men, many of them his best troops, to garrison strongpoints in Leinster and to help Sir Thomas Norreys prosecute the war against Desmond in Munster. Finally, whatever success Essex might claim paled before the disgraceful route of Harrington's force at Wicklow, a defeat for which Essex would later be blamed by the Privy Council.⁹⁵ But if the southern campaign were fraught with disappointments, it was nothing compared to the frustrations Essex would experience in the next few weeks.

⁹⁴Ibid., 243.

⁹⁵C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 545.

CHAPTER VI

THE WESTERN JOURNEY

Upon arriving back in Dublin on July 3, Essex met with the Irish Council, received an account of all that had transpired in his absence, and conferred about the status of provisions for the invasion of Ulster. Regarding the latter subject the news was ominous: no carriage horses or reinforcements had arrived, and no ships had yet been made available for the Lough Foyle operation.¹ After concluding the meeting, Essex delivered himself over to the care of his physician, in an effort to recover from the dysentery he had incurred during the Munster journey.

Three days later, Essex turned his attention to the disastrous rout in Wicklow and kept his promise of dealing harshly with Harrington's ill-fated troops. A court martial of all Harrington's officers was immediately held; and it was determined that the English troops, having had "advantage of number, and no disadvantage of ground," were cut to pieces "without striking a blow." Therefore, Lieutenant Peirs Walsh, of the Irish company, "for giving the first example of cowardice and dismaying to the

¹MSS. Carew, vol. 3, 312.

troops" was condemned to death, and shortly afterwards executed. The other captains and officers who had not run away, but whose troops had fled, were all cashiered because "in such an extremity and distaste they did not something very extraordinary, both by their example to encourage the soldier and to acquit themselves." The rank and file of Harrington's force were all condemned to death for cowardice in the face of the enemy. Essex modified the order, and "for example's sake," executed every tenth man and pardoned the rest.²

As for Sir Henry Harrington himself, since he was a member of the Irish Privy Council, Essex decided to take no action until he knew Her Majesty's pleasure.³ In fact, Harrington was never brought to trial, although he did not command any other troops while Essex was Lord Lieutenant. After Essex's departure Harrington wrote to Robert Cecil, asking for a new command of 200 foot, noting how he had lost his "blood and limbs," his eldest son and most of his possessions in doing the Queen's service in Ireland for twenty-three years.⁴ His request was granted and by January 1600, Harrington was back in Wicklow, building a new castle and commanding a new force.⁵

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 313.

⁵Ibid., 437.

Having taken such stern measures to restore discipline, Essex spent the next week surveying the Army's situation in Ireland, and on July 15 sent a detailed report to the Privy Council.⁶ The purpose of the report, according to Essex and the Irish Council, was to make known "the means we have, or are like to have,...lest Her Majesty and Your Lordships should expect more at our hands than we have ability to perform, or we fail of supplies by not making our wants known in time." The list strength of the Army was still 16,000 foot and 1300 horse, now distributed as follows: 3300 foot and 200 horse in Munster to face Desmond's army of 5000; 2850 foot and 200 horse in Connaught, although Sir Conyers Clifford felt he was too weak to attempt to attack Ballyshannon; 3000 foot and 300 horse in the Leinster area facing the victors over Harrington's force; and 1000 foot and 100 horse in garrisons along southeast Ulster to pen up Tyrone. This left a list strength of 6000 foot and 500 horse to attack Ulster.

Essex stated that if he should attempt to try a landing at Lough Foyle, he would have to divide his forces into two parts of 3000 men each, and Tyrone would be in a position to defeat each force in turn. It should be noted that in his report, Essex was talking in terms of the "list strength" of the army, rather than the real strength. The casualties from battle and sickness on the southern

⁶Contents of the July 15 report are taken from C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 80-81.

campaign, as well as casualties suffered by those simply in garrisons around the country, were so extensive that the 2000 reinforcements which were due on June 1, and which still had not arrived, would barely bring the army up to full strength. Even the presence of 16,000 soldiers was deceiving for, as Essex reported, "our men do fall sick, and our companies decay daily."

The troops, as we have seen, were suffering from poor clothing and equipment, which rapidly disintegrated in the wet climate, and from the lack of adequate victuals. Regarding the latter problem Essex concluded that part of the victuals "is not come out of England, part lost by shipwreck, and intercepted [by pirates] off the coast of Connaught, and a very great part so unsavory and unserviceable, that it would poison all the soldiers to whom it were delivered,..." Essex suggested to the Privy Council that food would not spoil so readily if they would "make the provision of butter and cheese not in Essex and Suffolk [counties], places so remote, but in Cheshire, Lancashire and Wales," so that the journey would not be so long.

After considering the above conditions, Essex suggested that the Lough Foyle operation, ships for which were still not available, and the invasion of Ulster must be postponed again. Until the other provinces were subdued, the most that could be attempted at Ulster would be for Sir Conyers Clifford to take Ballyshannon in the West,

while Essex planted another garrison at Armagh. Even these plans would be doubtful if Elizabeth did not send more reinforcements.

Essex's final suggestion of the report gives an indication of how highly he had come to regard the endurance of the Irish fighting men. The Earl requested that 2000 Irish be hired by his army, and added:

...these rebels will hardly be subdued, if some of themselves be not used against themselves. For besides the daily decay of our English soldiers, those men which are sent hither do not in good time make so good soldiers as these rogues here are.

Essex suggested that he be allowed to draw Irishmen from the rebel side, and under his personal leadership, "carry them every day to fight, assuring myself I shall do good service in making a riddance of either side." In this manner he would be able to save his Englishmen, his "triarii," and to deliver the final blow once loyal Irishmen had weakened rebel Irishmen. It was an interesting scheme, representing a cold-blooded outlook--using natives against each other while the outsider reaped the benefits--but Essex would not have the opportunity to implement it.

Along with the above official report of the Lord Lieutenant and the Irish Council, Essex sent a personal letter to the Privy Council. Essex had just received a letter in which the Privy Council assured him that the Earl did indeed have "sufficient backpiece of defense," and that the carriage horses, victuals, apparel and

reinforcements had already been sent, or would be sent in the near future.⁷ Essex thereupon sarcastically replied:

I do humbly beseech your Lordships to believe that I charge not your Lordships with want of care or breach of promise in directing supplies of all things in this war; but these wants we have, I acknowledge to have grown by casualty by sea, or by ill choice of victual, or contrariety of winds, which have stayed the supplies of men and provisions.⁸

Laying aside the sarcasm he continued:

I lay open to the malice and practice of mine enemies in England, who first procured a cloud of disgrace to over-shadow me, and now in the dark give me wound upon wound--I know that those who are guilty of them will confidently deny, and cunningly distinguish to excuse themselves.⁹

But Essex was confident that once back in England he would be vindicated because: "Your Lordships' own memories, and the Council book, wherein all your dispatches are recorded, will make up some part of this account." Having made his feelings plain Essex concluded:

But no more, neither now nor hereafter, of this argument. Your Lordships shall see that I will not fail of doing the uttermost duty that the happiest man could have performed. And I will humbly and patiently bear my unlooked-for, contemptible destiny.¹⁰

After this written exchange, and while waiting for horses, ships, reinforcements and victuals for the Ulster

⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 80-81.

⁸Ibid., 95.

⁹Ibid., 96.

¹⁰Ibid.

campaign, Essex resolved to make an interim campaign across the western borders of the Pale, in the areas known as Kings county and Queens county. Essex had received word that the rebels in Kings county had recently ambushed Captain William Williams and 300 of his men, killing 60 and sending the rest fleeing back to the principal city, Phillipstown, which was now endangered.¹¹ In Queens county, the O'Mores were threatening Maryborough, the principal fort in that area, which Essex had resupplied in May, but which now needed another convoy of provisions. Essex was exceedingly disappointed with the army's performance in Kings and Queens counties, complaining to the Privy Council in a letter on July 13 that, although the men had been well victualed and provided for in this area, they had "laid still like drones without doing service." Their recent defeat, in which they had showed "extreme cowardice," was indicative of the failing morale, and Essex resolved to move out and put some life into them.¹²

Accordingly on July 22 Essex sent the Lord Marshal, Sir Christopher Blount, into Queens county with 1000 men to relieve Maryborough and suppress the O'Mores, while the Lord Lieutenant led 1200 foot and 200 horse towards Phillipstown.¹³ The objective of Essex's force was to move

¹¹Dymmok, A Treatise on Ireland, 42.

¹²MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 231.

¹³Dymmok, A Treatise on Ireland, 42.

into a part of King's County known as Fercal, an area "so strong as nature could devise to make it by wood and bog,"¹⁴ and the place which, because of its supposed inaccessibility, was the chief rebel stronghold wherein the rebels stored munitions, food, and cattle. At the same time, Essex wished to use this western journey as another opportunity to confer once again with the Governor of Connaught, Sir Conyers Clifford, who was accordingly instructed to bring a strong force and meet Essex in the Fercal area.

Essex moved to Phillipstown without incident, viewed the sight of the Williams' ambush, and then moved on to Fercal. An enemy force of 600 men hung on the flanks and rear of his force, but attempted only one attack in which they lost a principal commander of the O'Connors and about 40 men, while Essex sustained only a few wounded. His force cut its way through the thick woods, built a small bridge across the Derrow river and arrived at Ardengroffe without further incident. Sir Conyers Clifford, with nine companies, entered Fercal from the western side, and encountered fierce opposition, losing 10 killed and 40 wounded as he cut through the woods, while the rebels reportedly lost twice as many men.¹⁵

Battered and weary from his labors, Clifford arrived

¹⁴Ibid., 43.

¹⁵Ibid.

at the Ardengroffe meeting place, and for the next two days, the troops rested while the Lord Lieutenant and Lord Governor of Connaught discussed future plans.¹⁶ One of the chief topics of their discussion was the fate of O'Connor Sligo, an Irish chief who was the principal English supporter in Connaught,¹⁷ but who had recently been besieged in his castle at Sligo by O'Donnell.¹⁸ It was resolved that Clifford should employ all means necessary to rescue O'Connor Sligo, and thereafter protect the landing of the Galway force at Sligo (discussed in their first meeting at Limerick) and finally to tie down O'Donnell's forces by capturing Ballyshannon. After concluding their conferences Clifford departed for Connaught while Essex turned to the business of subduing Fercal.

Essex divided his army into three units, resolving to sweep through the rebel area with two units abreast, each consisting of 500 infantry, while the Lord Lieutenant followed with a reserve of 200 foot and 200 horse, ready to reinforce or react to any enemy threat to the leading units. In this configuration the Essex force moved through Fercal, burning houses and corn, destroying supplies, and capturing about 1000 cows and 100 horses.¹⁹

¹⁶Henry, "The Earl of Essex and Ireland," 16.

¹⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 22.

¹⁸MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 289.

¹⁹Ibid., 268; Dymmok, A Treatise on Ireland, 44.

The rebels tried unsuccessfully to battle Essex's force, but after losing many men, they decided the effort was futile and disappeared into the woods. Essex completed the systematic destruction, leaving the rebels of Kings and Queens counties scattered and defeated, and returned to Dublin in early August.²⁰

Upon entering Dublin, Essex was presented with a letter from Queen Elizabeth which she had written on July 19, after receiving Essex's official report of the journey to Leinster and Munster.²¹ Elizabeth wasted few words with preliminaries, and immediately complained:

...you must needs think that we, that have the eyes of foreign Princes upon our actions, and have the hearts of our people to comfort and cherish, who groan under the burden of continual levies and impositions, which are occasioned by those late actions, can little please ourself hitherto with anything that hath been effected.

Essex's two-month journey had "brought in never a capital rebel."

Regarding the seizure of Cahir castle, the most substantial military accomplishment on Essex's southern journey, the Queen contemptuously characterized the action as having taken "an Irish hold from a rabble of rogues." But to Elizabeth the most exasperating aspect of this

²⁰Dymmok, A Treatise on Ireland, 44.

²¹The following excerpts are taken from the Queen's letter to Essex, dated July 19, 1599, found in the C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 98-101. For complete text, see Appendix A.

situation was the adverse effect on her prestige which resulted from allowing an Irish rebel to remain defiant and unpunished. She lamented to Essex that

...this one thing, that doth more displease us than any charge or expense that happens, which is, that it must be the Queen of England's fortune, to make a base bush kern to be accounted so famous a rebel, as to be a person against whom so many thousands of foot and horse, besides the force of all the nobility of that kingdom, must be thought too little to be employed.

She continued: "Little do you know how he [Tyrone] hath blazed in foreign parts the defeats of regiments, the death of Captains, and the loss of men of quality in every corner; and how little he seemeth to value their power..."

She concluded her letter with the forceful instructions:

...we must now plainly charge you, according to the duty you owe us, so to unite soundness of judgement to the zeal you have to do us service, and with all speed to pass thither [to Ulster] in such order, as the axe may be put to the root of that tree, which hath been the treasonable stock from whence so many poisoned plants and grafts have been derived.

While Essex was still contemplating this first letter, a second letter arrived from the Queen. The occasion for this correspondence was to answer Essex's report of July 15, in which the Earl had enumerated the difficulties of going to Ulster this year. The Privy Council had received Essex's report on July 28, and Elizabeth sent an immediate reply on July 30.²² In her letter, Elizabeth quickly

²²The following excerpts are taken from the Queen's

dismissed Essex's complaints of shortages in supplies by stating that her examination of the problem had revealed that most supplies had been sent, while the remainder of the promised supplies were delayed merely "by those accidental causes which accompany sea transportation."

Elizabeth's main concern was Essex's overall conduct of affairs, and she again launched into a denunciation of his actions. She reminded the Earl that the agreed-upon plan was "to assail the Northern Traitor, and to plant garrisons in his country, it being ever your firm opinion, amongst others of our Council, to conclude that all that was done in other kind in Ireland, was but waste and consumption."

Elizabeth stated that Essex's complaints of deficiencies in troop strength defied explanation, "except it be that by your unseasonable journey into Munster, and by the small effects thereof, you have broken the heart of our best troops, and weakened your strength upon inferior rebels, and run out the glass of time which hardly can be recovered..." She further commanded, "we must expect at your hands, without delay, the passing into the North, for accomplishment of those counsels which were resolved on at your departure, to the intent that all these six months charges prove not fruitless..."

letter to Essex, dated July 30, 1599, found in the C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 105-07. For complete text see Appendix B.

Elizabeth concluded her second letter on a particularly ominous note. In Essex's original commission the Earl had been given permission to return to England whenever he deemed it advisable, and to constitute a temporary governor in Ireland in his absence. Now the Queen revoked that liberty and warned: "we do charge you (as you tender our pleasure) that you adventure not to come out of that kingdom, by virtue of any former liscense whatsoever."

In the second letter, as in the first, Elizabeth again seemed to find it incomprehensible that the northern strategy had not been implemented, and seemed unaware of the true state of affairs in Ireland. A certain insight may be gained by considering the problem of correspondence between Essex and the Queen. Essex addressed all but two of his letters to the Privy Council--which was the appropriate communications channel--and consequently the correspondence passed through the hands of Sir Robert Cecil, who quite probably merely briefed the sixty-six year old Elizabeth about the contents, and most certainly was asked for his opinion. An indication of how various aspects of the Irish campaign were interpreted to the Queen can be seen in Elizabeth's first letter in which she referred to the seizure of Cahir castle as the taking of "an Irish hold from a rabble of rogues." In the same letter she condemned Essex's movement into Leinster and Munster before "that proud rebel" in the north was attacked, even though

the Privy Council earlier reported that she had given her consent to both the Earl's distribution of forces and the Leinster campaign.²³ Ernest George Atkinson, editor of the Calendar of State Papers, Ireland, explains this discrepancy by stating that Elizabeth "forgot" that she had given Essex permission to go to Leinster first.²⁴ The next document in the Calendars, however, shows the corrections made in the letter of July 19 to Essex by the Queen's secretary, Robert Cecil.²⁵ If Elizabeth did forget, is it possible that Robert Cecil, who corrected parts of the letter, forgot also? The more logical explanation is that either Cecil did not inform Queen Elizabeth of Essex's intent to go south in the first place, or that Elizabeth really did forget and Robert Cecil sent the letter out anyway, without bringing this obvious error to her attention.

In the Queen's second letter of July 30 we see that the Queen merely accepted the Council's word that provisions were not arriving only because of those common accidents which normally accompanied sea transportation. Since Elizabeth took only two days to answer Essex's letter, her "examination" of the supply situation must have been very superficial, and probably only consisted of receiving

²³C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 28.

²⁴Ibid., xxvi.

²⁵Ibid., 101.

assurances from the chief officials that all things had indeed been sent. In the Queen's reproaches Essex could undoubtedly see the work of Sir Robert Cecil, particularly in that part of the letter in which Essex was now forbidden "to come out of that kingdom by virtue of any former license whatsoever," until he had "reduced things in the north." In view of the impossibility of conducting a northern campaign without the necessary means, and considering the difficulties Essex was experiencing in acquiring those means, Elizabeth's revocation of his license to return to England when he saw fit, must have sounded like a sentence of exile by his enemy, Sir Robert Cecil. Indeed, in the copy of this letter kept in the State Papers, Cecil has endorsed the Queen's letter, and has written on his copy the words: "To command him not to come over."²⁶ At the same time, a court official made the following observation to a friend in Venice: "since Essex is away Her Majesty is wholly directed by Mr. Secretary, who now rules all as his father did," and added, "though he pretends friendship to the Earl, he is thought at heart his greatest enemy, envying his former greatness with the Queen, and intending his utter overthrow if Irish affairs take no better effect."²⁷

²⁶C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 107.

²⁷C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 251.

Essex had little time to dwell on the ramifications of the Queen's first two letters, for on August 5 occurred the most decisive disaster of the Essex campaign. In accordance with agreements made by Essex and Clifford at their meeting at Fercal in July, the Governor of Connaught prepared to conduct an expedition to Sligo, to rescue his ally, O'Connor Sligo, from O'Donnell's forces. In order to assist Clifford, Essex had reinforced him with four of his best foot companies, the Earl of Southampton's crack cavalry unit, and the services of Sir Alexander Radcliffe, one of Essex's best subordinates. Essex must have still been dubious about Clifford's chances, for on July 30 the Lord Lieutenant sent the Governor a message, warning him not to "venture the breaking of his neck," and counselling him that unless he was assured that he could go forward without danger, it would be better to wait until the Lord Lieutenant had started his force toward Ulster, to distract the rebels.²⁸ Although Clifford privately professed that he feared the upcoming expedition,²⁹ he resolved nevertheless to carry on the mission without waiting for Essex.

The Lord Governor of Connaught moved out from Tulske with 1900 infantry and 200 English and Irish horse. Although he had some reinforcement from Essex, Sir John Harrington described the force as one consisting of

²⁸C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 121.

²⁹MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 289.

twenty-one weak companies, some of which had only 60 men instead of the authorized 150.³⁰ The army moved in a northerly direction toward Sligo, and by early afternoon had traveled fourteen miles to the town of Boyle, at the foot of the Curlews Hills. By then it was four o'clock in the afternoon and Clifford had decided to camp for the evening. However, Captain Henry Cosby, who had traveled through the dangerous Curlew pass the day before, told Clifford that the enemy had only a few scouts in the pass, and advised that it would be expedient for Clifford to push on through the pass immediately, before the enemy had a chance to fortify it.³¹

Without reconnoitering the pass further, the Lord Governor gave the order for the army to continue its march into the Curlew pass, which started out as a narrow way between two bogs. The pass soon broadened out until it gave "liberty for twelve men to march in front," and then led up a gently rising slope with a hill and bog on the left, and thick woods on the right. The order of march was the vanguard of 571 men, commanded by Sir Alexander Radcliffe, followed by the main battle of 421 men, commanded by the Lord Baron of Dunkellin, and the rearguard of 504 men commanded by Sir Arthur Savage. Behind the main army was the Irish cavalry and the Earl of Southampton's

³⁰Harrington, Nugae Antiquae, 264.

³¹Ibid., 265; Dymmok, A Treatise on Ireland, 44.

cavalry troop, commanded by Sir Griffin Markham, whose mission was to guard the baggage train and to reinforce the main army if the need should arise.³²

As Sir Alexander Radcliffe's vanguard moved into the pass, they were surprised to find about 400 rebels, led by O'Donnell's ally, O'Rourke, entrenched on both sides of the pass and manning a barricade near the entrance. Radcliffe pushed forward driving the rebels back from their barricade, and then placed companies along both sides of the pass as he moved through, and ordered the company commanders not to relinquish their positions until he had so instructed. The vanguard, followed by the main battle and the rearguard, moved into the pass until they reached another great barricade across the pass, held by numerous rebels. Sir Alexander Radcliffe, who had already been shot "in the face," nevertheless resolved to lead the charge, and ordered Captain Cosby, an Anglo-Irish officer, to take his company and attack with him. Cosby refused and held back from the enemy fire, whereupon Radcliffe stated: "Well Cosby, I see I must leave thee to they baseness, but I must tell thee before my departure, that it were much better for thee to die in my company by the hands of thy countrymen, then at my return to perish by my sword."³³ Cosby still refused to move and Radcliffe

³²Dymmok, A Treatise on Ireland, 44-45.

³³Ibid., 45.

prepared to attack without the captain, and about 200 men who also stayed behind.

By this time Colonel Radcliffe's men had fired off most of their powder, so he began to assemble "choice pikes" from the body of the vanguard, calling key men out by name. While gathering the pikemen Colonel Radcliffe was shot again in the leg and collapsed in the arms of two "gentlemen volunteers."³⁴ As they tried to bring the Colonel away one of the gentlemen was shot dead, while Sir Alexander Radcliffe was shot a further time through the body and fell dying. Upon observing the fate of his commander Captain Cosby turned and fled with his unit. The rest of the vanguard, raked by enemy fire, likewise broke and ran back through the following formations, causing the inevitable panic.

Sir Conyers Clifford, traveling with the main battle saw the vanguard streaming back down the pass, pursued by the exultant Irish, and vainly tried to reform them. As the Irish closed in on the Governor Sir John MacSwine and Captain Oliver Burke tried unsuccessfully to convince Clifford to withdraw, and finally forcibly laid hold of him and pulled him back. Enraged at the spectacle of his men fleeing in such a cowardly manner, the Lord Governor tore himself loose and charged the rebel horde singlehanded. He crashed into the oncoming Irish and died fighting in

³⁴Ibid., 46.

their midst, with a pike through his body.³⁵ Perceiving the leaderless, panicked mob of English soldiers fleeing down the pass, with the Irish slaughtering them at will, Sir Griffin Markham attacked with all his cavalry. Although wounded by a bullet which broke his arm, Markham pressed home the charge, broke the Irish attack and scattered the rebels, thus giving "security to this ignominious flight."³⁶

When the English had a chance to ascertain their losses, they found 241 officers and men slain, and 208 officers and men wounded.³⁷ The rebel loss was later reported to have been greater than that of the English,³⁸ although considering the circumstances of the action, it hardly seems probable. As for the Lord Governor, his head was cut off by the O'Rourkes and sent to the O'Donnells as a trophy, while his body was taken and buried at a nearby monastery.³⁹ Captain Cosby's subsequent fate is unknown, although he and his company were initially left to garrison Boyle, at the foot of the Curlews, while the rest of the demoralized army retreated further back to Tulsk. Aside from the loss of men, and the negative effect

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., 47.

³⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 113-14.

³⁸Ibid., 123.

³⁹Dymmok, A Treatise on Ireland, 47.

on morale, the Curlew disaster meant that the threat to Ballyshannon and western Ulster had been totally eliminated. Tyrone and O'Donnell were now free to concentrate all their forces against any invasion of eastern Ulster through the Mowry Pass.

When Essex heard the news, he was understandably enraged, and immediately sent off instructions to Sir Arthur Savage and Lord Dunkellin, the two surviving senior officers. First, they were to send back all of Southampton's cavalry troop, along with any other cavalry they could spare. Sufficient garrisons were to be kept in the key cities of Galway, Athlone, Boyle, Tulsk and Roscommon, while the rest of the foot were to be sent back to Mullingar. Essex contemptuously stated: "I will send them to keep walls, since they do so cowardly and basely in the field."⁴⁰ While his rage at the rank and file of the Connaught army was boundless, he had only the highest praise for the heroic efforts of Sir Alexander Radcliffe, Sir Griffin Markham, and the gallant Sir Conyers Clifford. Regarding the Lord Governor Essex commented: "Connaught hath lost a valiant, a liberal, and understanding Governor, and cannot by me be supplied with another Conyers Clifford, though he also found too hard an encounter, and perished in it."⁴¹

⁴⁰C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 120.

⁴¹Ibid., 123.

When Essex returned from the Western expedition to Kings County on July 31, he assembled the Irish Council and announced his intention to move into Ulster.⁴² The Council objected to this course of action, and on August 3 voiced their objections in a letter to the Privy Council. The Irish Council members asserted that Essex, particularly after receiving the Queen's first letter of July 19, had been strongly urging the invasion of Ulster, in spite of the weak state of the army. The Council, however, believed that "perilous sequels" would grow out of such a course of action. The key to a successful invasion was the Lough Foyle operation, which the Lord Lieutenant was not able to implement. Therefore the most he could accomplish would be to plant garrisons at Armagh and the Blackwater, and even these garrisons would only turn into hospitals for the weak and sickly soldiers.⁴³

There was a great lack of carriage horses, which would make any such garrison virtually impossible to re-supply except by "frequent convoys," which only invited ambush. Additionally the original plan called for the Governor of Connaught to attack Ballyshannon to divert Tyrone's forces; however, the Governor was in a weak position, while the rebels had "dangerously fortified the Curlews and other straits by the which he must pass."⁴⁴

⁴²MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 263.

⁴³Ibid., 263-64.

⁴⁴Ibid., 265.

To further their argument, the Irish Council included a list of the troop dispositions in Ireland, which showed 11,250 foot and 925 horse in garrisons and patrol duty throughout the country, and no more than 4750 foot and 378 horse available for the Ulster journey.⁴⁵ In closing their letter, the Irish Council, in spite of Essex's objections, strongly urged that the Ulster campaign be again postponed until the other provinces had been settled.⁴⁶

On the same day in which she received the above letter from the Irish Council, Elizabeth sent a scathing reply to both Essex and the Irish Council, a reply which probably would have been harsher still if she had known of Clifford's recent defeat on August 5.⁴⁷ She began: "The letter which we have read this day from you of that Council concerning your opinions for the northern action, does rather deserve reproof than much answer." Elizabeth charged that the Irish Council, because of its "former suffering (nay, favouring) Popery," was responsible for much of the present trouble in Ireland.

The Irish Council's suggestion that the Ulster campaign must be postponed brought a torrent of abuse from Elizabeth. Such a course of action would "increase the

⁴⁵C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 111.

⁴⁶MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 267.

⁴⁷The following excerpts are taken from the Queen's letter to Essex, dated August 9, 1599, found in the C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 114-16. For complete text see Appendix C.

rebel's pride, and frustrate one whole year's charges," adding, "What would you have us believe, if we did not think you loyal, but that either some of you cannot forget your old good wills to that Traitor, or else are insensible of all things, save your own particulars."

Regarding the alleged inability of the English forces to implement the Lough Foyle landing, Elizabeth commented: "Lastly, for Lough Foyle, which still you ring in our ears, to be the place that would most annoy the rebel, we doubt not but to hear by the next that it is begun, and not in question." Her final comments concerned the strength of the army. The Irish Council had estimated that only 4750 foot and 340 horse would be available for an invasion of Ulster. Elizabeth, on the other hand, calculated that if one took into account the forces in Connaught, the new reinforcements, and portions of garrisons throughout the country, "you may not reckon under ten or eleven thousand for that service."

Elizabeth's letter of August 9 again illustrates her lack of appreciation of the true conditions in Ireland. Particularly revealing are her comments on the Lough Foyle operation, in which she simply cannot understand why the landing has not yet been accomplished, and in which she demands that it be accomplished immediately. Additionally, Elizabeth's calculation that Essex should have had at least 11,000 men available for the Ulster project shows

that she did not appreciate the necessity for garrisons or the problem of sickness which brought the real strength of the army far below the list strength.

Part of Queen Elizabeth's false impression was undoubtedly caused by Essex, who in his letters back to England dealt in "list-strength" figures. Essex may have used list strength numbers so as to simply explain the relative distribution of the Army without complicating his explanation with a breakdown of "unserviceable" men in all garrisons, a figure which would have been difficult to ascertain or document with certainty. A more probable reason, however, may have been connected with finances. The Lord Lieutenant was terribly short of money to conduct the campaign, and had protested that "no Governor in the kingdom was ever so limited and restrained."⁴⁸ Government funds were so scarce that Essex had to pay for the bedding and sheets of casualties out of his own pocket,⁴⁹ and to use his own carriage as an ambulance,⁵⁰ facts which help in explaining his popularity with the troops. If he reported the list strength of the Army as remaining at 16,000 foot and 1300 horse, which he did, then he would at least get the salary due all these troops. On the other hand, if he reported the real

⁴⁸Ibid., 94.

⁴⁹Ibid., 43.

⁵⁰Ibid., 98.

strength of the Army, which was well below the above figure, he may well have feared that the money for troop salary would be cut proportionately. However, the Earl was caught in a "numbers-game" dilemma; by dealing in list strength figures he gave Elizabeth the impression that his strength was far greater than it was, and consequently she expected more out of his forces, and found his troop dispositions incomprehensible.

However, the Privy Council, which was well aware of the realities of campaigning in Ireland, might have enlightened Queen Elizabeth or explained Essex's position, if they were so inclined and had the success of his expedition at heart. Instead, on the day after Elizabeth sent her third letter, the Council sent Essex a letter of their own, in which they stated that the Queen had called them in for consultation and that they "must now only concur with Her Majesty" concerning Essex's disposition of forces and his lack of progress. The Council further charged that "there should have been a prosecution of the capital rebels in the north, whereby the war might have been shortened."⁵¹ They concluded by informing Essex that his 2000 reinforcements, which he had been promised by June 1, had not yet been sent, but would arrive shortly; and then closed by wishing him "the same success" which his own heart desired.⁵²

⁵¹Ibid., 117.

⁵²Ibid., 118.

Stung by the reproaches of the Queen and the hypocrisy of the Privy Council, Essex resolved to march at the earliest opportunity. On August 14 Essex assured the Privy Council that as soon as his "best companies" came in from Munster and Connaught, and as soon as he gathered up all his "beeves" and carriage horses, which would take about eight days, he would be off to Ulster.⁵³

⁵³Ibid., 121-25.

CHAPTER VII

THE NORTHERN JOURNEY

Essex's determination notwithstanding, the English Army of Ireland had fallen to an exceptionally critical state by mid-August. A report written by Captain Francis Kingsmill, a company commander in Munster, was sent to Sir Robert Cecil on August 22, and gives a vivid illustration of the Army's plight. In Mallow, an English garrison consisting of 500 men from veteran companies was not able to field more than 200 effective soldiers. Other units were in similar straits, many having as many as half their men down with sickness. The troops had not been given a new issue of uniforms in eight months, and the damp, moist climate had long since reduced their clothes to tatters. The food, particularly the cheese and butter, was rancid by the time it arrived. As for pay, they had not received one penny of their salary in the last four months, and had to commandeer what little food was available in the surrounding area. In expressing his contempt for the supply system, the captain sarcastically complained that the troops had to wait for "six winds to blow" before the cargoes reached them.¹

¹C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 130.

Essex confirmed that the situation in the other provinces was just as serious, although he placed as much blame on the character of the individual soldiers as he did on the want of supplies. On August 14 he wrote to the Privy Council: "every town and place of garrison is a hospital, where our degenerate countrymen are glad to entertain sickness as a supersedeas for their going into the field, and every remove of an Irish company is almost a breaking of it."² The result of the supply situation, coupled with the terrifying news of Clifford's recent disaster, had destroyed morale to the point where, as Essex complained, "the Irish go to the rebels by herds; the others make strange adventures to steal over; and some force themselves to be sick, and lie like creatures that have neither hearts nor souls."³

Considering the crucial part supplies and transportation played in the Essex campaign, it would be appropriate at this time for us to explore in greater detail the problems of the Lord Lieutenant in acquiring the needed requisitions of ships, horses, victuals and clothing. The most critical item, on which the entire strategy hinged was the acquisition of shipping for the Lough Foyle operation. In the original warrant for shipping by the Queen on December 16, 1598, Essex was assigned two great warships, three

²Ibid., 124.

³Ibid., 125.

pinnaces, and four double fly-boats which were each capable of transporting 300 soldiers or a great quantity of provisions. The warrant for warships and fly-boats was for a six-month time period; thus the ships would have to be reassigned, and recommissioned not later than June 16, 1599.⁴ In order to transport his 3000 levies from England to Ireland Essex was granted the use of seventeen merchant transports from the period January 16 to March 16.⁵

As we have seen, Essex's transporting of levies was delayed by "contrary winds and other accidents," so that he could not transport his units from Chester by the March 16 deadline.⁶ Therefore the seventeen merchant ships were extended in commission by the Queen for one month until April 16, by which time the transporting of levies was complete. When the Queen assigned the warships and transports for Essex's use, she stipulated that after the initial transport of troops, the ships were "to perform upon the coast such service as he [Essex] shall direct."⁷

Thus, in summarizing Essex's shipping assets, by early April; the time of his arrival, he should have been

⁴C.S.P. Ireland, Addenda, 1565-1654, 507.

⁵Henry, "The Earl of Essex and Ireland," 9.

⁶Ibid.

⁷C.S.P. Ireland, Addenda, 1565-1654, 607.

able to count on two great warships, three lighter pinnaces, four double fly-boats and seventeen merchant ships for the Lough Foyle operation. It is interesting to note that in 1600 when Sir Henry Docwra actually conducted the Lough Foyle landing for Lord Deputy Mountjoy, with 4000 men--the same number which Essex had planned to take-- Docwra's shipping strength amounted to one pinnace and seventeen merchantmen to make the initial landing, and two pinnaces, three "special" ships and three converted merchantmen to keep the force supplied.⁸

In Essex's commission for shipping, however, there was a great exception to his authority, which stipulated that all shipping dispositions were subject to the approval of the Lord Admiral, Sir Thomas Howard.⁹ Essex and the Lord Admiral had long been antagonists, and continued their feud up until the time Essex left for Ireland, quarrelling on January 17¹⁰ and again on March 1.¹¹ The command structure for the use of shipping implied that Essex and Howard would have to cooperate on the use of shipping to support the campaign. The Lord Admiral exercised his authority and ordered that the two great warships, one pinnace, and the four double fly-boats should patrol a

⁸Henry, "The Earl of Essex and Ireland," 20.

⁹Ibid., 10.

¹⁰C.S.P. Domestic, 1598-1601, 151.

¹¹Ibid., 166.

line across the Irish Sea from Cornwall to southwest Ireland to scout for Spanish ships.¹² Essex does not mention this diversion of his ships in any of his letters and apparently did not protest the Lord Admiral's decision too vociferously, probably because he still had at his disposal two pinnaces and seventeen merchant ships, which, judging from Sir Henry Docwra's landing in 1600, was still sufficient shipping to conduct the initial landing at Lough Foyle. In any case the warships were taken from him and by April 30 were still on patrol duty for Howard, and remained on patrol duty until their six-months commission came to an end on June 16.¹³

The decisive blow to the Lough Foyle operation occurred when Admiral Howard ordered that the seventeen merchant ships, which had just delivered Essex 3000 levies to Ireland in early April, were to join the Lord Admiral's naval force off southwest England. On May 17, the merchant ships arrived at Scilly and joined up with Admiral Howard, thus leaving Essex with only two pinnaces.¹⁴ Throughout Essex's campaign the two pinnaces did good service by shuttling men and supplies back and forth from England, but the Lough Foyle expedition was clearly out of the question.

¹²MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 172.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

When Essex returned from the Munster journey on July 1, and found that shipping had still not been made available, he again protested to the Privy Council about his lack of shipping. By that time the periods of commissioning had long since run out, and the transports had to be recommissioned all over again, in the usual cumbersome manner. On July 19, in response to Essex's protest, Lord Treasurer Buckhurst wrote a memo to a Mr. Skinner, one of his assistants, instructing him to make out an order for the payment of money to hire the necessary shipping. In the same memo Buckhurst explained how the Earl of Essex would not be able to go north to Lough Foyle without this requisition.¹⁵

Thus as late as July 19, while the Queen raged that the Ulster expedition was not being pursued, and while Essex, deprived of his shipping by Lord Admiral Howard, conducted torturous secondary campaigns while waiting for more shipping, the Privy Council was only at the stage of appropriating money to get the vessels needed! In these circumstances, because of the slowness of gathering up shipping, the ships could not, and indeed would not, be available before Essex's northern journey started in late August. In any case, by then it was far too late; the critical time for the Lough Foyle operation--late April

¹⁵Henry, "The Earl of Essex and Ireland," 20.

or early May--had long since passed and Essex was off on his Munster journey. When he returned from Munster, his troops, as Essex related, were too depleted to conduct the Lough Foyle operation, although if shipping had been available in Dublin, Essex might have attempted the operation before his troops were further depleted in the Kings county campaign.

How the shipping situation was explained to Elizabeth by the Privy Council is not known for certain. However, later at Essex's trial, Lord Admiral Howard testified that the ships for the Lough Foyle expedition were all prepared to sail, but Essex's army was in such a weakened condition that it was not able to use them.¹⁶ From the remarks made by Elizabeth in her letters regarding shipping, it would seem that the Queen, unconcerned with such technicalities as commissioning dates, was assured by the Privy Council that the shipping was available, and only awaited Essex's directions.

Lord Admiral Howard's order for Essex's ships to screen the south English and Irish coasts has been explained by citing the great "Spanish Alarm" which swept England in the summer of 1599.¹⁷ Indeed, at the height of the panic, there were rumors and reports that England was about to be invaded by 30,000 Spaniards, 20,000 French,

¹⁶Bacon, Essex's Vindication, 65.

¹⁷Silke, Kinsale, 57-61.

and 40,000 Scots, supported by a fleet of 250 Spanish and Danish sailing ships and 70 galleys.¹⁸ The English quickly mobilized almost 20,000 men from all the shires and designated Lord Admiral Howard as supreme commander of the forces for defense.¹⁹ The Reverend John J. Silke, in his book Kinsale, quite rightly points out that although the rumors were later proven false, it was still a threat which the government could not ignore.²⁰ However, while there were the usual rumors of a Spanish invasion, beginning in January and²¹ continuing through May and June,²² it was not until the end of July that real and universal alarm ensued, when information reached the Court that the Spanish fleet had assembled at Brest and Conquet.²³ The crisis lasted from the end of July until August 20, by which time all the rumors had been proven false, and Howard was ordered to dismiss the motley collection of militia which had been mobilized.²⁴ The "Spanish alarm" of late July does not explain Essex's lack of competent shipping in late April and early May, or Howard's order for the

¹⁸MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 282-83.

¹⁹Ibid., 289.

²⁰Silke, Kinsale, 57.

²¹MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 20.

²²Ibid., 171-72.

²³Ibid., 253, 322.

²⁴Ibid., xxi, 307.

ships to ply off the south English coast at that time; although it does explain why Essex could not acquire shipping after he completed the Western campaign in early August.

One of the greatest mysteries of the Essex campaign is that the carriage horses, both those which Essex had gathered himself and had left in England, and the new allotment of 200 horses assigned by the Privy Council, never arrived in Ireland! After the Essex campaign had ended, and Lord Mountjoy was preparing to embark for Ireland, Lord Treasurer Buckhurst, in writing a list of "considerations" for the Irish campaign of 1600, listed as Item 15:

That as well the 200 carriage horse allowed to the Earl of Essex at his going over, as also the other 200 carriage horse allowed him afterwards out of the checks, may be known where they be, and accounted for, and that they may be delivered to the Lord Mountjoy for the Queens service.²⁵

Before Mountjoy left for Ireland in January 1600, he was instructed, among other things, "To insure as to the 400 carriage horses supplied to the Earl of Essex."²⁶ The mystery was never satisfactorily cleared up and the incident was eventually forgotten as government officials moved on to other matters. However, an examination of the Cecil papers reveals an interesting letter from

²⁵C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 380.

²⁶Ibid., 443.

Essex's supposed friend, Sir William Knollys, to Sir Robert Cecil, written in May 1599. Apparently Knollys was responding to a letter from Cecil and commented as follows on the subject of Essex's request for carriage horses:

I am not of opinion you have reason to hearken to any new demand, though he shew a necessary reason touching the carriage horses which are not there to be had, and without which he will not be able to march.²⁷

Knollys further counselled Cecil that "unless you keep touch with him (Essex) in the agreements concluded on, both for his number and the timely supplies, he may allege the same excuses that former governors have done,..."²⁸

The context of this letter would appear to indicate once again that the Privy Council, principally Sir Robert Cecil, wanted Essex to fail, but wished to insure that he failed in such a way that no blame could be attached to the Privy Council. In Knollys' statement on the carriage horses he is alluding to facts obviously known to Cecil: that carriage horses were not available in Ireland; that the army could not march without them; but then he recommended that Cecil ought not send Essex any more carriage horses! Sir William Knollys' hopes were to be realized, for the horses would not arrive, and the bulk of Essex's army then was not able to march.

Concerning the lack of victuals and clothing Essex

²⁷ MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 188.

²⁸ Ibid.

was hampered not by the Privy Council, but by corruption. The Privy Council, as we have seen, openly accepted the supply of these items as its responsibility and did all that could reasonably be expected to insure their timely arrival. According to instructions from the Privy Council on April 24, Sir George Carey, the Treasurer in Ireland, and George Beverly, the Comptroller of the Victuals in Ireland, were to send in reports on the status of victuals, clothing and the money they had in their possession. Upon receiving these orders Sir George Carey wrote back to the Privy Council that, because of the difficulties of communicating with the outlying provinces, it would be very difficult for him to keep track of the various supplies of victuals and clothing, which often were shipped directly to Munster or Connaught.²⁹ His reasons for not being able to keep an accurate account were plausible, considering the circumstances surrounding communications; however the Privy Council still demanded an accounting. But neither Sir George Carey, Sir George Beverly nor Sir Ralph Lane, the Muster-Master, sent in their bi-monthly reports, and on July 11 the Privy Council censured all three individuals for not following instructions. The three men protested that "the state of this rebellious kingdom being as it is," they could not get accurate and timely certificates from all their subordinate officials

²⁹C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 32.

strung out in all the garrisons.³⁰ And so the debate went on by exchange of letters throughout the Essex campaign.

As early as May 16, Sir John Jolles, a merchant of London who had contracted to supply victuals to Ireland, complained to the Privy Council that Her Majesty was being defrauded in respect to victuals being sent to Ireland, particularly to Munster. An inquiry was sent to Sir Thomas Norreys, President of Munster, to look into the matter;³¹ however, he died before any investigation could be made,³² and the matter was not followed up. On July 29, Jolles again complained that all the victuals were being sent by his firm, but that the prevailing great corruption in Ireland resulted in food being sold, stolen or wasted. John Jolles was apparently fulfilling his part of the contract in England, because he suggested that a Mr. Darell, one of the Privy Council's lesser officials--a Surveyor of Victuals for the Navy--should take the merchants' records, go to Ireland, and check for himself the way Her Majesty was being defrauded.³³

The Privy Council apparently believed John Jolles, because on August 4 they wrote to Essex that if there were a shortage of victuals, then "the Treasurer (Sir George Carey) must either have the magazines full, or have a good

³⁰Ibid., 96.

³¹Ibid., 35-36.

³²Ibid., 128.

³³Ibid., 105.

store of money in his hands."³⁴ In any case, to sort out the matter the Council would send one of their Victualling officials (Mr. Darell) with all the records, in order to give Essex a "more clear satisfaction in all things."³⁵ However, Mr. Darrell was not able to gather up his records and depart before September 9,³⁶ and by the time he arrived, the Essex campaign was over, and the matter was subsequently unresolved in the general confusion following Essex's departure on September 24.

Although the investigation regarding victuals went unsolved, the corruption in clothing was more clearly brought to light. Again, in response to Essex's protestations the Privy Council assured the Lord Lieutenant on August 4 that over 12,000 uniforms should have been received by this time, and insisted that if there were losses the fault must be with the officials in Ireland.³⁷ Indeed, Essex's choice of Sir George Carey as Treasurer, and merchants Babington and Bromley as contractors for uniforms, was unfortunate because together they perpetrated one of the most outrageous frauds in Elizabeth's reign. The case was not brought to light until 1616, but the investigation revealed that the Crown had been defrauded of

³⁴Ibid., 111.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., 147.

³⁷Ibid., 111-12.

£27,000 by the merchants between 1597 and 1600.³⁸

The merchants had supplied only two-thirds of the uniforms contracted for, and in the winter of 1598 had supplied only 2500 of the 10,000 uniforms which had been authorized. The way the deception worked was that the merchants paid the captains money instead of giving them clothing. The Crown, for instance, contracted for a winter outfit costing forty-nine shillings, and then, instead of delivering the uniform, the merchants simply paid the Captain twenty-four shillings, which the captains pocketed. Another method was to give the men rotten uniforms, and then offer to buy the uniforms back for eighteen shillings. The men would gladly agree to receive money which they could use for food, instead of useless, rotting clothing, and in this way the merchants would obtain as much as £20 on a single uniform. Finally the deception was kept quiet by bribing officers in Ireland, principally Sir George Carey, and port officers in London, Bristol and Chester, to certify that the correct number of uniforms had left England and had arrived in Ireland.³⁹

While Essex assumed he was making a clean sweep of the corruption of the past, he was in fact inadvertently bringing together some of the most corrupt individuals which the Irish wars had seen.

³⁸Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army, 99-100.

³⁹Ibid., 99-101.

After Essex's campaign the Privy Council attempted to conduct an investigation, noting that since the captains and officials in Ireland made no complaint, they must have been bribed into silence. They ordered Mountjoy to investigate the matter, but nothing conclusive was proved until well into James I's reign.⁴⁰

While Essex, as the overall commander must assume a certain responsibility for not rooting out this corruption in victuals and apparel, we must consider the realities of the situation. The Lord Lieutenant, as his journal indicates, spent virtually every moment in Ireland either on his three journeys, or getting the army ready for the journeys. It is obvious that he had no time to really delve into and keep up with the day-to-day problems of supply contracts and shipping schedules. It is easy to see how Sir George Carey, the Treasurer in Ireland could have answered any of Essex's inquiries by attributing the shortage of promised supplies to transportation problems, or to bad faith on the part of the Privy Council, an explanation which Essex would have been all too willing to accept.

On August 21 Essex called a council of all the high-ranking Army officers at Dublin Castle to discuss the invasion of Ulster. Faced with the Lord Lieutenant's

⁴⁰C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 441-42.

determination to prosecute the campaign with any means available, the officers tendered the following declaration:

The opinion of the Lords and Colonels of the Army dissuading the journey northward.

We, the Lords, Colonels and Knights of the Army, being called to a Council at War, the day and year above written, at what time the Lord Lieutenant, proposing to us his purpose of invading Ulster, as well in regard of Her Majesty's express commandment, as also to pull down the pride of the Archtraitor Tyrone, to redeem the late scorn of the Curlews, and lastly to hold up the reputation of the army, required us to deliver our opinions in what sort of present journey thither might be made, we, who were then present, being thoroughly acquainted with the state of Her Majesty's forces (as having particular charge of them, some as Colonels over regiments, and some as Captains over companies), after long debating every one of us having spoken in order, at last by common consent resolved that, seeing the army so unwilling to be carried thither, that some secretly run into England, others revolt to the rebels, a third sort partly hide themselves in the country, and partly feign themselves sick, and seeing that there could be no planting this year at Lough Foyle, nor assailing of the north but one way (the Connaught army, consisting of a great part of old companies, being lately defeated), and that our army, which passeth not the number 3,500 or 4,000 at the most, of strong and serviceable men, should be far overmatched, when all the forces of the north should encounter them; and sithence that it was a course full of danger, and of little or no hope, to carry the army into their strengths, where the rebels should be first lodged, and were able to bring 6,000 shot to entertain fight with less than 2,000 (in which places, also, our horse should never be able to serve, or succour our foot); and, further, forasmuch as we could place no garrisons in the north, but such as consisted of very great numbers, and great numbers we could not spare from so small an army, with any likelihood of making a good retreat with the rest (to say nothing of the want of shipping and especially of victualling caused by the lack

thereof); and lastly sithence, if we could spare a sufficient number, and could lodge them at Armagh and the Blackwater, it would but tie the army to be ever busied in victualling them, and consequently more incommodate us than trouble the rebels (as it appeareth in the former plantations there in the times of the Lord Burgh, Sir William Russell, and Sir John Norreys) in regard of the premisses, we all were of opinion that we could not, with duty to Her Majesty, and safety to this kingdom, advise or assent to the undertaking of any journey far north. In which resolution if any man suspected it proceeded of weakness or baseness, we will not only in all likely and profitable service disprove him, but will every one of us, seal with his life, that we dissuaded this undertaking with more duty than any man could persuade into it--Dublin Castle, 1599, August 21.⁴¹

To support the gloomy picture described by the army commanders, Sir George Carey wrote to the Privy Council on August 26 that "the soldiers fall exceedingly sick."⁴² Even after the arrival of the long-awaited 2000 reinforcements brought over by Sir Francis Darcy at the end of July,⁴³ Carey estimated that there were only a total of 10,000 men alive and physically present, instead of the now authorized list strength of 19,000.⁴⁴

Against the unanimous opposition of the Army commanders, Essex gave the order for the appointed companies to assemble at Kells, and on August 28 he left Dublin with 100 cavalrymen, to join them. It took until August 31

⁴¹Ibid., 126-27.

⁴²Ibid., 131.

⁴³Ibid., 79.

⁴⁴Ibid., 131.

for all the units to arrive, by which time Essex's force numbered 2500 foot and 300 cavalry. After waiting another day for supplies to arrive from Drogheda, the Lord Lieutenant started his army off to challenge the wilds of Ulster and the army of Tyrone.⁴⁵ Without the Lough Foyle operation to tie down Tyrone, without the attack at Ballyshannon to engage O'Donnell, Essex could expect to find the full force of the best Irish armies waiting to meet him.

On September 3 near Ardolph Essex approached Tyrone's force and the Irish leader sent out some foot and horse to skirmish with Essex's troops.⁴⁶ The two opposing leaders finally caught sight of each other, and Essex wrote to the Privy Council on September 4: "yesterday Tyrone and I looked one upon another from two hills; but the river and his fastness was betwixt us."⁴⁷ In the same short note to the Council Essex informed them that he intended to move towards Louth, where he hoped to meet another convoy of victuals coming north from Drogheda. As Essex marched towards Louth along an open plain, Tyrone paralleled Essex's march, keeping his Irish soldiers generally in the woods, except for occasional skirmishes. On September 5 Essex arrived at Louth, met up with the victual

⁴⁵Ibid., 144-45.

⁴⁶Ibid., 145.

⁴⁷Ibid., 142.

convoy from Drogheda, and held a council of war, to consider what should be done about Tyrone's army, which was hovering nearby.

Essex had been keeping track of Tyrone's disposition and plans, by means of intelligence reports which he had been receiving continuously throughout his campaign.⁴⁸ The general opinion of the Essex agents was that Tyrone intended "to make strong fights upon every pass" by which Essex was to go to Ulster, drawing out the war to "unmeasurable length" until "the three furies, Penury, Sickness and Famine," forced the Queen's army to retire.⁴⁹ Captain "J.C." in his intelligence report in June concluded that Tyrone would make use of "the desert, craggy and boggy mountains of Sleoughe Gallaine, containing forty miles in compass, with the great woods of Killultagh, Kilwarlin, Kileleyrto, and Clancakie."⁵⁰ The captain added: "these fastnesses were inevitable stops to the journeys of all former Deputies into Ulster, in times of far easier wars than this one is like to prove."⁵¹ As for the size of Tyrone's army, the estimate fluctuated continuously. By early September, Essex and the Irish Council estimated Tyrone's force at 6000 foot, while Sir George Carey in

⁴⁸Ibid., 43, 68, 136.

⁴⁹Ibid., 69.

⁵⁰Ibid., 69-70.

⁵¹Ibid., 70.

Dublin, estimated Tyrone's Army at 8000 foot and 700 horse,⁵² and Captain Dymmok estimated 10,000 foot and 1000 horse.⁵³

In view of the Irish leader's commanding position, one can imagine Essex's surprise when he received a message from Tyrone on September 5 that the Irish chief wished to have a parley. Essex refused, but informed the messenger that if Tyrone still wished to parley he could find the Lord Lieutenant the next day at the head of his troops.⁵⁴

On September 6, after leaving 500 foot and 20 horse behind to guard the supply train, Essex formed his army up on the plain of Louth and began to move towards Tyrone's position. Essex's force of 2000 foot and 300 horse were drawn up in a tactical formation which Captain Dymmok called a "Saint Andrews cross" which consisted of infantry in the center, 100 horse on the left, 100 horse on the right and 100 horse in the rear, which could rescue any threatened part of the army, and prevent any retreat. At the head of the formation was the Lord Lieutenant and his immediate party, who led the way as the army drew closer to the rebels.⁵⁵

⁵²Ibid., 143.

⁵³Dymmok, A Treatise on Ireland, 48.

⁵⁴C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 145.

⁵⁵Dymmok, A Treatise on Ireland, 49.

Tyrone's advance guard of cavalry drew back as Essex approached, while the Irish infantry refused to emerge from the woods. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, after much feinting and some skirmishing, an Irish horseman approached Essex and delivered a message, the substance of which was "that Tyrone would not fight, nor draw forth, but desired to speak with the Lord Lieutenant, but not between the two armies."⁵⁶ Essex sent the messenger away without an answer and, since it was approaching dusk, Essex made "his rear, the vanguard" and withdrew back to his camp for the night.⁵⁷

The next day the army moved out again, but before they had gone a mile, Tyrone's messenger approached, and stated that the Irish leader desired Her Majesty's mercy and that the Lord Lieutenant should meet with him at a ford called Billaclynthe, located a short distance to the right of Essex's army. Essex halted his troops and sent two gentleman volunteers to the ford, where they found Tyrone, who was, however, located too far out in the water to converse with the messengers. Upon hearing this report Essex grew impatient and exclaimed, "Then I shall despair ever to speak with him."⁵⁸ At last, however, a suitable place was found and the Lord Lieutenant led a troop of

⁵⁶C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 146.

⁵⁷Dymmok, A Treatise on Ireland, 49.

⁵⁸Harrington, Nugae Antiquae, 299.

cavalry to a hill above the ford. Below, in the water up to the belly of his horse, was Tyrone, waiting there alone for the Lord Lieutenant. When Essex saw this he left his cavalry escort on the hill and rode down to the edge of the ford by himself. Upon Essex's coming, Tyrone saluted "with much reverence" and the two conversed alone for one half-hour, out of hearing distance of any other witnesses.⁵⁹

Such a private conference by the Queen's representative was a highly irregular procedure in Tudor England, or in any diplomatic circle. Since no witnessed record was kept of the proceedings, the meeting was the subject of much speculation among the Lord Lieutenant's friends and enemies. Essex later stated that the private meeting was only an occasion to arrange for a more formal meeting, which took place later in the day. The various State Papers, however, tend to shed a different interpretation on the conference. As Essex began his Ulster journey, one of his agents, Richard Weston, wrote a report on August 28 which Essex may not have seen until after he returned from Ulster. According to Weston, Tyrone had received a letter from an agent in Scotland. The agent asserted that "your honor (Essex) was mightily crossed in England, since you left it, and did think that you would make no great stay here."⁶⁰ If the above report is true, and if Tyrone

⁵⁹Dymmok, *A Treatise on Ireland*, 50; Harrington, *Nugae Antiquae*, 299; C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 146.

⁶⁰C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 137.

believed it, it would explain why Tyrone offered to parley with Essex, hoping that the Earl would be ready to make any truce, so that he could leave Ireland and return to his affairs in England.

Another reference to the private conference occurs in the Calendar of State Papers in the Archives of Simancas. On July 1, 1600, the Archbishop-elect of Dublin wrote to the Spanish king:

O'Neil (Tyrone) had almost gained the earl of Essex, the Queen's commander, to leave her side and join your Majesty, surrendering the country to you on the promise of great favors in your majesty's name, and O'Neil gave him his own son as hostage. The Earl did not carry out arrangement, out of suspicion of your Majesty in consequence of certain acts of his against Spain some time ago.⁶¹

The "certain acts" undoubtedly refers to the sacking of Cadiz in 1596, a humiliation which the Spanish King would be loath to forget.

Another interpretation of the private conference was later offered by Sir Robert Cecil, who stated that Essex had made a bargain with Tyrone by which a force of Irishmen were to land in England with Essex, depose the Queen, and make all the English "prey to Irish kern."⁶² While Cecil's interpretation seems a bit outlandish, it is probable that Tyrone did make treasonable offers, and that Essex, anxious to make a quick end of the matter, was in

⁶¹C.S.P. Simancas, 1587-1603, 663.

⁶²C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 554.

no mood or disposition to drive a hard bargain.

In November, after Essex had left Ireland, Tyrone sent a letter to England containing twenty-two articles, which supposedly had been agreed upon, or at least discussed, by the Earl of Essex. The most controversial provisions concerned religious freedom, and stipulated that Catholicism could be "openly preached and taught"; that the Catholic Church in Ireland was to be governed by the Pope; that free travel of all priests and missionaries was to be insured; and that the lands and privileges of the Catholic church should be restored. The remaining articles provided for measures which would allow Ireland and the Irish people virtually an autonomous existence. Robert Cecil labeled the document with the word "Eutopia" and cast it aside.⁶³

In any case at the end of the half-hour private conference Essex and Tyrone each brought down six of their principal advisors. Again Tyrone and all his party rode their horses into the water, while the Lord Lieutenant's party remained on the shore, and in this setting they continued the conference for another hour. After agreeing to have their commissioners meet to draw up terms of a truce, Essex and Tyrone parted, and would not set eyes on each other again.⁶⁴ The next day an agreement was

⁶³C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 279-80.

⁶⁴Ibid., 137.

drawn up whereby there would be a six-weeks' truce, which would be renewed from one six-weeks' period to another six-weeks' period until May day, and could be terminated by either side with 14 days' notice. Additionally, commissioners would meet and draw up more details of the terms during the next few weeks.⁶⁵ To seal the bargain Essex gave his word, while Tyrone gave his oath, after which the English commander dispersed his army and returned to Drogheda to "take physic" for his illness, while the Irish commander retired, "with all his forces, into the heart of his country."⁶⁶

Essex immediately sent a copy of his journal of proceedings from August 28 to September 8 to the Privy Council. In this journal the Earl only mentioned that a six-weeks' truce had been concluded, but did not give any details.⁶⁷ Essex had given Tyrone twenty days to discuss terms of the truce with his allies, principally O'Donnell,⁶⁸ and the Lord Lieutenant moved back to Dublin Castle to await Tyrone's final answer. While in Dublin, on September 15, Essex wrote up a detailed description of all the truce's terms and sent them off to Elizabeth.⁶⁹

⁶⁵MSS. Salisbury, vol. 9, 348.

⁶⁶C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 147.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Harrington, Nugae Antiquae, 301.

⁶⁹C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 154.

On September 20 Essex received a stinging letter from Elizabeth, written in response to the Earl's short note of September 4 in which he related his Ulster proceedings; proceedings which may well have appeared cautious and irresolute.⁷⁰ Elizabeth opened her letter to Essex by noting "how little the manner of your proceedings hath answered either our direction or the worlds expectations." She then launched into a lengthy denunciation of the whole course of Essex's campaign.

The Queen would accept none of Essex's excuses for having postponed the Ulster invasion:

If sickness of the army be reason, why was there not the action undertaken when the army was in better state? If the spring were too soon, and the summer that followed otherwise spent, if the harvest that succeeded were so neglected as nothing hath been done, then surely we must conclude that none of the four quarters of the year will be in season for you and that Council to agree to Tyrone's prosecution, for which all our charge is intended. Further, we require you to consider whether we have not great cause to think that your purpose is not to end the war.

Concerning strategy she continued:

How often have you told us that others that preceded you had no judgement to end the war, who often resolved us that until Lough Foyle and Ballyshannon were planted there could be no hope of doing service upon the capitol rebels? We must therefore let you know, as it cannot be ignorance so it cannot be want of means: for you had your asking, you had choice of times, you had power and authority more ample than ever any

⁷⁰The following excerpts are taken from the Queen's letter to Essex, dated September 14, 1599, found in the C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 150-53. For the complete text see Appendix D.

had or shall have.

As for the steadily diminishing numbers of the army the Queen observed: "For the small proportion (of troops) you say you carry with you of 3,500 foot, when lately we augmented you 2,000 more, it is past comprehension, except it be that you have left too great numbers in unnecessary garrisons, which do increase our charge and diminish our army..." Finally, the Queen commented on Essex's incessant charges that his campaign was being undermined by persons in England: "We have seen a writing, in manner of a catalogue full of challenges, that are impertinent, and of comparisons, that are needless, such as hath not been before this time presented to a State, except it be done more with a hope to terrify all men from censuring your proceedings."

This last letter contained the most serious accusations hurled at Essex to date. In addition to a general condemnation of his proceedings, there was the ominous new charge that perhaps Essex's purpose was not to end the war. Furthermore, Elizabeth's comments concerning Essex's "catalogue full of challenges" against the Privy Council made it obvious that the Queen was believing the Privy Council's interpretation of events.

Three days after writing her letter of September 14, Elizabeth received Essex's journal and letter of September 8, describing the termination of the Ulster campaign and

the prospect of a truce. The Queen immediately sent off her final correspondence.⁷¹ The Queen initially expressed surprise to "see a quick end made of a slow proceeding."

But Elizabeth was skeptical, and stated:

We never doubted but that Tyrone whensoever he saw any force approach, either himself or any of his principal partisans, would instantly offer a parley, especially with our supreme Governor of that kingdom, having often done it to those who had but subaltern authority.

Elizabeth was particularly distressed about Essex's private conversation with Tyrone and commented:

...it appeareth to us by your journal, that you and the traitor spake together half an hour alone, and without anybody's hearing: wherein, though we trust you with our kingdom, are far from mistrusting with a traitor; yet both for comeliness, example, and for our own discharge, we marvel you would carry it no better.

Regarding any truce terms which Essex might offer to Tyrone, the Queen sarcastically noted: "...you have prospered so ill for us by your warfare, as we cannot but be very jealous lest you should be as well overtaken by the treaty." And she grimly observed:

...if this parley shall not produce such a conclusion, as this intolerable charge may receive present and large abatement, then hath the managing of our forces not only proved dishonorable and wasteful, but that which followeth is like to prove perilous and contemptable.

In respect to any promises Tyrone might make, the

⁷¹The following excerpts are taken from the Queen's letter to Essex, dated September 17, 1599, found in Harrington's Nugae Antiquae, 302-08. For the complete text see Appendix E.

Queen continued:

To trust this traitor upon oath, is to trust a devil upon his religion. To trust him upon pledges is mere illusary, for what piety is there among them that can tie them to rule of honesty for itself, who are only bound to their own sensualities, and respect only private utility.

Therefore the terms which the Queen expected Essex to impose were expressed as follows:

...unless he [Tyrone] yield to have garrisons planted in his country to master him, to deliver O'Neils sons [as hostages], and to come over to us personally here, we shall doubt you do but piece up a hollow peace, and so the end prove worse than the beginning.

The Queen then emphatically directed:

And therefore, as we well approve your own voluntary progression, (wherein you assure us that you will conclude nothing till you have advertised us, and heard our pleasure), so do we absolutely command you to continue and perform that resolution.

Lastly, the Queen explained her reasons for taking such an uncompromising position:

For whatever we do, ought to be well weighed in such a time, when the world will suspect that we are glad of anything out of weakness, or apt to pardon him out of mistrust of our power to take due revenge on him.

When Essex received the above letter, he immediately appointed a temporary government in Ireland, and, in direct disobedience to the Queen's order through the Privy Council, too several close companions and departed Ireland on September 24, 1599, for Her Majesty's Court at Nonsuch.⁷²

Exactly why Essex left in such a manner is still a

⁷²C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 156.

matter of speculation. Perhaps it was to explain the terms of the truce which the Queen would receive shortly, terms which would hardly meet her expectations. Perhaps he was apprehensive about Her Majesty's inference of treasonable activities in her letter of September 14. Undoubtedly the last two letters from the Queen had inflamed his passionate disposition, and such a flamboyant, dramatic gesture was certainly in keeping with his personality. In any event his departure from Dublin brought to a close one of the most controversial campaigns in English history.

CHAPTER VIII

EPILOGUE

On September 28, 1599, four days after leaving Ireland, Essex arrived at the Court of Elizabeth and burst into her bed chamber unannounced. After making an initial hasty explanation, he was dismissed until the afternoon, when his conduct would be examined in detail. Essex had brought a company of knights, captains and other officers with him and they remained close to the Earl throughout the long afternoon and evening.¹

If Essex had hoped to persuade Elizabeth to his way of thinking, he was mistaken. A court observer noted that the Queen privately commented: "By God's Son I am no Queen, that man is above me!"² Elizabeth made no sudden, rash decisions immediately upon Essex's arrival since there was no way of knowing how many men he had brought with him, and what his intentions were. She may well have recalled a statement made by Francis Bacon only nine days before. On September 15, when discussing Irish questions and Essex's actions, Bacon, still considered a friend by the unsuspecting Essex, offered the observation to the

¹Harrison, Elizabethan Journals II, 116-18.

²Quoted in Bowen, Lion and Throne, 129.

Queen, that if Her Majesty

...had my Lord of Essex here with a white staff in his hand, as my Lord of Leicester had, and continued him still about for society to yourself, and for an honour and ornament to your attendance and Court in the eyes of your people and in the eyes of foreign ambassadors, then were he in his right element, for to discontent him as you do and yet put arms and power into his hands, may be a kind of temptation to make him prove cumbersome and unruly.³

In any case, after a day of questioning, with Elizabeth now certainly aware that Essex had brought few followers, the Earl was turned over to the custody of the Lord Keeper, Thomas Egerton, for confinement at York House.⁴ A hearing of the Star Chamber was considered, but its fines were ruinous, and apparently Elizabeth still held Essex in affection. Instead, he would be judged by a private commission of peers headed by the Lord Keeper.⁵ The public reaction was one of disbelief and dismay. Unaware of all the circumstances surrounding the Earl's return, the people would remain stubbornly loyal to Essex throughout.

The official hearing regarding the Earl's conduct during the Irish campaign took place in June 1600. However, preceding this an important meeting of the Star Chamber

³John Bruce (ed.), Correspondence of King James VI of Scotland with Sir Robert Cecil and Others in England (London, 1830), 107-08.

⁴Williams, Elizabeth, 337.

⁵Bowen, Lion and Throne, 129.

had taken place in November 1599. It was at this meeting that the charges against the Earl were clarified and the opinion of many otherwise neutral persons were swayed against Essex. Additionally, Essex's conduct during the official hearing in June 1600 can be understood only by examining the proceedings of the November Star Chamber meeting. It would be profitable, therefore, to consider these proceedings in detail.

The occasion for the Star Chamber meeting, which Essex did not attend, was the end-of-term speech of Lord Keeper Egerton. Six members of the Privy Council used this opportunity to speak out against treason in general and the conduct of Essex in particular. Though not charging Essex outright with sedition, the implication was clear.

The first speaker was Lord Keeper Egerton, who began by condemning certain libels and slanders leveled by "wicked Traytors" against Her Majesty. There were rumors that the Queen had not taken the affairs of Ireland with as much "Care and Providence as was meet."⁶ Yet, Her Majesty had sent a splendidly equipped army, had forgiven Essex £8,000 of his private debt, and had sent all the arms and victuals which were needed. Thus, "if this be no Care and Providence in Her Majesty, I know not what Pains, what Council, what Foresight is required in a carefull and

⁶Bacon, The Earl of Essex's Vindication, 60.

Provident Prince."⁷

Lord Egerton then sought to determine the cause of the failure in Ireland. Essex had been instructed to go north to Ulster; instead he had gone south and had wasted his army. Then, with his army weakened, he had engaged in a private conference with Tyrone, had made a dishonorable truce, and had returned to England without permission. The Lord Keeper concluded that the Earl should get the punishment he deserved.⁸

The next speaker was Lord Treasurer Buckhurst, responsible for supplying and financing the expedition. He covered the subject of support for the expedition, pointing out that Essex had the best equipped army ever sent. All the men had been paid in advance and all supplies had arrived generally as planned. Therefore, no blame could be placed on Her Majesty for lack of support.⁹

Buckhurst was followed by Lord Admiral Howard, who castigated Essex for going south into Munster after he, Essex, had even recognized the need to destroy Tyrone in Ulster.¹⁰ He further condemned the promise of religious toleration Essex had granted in the truce with Tyrone. Nottingham finished by stating that the ships to carry

⁷Ibid., 62.

⁸Ibid., 64.

⁹Ibid., 64-65.

¹⁰C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 349.

troops to the north had been ready to sail, but Essex's weakened army had been in no condition to use them.¹¹

At this point, Sir Robert Cecil interrupted. He acknowledged Lord Egerton as being the "mouthpiece of Her Majesty" and explained: "It goes against my Heart to speak in this Cause, but when my Sovereign's Honour is in Question, I cannot be silent."¹² He then launched out against "these wicked Spirits," who were saying that the Queen cared not for her soldiers. Regarding Ireland, he stated: "I have heard that my Lord of Essex said that if he had had men and money, Ireland had not been lost, but I do not think he would say so."¹³ Furthermore, from the time Essex's army first landed, it had never tried to defeat the main rebel army, but instead had gone south. Essex, in going south, proceeded contrary to instructions, for the "Council here declared they never advised such a course."¹⁴ Cecil reiterated the other charges against Essex, ending by declaring that he had heard that the insolent Irish, heartened by the easy terms Essex had granted, were boasting of invading England itself.¹⁵

The remaining speakers stated that they were not

¹¹Bacon, The Earl of Essex's Vindication, 65.

¹²Ibid., 67.

¹³C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 353.

¹⁴Ibid., 350.

¹⁵Bacon, The Earl of Essex's Vindication, 66-72.

present when Irish affairs were being discussed, therefore they could make no statements on the specifics of the campaign.¹⁶ However, Chief Justice Fortiscue commented that libelers and slanderers must be rooted out, or else there would be chaos. As for Ireland, all he knew was that the island was now in worse condition than when Essex's army first landed. Lord Chamberlain Hunsdon, another neutral, expressed complete bewilderment at the Irish debacle and stated that with the army Essex had, he should have been able to march through Spain itself.¹⁷

Cecil, Egerton, Buckhurst and Howard had presented their declaration in such a way that Essex could not respond without seeming to attack the Queen herself. As a final warning, the Council stated that anyone who persisted in slanderous tales concerning the alleged lack of care regarding the Irish expedition, would be subject to severe punishment.¹⁸

Essex and his followers quickly heard of the proceedings in the Star Chamber and recognized the vulnerability of their position. The next day Edward Reynolds, secretary to the Earl of Essex, wrote to Henry Cuffe, another Essex supporter, relating the details of the Star Chamber proceedings. Reynolds informed Cuffe that Essex wanted a thorough check of the Irish records to answer the accusa-

¹⁶C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 351.

¹⁷Bacon, The Earl of Essex's Vindication, 66.

¹⁸Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, II, 129-30.

tions of the Council. As for the present, Reynolds felt that discretion was the better part of valor. If the Earl protested in his usual vociferous manner, he would only antagonize the officials and make things worse. Reynolds concluded: "If he gets out of this bog, he may speak home hereafter, and yet lose nothing now by a humble and temperate proceeding."¹⁹ As we shall see, Essex followed the advice of his friends when he attended the June hearing.

On December 1, 1599, the Lords of the Star Chamber declared that because of his misgovernment in Ireland, along with his other errors and faults, the household staff of Essex, numbering 160 persons, was to be dispersed. He would be allowed to keep a few retainers in his new residence, which was to be designated by Elizabeth. Essex was in no position to argue, particularly since he was seriously ill from the effects of campaigning in Ireland. By December 15, it seemed that he would die, so Elizabeth sent her personal physician to look after him.²⁰ The people were much aggrieved and prayed for Essex's recovery. One of Cecil's supporters, Dr. Edward Stanhope, complained in a letter that sermons were being preached on behalf of Essex, while public prayers were offered in his name.²¹

¹⁹C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 354.

²⁰Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, II, 174.

²¹C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 365.

With the coming of Spring, Essex recovered and appeared before the Council for a formal hearing on June 5, 1600. The session lasted for eleven hours, beginning at nine in the morning. The charges against him were those discussed in the November meeting. The only significant change was that Francis Bacon openly joined the ranks of the witnesses against Essex. The Earl was condemned for appointing Southampton as General of the Horse, going south to Munster in Ireland contrary to his instructions, and returning from Ireland without permission.²²

Throughout the long session, the Earl was the picture of humility, rarely speaking, and then only in barely audible tones. He began the hearing by voluntarily kneeling at the feet of the Council. As the session went on, he was given permission to stand, then to lean, and finally to sit. When the testimony ended, Essex offered no excuses, not even to the insinuations of Sir Edward Coke of the Earl's disloyalty. All the Councilors condemned Essex for "contemptuously offending so great a sovereign." However, they could not agree on his punishment, suggestions about which ranged from loss of offices to imprisonment in the Tower. Finally, he was told to return to his house to await the Queen's pleasure.²³

Elizabeth was possibly impressed by Essex's new-found

²²Ibid., 159.

²³Ibid., 160.

humility and kept the sentence relatively light, sequestering all the major offices Essex had accumulated and keeping him under house arrest. In August, convinced of his repentance, she decided to set him free. This decision prompted controversy among the Court members, as Sir Walter Raleigh warned:

His malice is fixed and will not evaporate by any mild courses. Let the Queen hold him while she has him for he will always be a danger. Princes are lost by security and preserved by prevention: if he have his liberty then we have seen the last of her good days and all ours.²⁴

Raleigh's advice notwithstanding, Essex was freed in late August and publicly announced his intention to live a retired life.

Whether a man of Essex's temperament would have been content to retire at the age of thirty-three seems doubtful. Whatever his plans, a new crisis emerged over the issue of finances, the plague of king and commoner alike. In an age when a teacher could expect to earn £5 a year, and a good privateer £9 or £10, the Earl had run up staggering debts. As we have seen, Elizabeth had written off his debt of £8,000 when he left for Ireland.

By September 1600, being over £16,000 in debt, he wrote to Elizabeth regarding his financial status. His main source of income was from his lease to a monopoly on imported sweet wines. The ten-year lease would be up in

²⁴Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, II, 174.

October 1600 and the Earl begged the Queen to renew it, to save him from his creditors.²⁵ Elizabeth made no decision until the very end of October, and then sent Essex word that she had decided to keep the lease herself and award it to no one.²⁶

Neville Williams, author of Elizabeth the Queen, states that Her Majesty decided to hold it until Essex would mend his ways.²⁷ A more plausible explanation lies in a comment made by Sir Francis Bacon, who was present when the Queen read Essex's letter, written in his usual flowery style. Apparently Elizabeth still cared for Essex and was deeply disappointed upon receiving this letter, for "she took the letter to be the abundance of his heart, she found it to be but a preparation for the renewing of his farm on sweet wines."²⁸ Thus, in her offended vanity, she refused to allow Essex to keep his means of financial support.

The news instantly threw Essex into a frenzy. His friends told him that the Queen, the Council and his other adversaries intended to thrust him down to extreme poverty.²⁹ Sir John Harrington, who served with him in Ireland, saw him shortly afterwards and wrote to a friend:

²⁵Williams, Elizabeth, 340.

²⁶Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, II, 191.

²⁷Williams, Elizabeth, 340.

²⁸Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, II, 186.

²⁹Ibid., 195.

His soul seemeth tossed to and fro like the waves of a troubled sea. His speeches of the queene becometh no man who has mens sana in corpore sano. He uttered strange words bordering on such strange desynges that made me hasten forth and leave his presence. Thank heaven! I am safe at home.³⁰

When the Queen turned down his request for renewal of his lease, the Earl committed himself to the idea of rebellion.

When one considers his dealings with James VI of Scotland and Lord Mountjoy in Ireland, it would seem that rebellion had been in the back of his mind for some time. The Scottish King, who had long set his mind on succeeding to the Crown of England, had had constant correspondence with Essex, and there were many who advised James that Essex was the man with whom he would have to deal.³¹

At the same time, Essex had been keeping in close touch with Lord Mountjoy, his successor in Ireland, and correspondence indicates that Mountjoy and Essex had a plan for an invasion of England from Ireland and Scotland. Immediately after taking over the Irish army, Mountjoy sent Henry Leigh, his personal emissary, to James VI, proposing that if James would mass troops on the border, Mountjoy would invade England with four or five thousand men, and under Essex, effect a coup, turning the Crown over to James.³² James, as usual, was hesitant and unwilling

³⁰Quoted in Bowen, Lion and Throne, 130.

³¹Helen G. Stafford, James VI of Scotland and the Throne of England (New York, 1940), 205.

³²David H. Wilson, James VI and I (New York, 1967), 150-51; Handover, The Second Cecil, 200.

to take so drastic a step; thus negotiations stretched throughout the summer of 1600. At the same time, Mountjoy was experiencing great success in Ireland and quickly grew lukewarm to the idea of an armed invasion.³³ After the sweet-wines incident, Essex attempted to push the invasion plot again, playing on James' fear of exclusion by writing that Cecil was considering the establishment of the Spanish Infanta on the throne of England.³⁴ But James, though alarmed, still would not risk offending Elizabeth, while Lord Mountjoy no longer wished to risk his career, and possibly his head, for Essex.

With or without James VI and Mountjoy, Essex was determined to act, and as later confessions indicated, the outline of the plot was formed at the beginning of November 1600. The conspirators, headed by Essex and the Earl of Southampton, met at Drury House, where they decided to capture the Tower of London first, then the Court, and without harm to the Queen, to effect a change of government and thus rid the Queen of evil advisors. For support, Essex's friends confidently assured him that he could count on the people of London, and at least twenty-one of the twenty-four aldermen.³⁵

At the end of December Essex went to London, where

³³Handover, The Second Cecil, 205.

³⁴Ibid., 220.

³⁵Bowen, Lion and Throne, 133, 137.

his presence immediately attracted the attention of the entire city. Throughout the month of January there were almost daily gatherings at his house, while preachers gave sermons on the power of superior magistrates to restrain even kings. Discontented officers, Puritans and other malcontents also thronged about his residence.³⁶ Apparently by early February the conspirators were ready, since on February 5, Essex's friends paid forty shillings to have the play Richard II performed at the Globe Theater in London.³⁷

Such obvious preparation could hardly be missed by Cecil, and on February 7, he sent word for Essex to report to the Council. Essex refused, telling Cecil that he was sick and confiding to his friends that he expected to be murdered. The next day Cecil sent a delegation, led by the Lord Keeper and the Lord Chief Justice, to Essex's house to take the Earl into custody. Essex immediately had them locked up, and with about two hundred followers went into the London streets to start the rebellion. The crowds were both wary and confused as the greatest lord in England rode through the streets calling them to arms and warning of plots by Raleigh and others to kill him.³⁸

Robert Cecil had been well prepared. The day after

³⁶Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, II, 203, 205.

³⁷Bowen, Lion and Throne, 131.

³⁸Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, II, 210.

the revolt, he wrote: "If the Queen had not put herself in strength that morning and barricaded Charing Cross and other places of the back parts of Westminster, the resolution was to have been at the court by noon."³⁹ As Essex passed through the streets, Robert Cecil's brother followed as a herald, proclaiming Essex a traitor.⁴⁰ The Lord Mayor and the Lord Sheriff, whom Essex had thought might provide 1000 men, refused to aid him, while the troops of the Bishop of London fired on the rebels, killing three men, the only fatalities of the rebellion.⁴¹

With nowhere to go, Essex retreated back to his house, citizens and followers alike using the opportunity to slink from his side. Finding his prisoners gone, Essex barricaded the house and awaited his fate.⁴² It came in the person of Lord Admiral Howard, who arrived with a force of cavalry and called upon Essex and the conspirators to surrender, promising that their grievances would be brought to the Queen. At this, a contemporary writes, "they seemed utterly to despair, Essex saying there was none near the Queen that would be suffered to make a true report of his action, or speak a good word for him."⁴³

³⁹C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 547.

⁴⁰Handover, The Second Cecil, 237.

⁴¹Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, II, 210-13.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 550.

After more prompting, Essex came out, and the Lord Admiral took him away. The brief rebellion was over, undone, as one contemporary observed, by the "providence and celerity of the Secretary who foresaw before he was believed and showed great dexterity and courage in ministering sudden remedies."⁴⁴

The immediate concern of both Elizabeth and Robert Cecil was to discredit Essex with the people and to insure that no outside force would attempt to complicate the issue. The next day, Elizabeth set the tone, when she explained to the French Ambassador that "a senseless ingrate had at last revealed what had long been in his mind."⁴⁵ On the same day, a proclamation drawn up by Robert Cecil was sent to the people of London which stated that the Earls of Essex, Southampton and Rutland had been discovered in treasons in Ireland with Tyrone, and also in England. Upon being discovered, the conspirators had imprisoned the Lord Keeper and the Lord Chief Justice and then, pretending that their lives were threatened, had attempted to lead a rebellion. The culprits now had been apprehended, and Her Majesty thanked Her subjects for their loyalty.⁴⁶

The charge of an Essex-Tyrone conspiracy was the main theme in the subsequent attempts to discredit Essex, since

⁴⁴Ibid., 555.

⁴⁵Williams, Elizabeth, 340.

⁴⁶C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 545.

an invasion by half-civilized Irishmen, whose savagery was well known to the masses through stories from returning veterans, was a particularly frightening prospect. At Essex's trial, Sir Robert Cecil solemnly announced that Essex had planned to have Tyrone land with 8000 Irish barbarians and depose the Queen, after which all would be made "prey to Irish kerns."⁴⁷

Sir Robert Cecil, who must have had a superlative intelligence network, apparently was aware of Essex's previous intrigues with Mountjoy in Ireland, as well as with James VI in Scotland. Now, Cecil wrote a letter to Lord Mountjoy to subtly inform the Viceroy that if he had any thoughts of returning to save Essex he would be backing a dead favorite. After informing Mountjoy of the details of the rebellion, Cecil concluded: "I shall only need to say that I think by the time my letters arrive, both he (Essex) and the Earl of Southampton with other principles, shall have lost their heads."⁴⁸ Cecil need not have troubled himself about Mountjoy; things were going too well in Ireland. As for James VI of Scotland, when he heard the news of Essex's failure, he realized that for all practical purposes, Cecil was the temporary ruler of England and immediately sought to solidify relations with the Secretary.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Ibid., 554.

⁴⁸C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 547.

⁴⁹Stafford, James VI, 217.

The trial, which began on February 19, 1601, was a mere formality, since the issue was never in doubt. Actually, in Tudor England, to be put on trial for treason was tantamount to a death sentence. From 1522 to 1589, many noblemen were brought to trial, yet only one, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, managed to talk himself into an acquittal. Throckmorton's jury was immediately imprisoned, and eight who refused to retract their "not guilty" verdict were ruinously fined.⁵⁰

The rules for procedure were somewhat lax and were definitely stacked against the accused. At Essex's trial, two eminent lawyers, Sir Edward Coke, who had both set up the trial and selected the jury, and Chief Justice Popham, who was the judge, gave testimony against Essex. The jury contained numerous persons of very doubtful objectivity, such as Lord Admiral Howard and Lord Grey. However, the trial proceeded as a model of Elizabethan jurisprudence and the prosecutors, particularly Sir Edward Coke, presented an unanswerable case. When the verdict was called for, each jurymen rose and stated in monotonous succession: "Guilty, my Lord, of high treason, upon my honor."⁵¹

On February 25, 1601, Robert Devereaux, second Earl of Essex, ascended the scaffold to the executioner's block in the Tower of London courtyard, to suffer the penalty

⁵⁰ Bowen, Lion and Throne, 142-43.

⁵¹ Ibid., 141, 143, 159.

for treason and rebellion. Of his principal antagonists, Sir Robert Cecil was nowhere to be seen, but Sir Walter Raleigh accompanied Essex to the very steps of the platform, ostensibly to be in a position to reply to any final accusations Essex might hurl at him. Some said he came to feed his eyes with the sight of the Earl's blood.⁵² The Privy Council instructed the officials in charge of the execution to insure that Essex, in his final remarks, in no way attempted to discuss the particulars of his trial or to justify himself. Thus, the sentence was carried out with scrupulous attention to ancient custom, ending with the executioner lifting the severed head to the assembled notables and crying: "God save the Queen."⁵³

After the execution, Robert Cecil still tried to destroy the image of Essex. Sir Francis Bacon was commissioned to write a tract about the treason of the fallen earl,⁵⁴ while preachers were ordered to condemn him from the pulpit. The gist of the condemnation was that Essex had plotted with Tyrone, had been reconciled to the Pope and the King of Spain, and had sought to place himself on the throne of England. But the populace knew that most of these outrageous charges had not been mentioned at the

⁵²Camden, Historie, 188.

⁵³C.S.P. Domestic, 1597-1601, 595-96.

⁵⁴Harrison, Elizabethan Journals, II, 241.

arraignment,⁵⁵ and in resentment they spoke of Cecil as "Robin with the bloody heart" and "a Machiavelli with a crooked back."⁵⁶

Elizabeth, for all her outward imperturbability, was as grieved as the people at the death of Essex. The Queen slipped into a mental depression from which she never really emerged. Court observers wrote of how she suddenly cared little for food, wore the same garments for days on end, paced her privy chamber at all hours of the night, and generally displayed annoyance at all things.⁵⁷

In December 1602, Sir John Harrington, Elizabeth's godson, visited the Court and found Elizabeth "in most pitiable state." Harrington, who had a reputation for his lively poetry, tried to cheer her up by reading some of his verses, but the Queen only replied: "When thou dost feel creeping time at thy gate, these fooleries will please thee less; I am past my relish for such matters."⁵⁸ During the course of their conversation, Elizabeth casually asked Harrington if he had ever seen Tyrone, whereupon Harrington said that he had seen Tyrone when he served with the Earl of Essex. At this remark, she suddenly looked up

⁵⁵Elizabeth M. Thomson, The Chamberlain Letters (New York, 1965), 18.

⁵⁶Williams, Elizabeth, 342.

⁵⁷Harrington, Nugae Antiquae, 317-20.

⁵⁸Ibid., 323.

with "much color and grief in her countenance," and her eyes filled with tears.⁵⁹ In this state of melancholia, Elizabeth spent her remaining days, and she died on March 24, 1603.

The fate of Ireland after the departure of the Lord Lieutenant was similarly unhappy. Essex had made a great impression on the Irish in general, and Tyrone in particular. After the Lord Lieutenant had gone back to England, negotiations broke down, while reports kept coming in that the rebels would surrender only to the Earl of Essex.⁶⁰ Tyrone himself wrote that Essex was the only Englishman in whom he had confidence.⁶¹ However, by November, Tyrone began to doubt whether Essex would come back, and in January 1600, the Irish leader began his depredations anew.⁶²

Sir Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, was asked to take command of Essex's army in October 1599, shortly after the Earl had returned from Ireland. Lord Mountjoy at first refused out of loyalty to Essex, a feeling no doubt prompted in part by the fact that Mountjoy loved Essex's

⁵⁹Ibid., 322.

⁶⁰C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 201.

⁶¹Ibid., 240-41.

⁶²Ibid., 252.

favorite sister, Penelope.⁶³ In February 1600, apparently convinced that Essex's fortune was on a downward course, Mountjoy suddenly accepted command of the army.

The new Lord Deputy arrived in Ireland at the end of the month and, with an army of 14,000 foot and 1200 horse, brought up to full strength by new drafts from the Queen,⁶⁴ began his work with efficiency and dedication. His first task was to revise the victualing system. The old system of supplying the Army's needs directly from England had worked while the garrisons numbered only a few thousand; it was threatened when the garrisons rose from 4000 to 7000 in 1595; and finally broke down altogether when Essex's great army of 17,300 sought to sustain itself.

Upon observing the disastrous effects on Essex's army, Lord Mountjoy implemented a ruthless version of the Netherlands system, whereby the householders in fortified towns were required to store one year's supply of corn, and if possible, butter, cheese and salt pork, which his army could use as it passed by the area.⁶⁵ Mountjoy's system, which he had three years to perfect, worked well for the English, although it resulted in the Irish countryside being scoured of foodstuffs and left famine in the wake.

The Privy Council gave additional support by changing

⁶³Handover, The Second Cecil, 200.

⁶⁴Falls, Elizabeth's Irish Wars, 262.

⁶⁵C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 370.

the system of shipping victuals from England. Instead of allowing the merchants to turn over supplies to the "commissaries of victuals" at the Irish ports, the merchants were made utterly responsible for supplies, from initial procurement to final distribution to the army units. Without the ambiguities of responsibility which existed when the "commissaries of victuals" were involved in the distribution process, the Privy Council was able to control the system better and greatly reduce corruption.⁶⁶

Acceptable strides were also made in reforming the problem of uniforms. Essex's troops had had their uniforms rot off their bodies, and had been otherwise unsuitably dressed to conduct a campaign in the Irish climate and terrain. Essex had realized these deficiencies and had suggested in July 1599 that the troops be outfitted with Irish shoes and Irish mantles (large woolen coats) which were ideally suited for the climate.⁶⁷ No action was taken during Essex's lieutenancy, but in December 1599, Irish apparel, notably shoes and mantles, was authorized for the army in Ireland.⁶⁸ As for the corruption in supplying uniforms which had plagued Essex, Mountjoy was ordered to investigate the matter and determine where

⁶⁶Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Irish Wars, 85.

⁶⁷C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 93.

⁶⁸Ibid., 109-12.

the discrepancies lay.⁶⁹ Although Mountjoy never determined the exact source of corruption, his investigation apparently had some deterrent effect, since difficulties about uniforms were only a minor problem in his army.

The overall effect of reform in disbursing victuals and uniforms was to upgrade the health of Mountjoy's army. Additionally, while Essex's soldiers died in the streets for want of appropriate medical care--despite Essex's personal efforts--a massive government effort was ordered for Mountjoy. In January 1600, Lord Buckhurst, the Treasurer, authorized money for the establishment of hospitals in every province in Ireland.⁷⁰

The final area of reform concerned the rule that soldiers had to pay for their own gunpowder, even in battle. As early as August 1598, Sir Robert Cecil in a memorandum entitled "Some errors to be reformed in the government of Ireland" had discussed with understanding the problem of ammunition--and, incidentally, the use of Irish mantles and shoes.⁷¹ However, while Essex brought the problem of gunpowder to the attention of the Privy Council, it was not until after his campaign that corrective action was taken.

The chief opponent against having the Crown pay a

⁶⁹Ibid., 442.

⁷⁰Ibid., 396.

⁷¹C.S.P. Ireland, 1598-99, 251-53.

gunpowder allowance was the Treasurer, Lord Buckhurst, who believed that if the soldiers did not pay for their own ammunition, they would not care how much they fired off, and how much of the Queen's resources were wasted. On January 16, 1600, Buckhurst reluctantly approved the new rule of having the Crown pay for gunpowder used in battle, concluding, however, that the new system was "against all reason, equity, good order and justice."⁷² Later in the year, Mountjoy was authorized to issue gunpowder for training purposes as well as for active service,⁷³ while in 1601, the government decided that the ordinary soldier should no longer be compelled to pay for weapons lost on the battlefield.⁷⁴

With a firm base of support at Dublin, and with the enthusiastic cooperation of the Privy Council, Mountjoy systematically began the subjugation of Tyrone. A new series of mutually supporting garrisons were established across the southern Ulster border at Mount Norris, Armagh, the Blackwater fort, Breifne and Boyle abbey in Connaught. Corn and food supplies were destroyed throughout the country, wherever they could not be protected. Finally, on May 16, 1600, with the full cooperation of the English navy, 4000 men, commanded by Sir Henry Docwra, and all their

⁷²C.S.P. Ireland, 1599-1600, 380.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴A.P.C. XXXII, 337.

supplies, were landed at Lough Foyle.⁷⁵

Lord Mountjoy was fortunate enough to have two outstanding subordinates, Sir George Carew and Sir Arthur Chichester. Sir George Carew took the place of the dead Sir Thomas Norreys as President of Munster, and soon had the province well in hand. An astute politician, as well as an able soldier, Carew convinced an increasing number of Irish rebels not only to stop fighting against the English, but to join in the conflict against their former associates in order to bring the devastating war to a close.⁷⁶ Sir Arthur Chichester, who would reach the pinnacle of his fame as Lord Deputy of Ireland under James I, commanded the forces operating out of Carrickfergus in Ulster.

Mountjoy opened the assault on Ulster with a three-pronged attack: Docwra moving in from Lough Foyle; Sir Arthur Chichester from Carrickfergus; and Mountjoy's field army coming up through the Mowry Pass. To the horror of the Irish, Mountjoy continued these attacks throughout the winter of 1600-1601, a tactic which according to Fynes Morison, "brake their hearts" and threatened to summarily end the war.⁷⁷ However, before Mountjoy could finish Tyrone, the long-awaited Spanish intervention took place.

⁷⁵ Hayes-McCoy, "Strategy and Tactics in Irish Warfare," 269.

⁷⁶ Falls, Elizabeth's Irish Wars, 255.

⁷⁷ Moryson, Itinerary, vol. 11, 270.

In October 1601, 4000 Spanish troops landed at Kinsale, on the southern coast of Munster, and Mountjoy had to take his entire field army, some 5000 men, to meet the threat. Tyrone likewise brought all the forces he could spare, over 6000 men, to Kinsale, where a climactic battle ensued. Mountjoy besieged the Spanish in Kinsale, while Tyrone in turn surrounded Mountjoy, and in this configuration, Tyrone elected to fight the one orthodox battle of his career on Christmas Day 1601.

The Irish, attempting a night attack, became uncoordinated in executing their complicated maneuver and the four sections of the Irish army were defeated in detail, while the Spanish never kept their promise to emerge from their fortifications to assist Tyrone.⁷⁸ The Irish were sent reeling northwards, while Mountjoy forced the Spanish to surrender. The Lord Deputy and his subordinates, Docwra and Chichester, pursued Tyrone ruthlessly for the rest of the winter. In May 1601, Sir Arthur Chichester, the most relentless of the pursuers, described his savage progress in a letter to Mountjoy:

We have killed, burnt, and spoiled all along the Lough within four miles of Dungannon, from whence we returned hither yesterday...We spare none of what quality or sex soever, and it hath bred much terror in the people, who heard not a drum or saw not a fire there of long time. The last service was upon Patrick O'Quin, whose house and town was burnt, wife, son, children, and people slain, himself (as is now reported to me)

⁷⁸ Hayes-McCoy, "Strategy and Tactics in Irish Warfare," 269.

dead of a hurt received in flying from his house, and other gentleman which received blows in following us in our return to the boat; and Tyrone himself lay within a mile of this place, but kept himself safe, sending 100 shot to know the matter, which he seemed to marvel at.⁷⁹

Additionally, as Tyrone's allies gradually deserted the Irish leader they were used to fight the remaining rebels. The English attitude was expressed by Chichester who, upon hearing of a vicious battle between friendly and hostile Irish, commented: "It was good service on both sides; for never an honest man was slain."⁸⁰

Tyrone was doomed, but stubbornly held out for another murderous winter, by which time famine was in full fury. Fynes Moryson tells of corpses lying in Ulster roads, mouths stained green with the grass with which they had tried to sustain themselves; and of a band of old women who enticed children into their company and then killed them for food.⁸¹ With this note of misery and degradation, Tyrone's rebellion, the great rebellion, ended.

On Mary 30, 1603, Tyrone and his few remaining followers, now reduced to fugitives in their own land, proceeded to the Blackwater fort and surrendered to Mountjoy.⁸² As a final irony attributable to the slowness of

⁷⁹C.S.P. Ireland, 1600-1601, 356.

⁸⁰Ibid., 333.

⁸¹Moryson, Itinerary, vol. 111, 170.

⁸²Falls, Elizabeth's Irish Wars, 333.

communications, Tyrone had surrendered six days after Elizabeth had died, without knowing that his former secret ally, James I of Scotland, had succeeded to the throne of England.

CONCLUSION

The campaign against the Earl of Tyrone was the most formidable undertaking of any English expeditionary force up to that time. If the army of Essex was the largest ever sent, so were the problems of supply and maintenance the most difficult yet encountered. Success depended on whole-hearted backing from England. Even with complete cooperation, decision by military victory was a questionable thing, as seen by the campaign of Essex's successor, Lord Mountjoy, who, being judged by many as a superior soldier to Essex, and who received all the support which Essex did not, still took three years to end the conflict.

Essex had enemies in key positions at home, principally Sir Robert Cecil, who had much to lose by a quick and successful campaign; and in the Earl's absence the sixty-six year old Queen relied on his most bitter enemy for guidance and advice. The incredible lack of support, as manifested by nonavailability of shipping, failure to send draught horses, recall of Essex's subordinates, revocation of his permission to return, the lack of money, and the belittling and misrepresentations of his actions to the Queen all imply a conscious effort on the part of his enemies to insure his failure. In those areas in which the Privy Council did cooperate, widespread corruption

added to Essex's problems and undermined his campaign.

The lack of support dictated the strategy Essex had to employ. Instead of following the best possible courses of action, which he himself recognized and recommended, circumstances forced him to choose alternative courses of action which were potentially disastrous. The primitive state of communications also forced Essex to depend heavily on subordinates. Instead of assisting his effort, Essex's subordinates involved him in two crucial defeats, over which he had no control, but for which he would be blamed. In spite of these formidable stumbling blocks, Essex, by the force of his personality, succeeded in bringing about a truce which had all the possibilities of leading to a relatively inexpensive negotiated settlement. The negotiations were wrecked by not allowing Essex to return, the rebels being willing to deal only with him.

To attribute the collapse of the Irish campaign of 1599 to the Earl of Essex is to exhibit the same lack of understanding which Elizabeth reflected in her letters. In all major strategic decisions Essex chose the best possible alternatives. Instead, the failure of the campaign should be attributed to a panoply of factors including: the inherent difficulties of Irish warfare; corruption; and, particularly, to the uncooperative and hostile actions of those persons who actively sought the Earl's downfall.

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Most historians of the period appear to regard the Earl of Essex with a disaffection which would seem to impair their objectivity. Only by restructuring the campaign from the original documents and correspondence could the author attain an accurate impression of the subject. Therefore, the author relied primarily on the Calendars of the State Papers, Relating to Ireland. Early volumes of the Irish Calendars cover great periods of time (Volumes I and II cover the years 1509-1585), and are therefore sketchy. In contrast, later volumes are extremely detailed (Volumes V-IX only cover the years 1596-1601), and present all but the most technical reports in their entirety. In the relevant volumes for Essex's five-month campaign, most documents, including all correspondence between Essex, Elizabeth, Cecil and the Privy Council are printed verbatim.

While the Irish Calendars form the core of the research material, the Domestic Calendars, the Salisbury Manuscripts and the Acts of the Privy Council form a necessary supplement to the Irish Calendars; particularly as they help to illuminate events in England and logistical matters. In tracing the course of Essex's journeys, three sources are invaluable: the Journal of the Lord Lieutenant;

the account of John Dymmok, a company commander under Essex; and the journal of Sir John Harrington, a gentleman volunteer. These three works support each other on virtually every point, and together present a seemingly unimpeachable authority on events in Ireland.

Finally, the nature of warfare in Ireland and the organization of the opposing forces are admirably covered by C. G. Cruickshank in his book Elizabeth's Army, and in a series of articles by Gerard Hayes-McCoy, Cyril Falls, and L. W. Henry. Cyril Falls' great work Elizabeth's Irish Wars, forms the most complete coverage of this facet of Elizabeth's foreign policy and is helpful in giving the reader a frame of reference and sufficient background to understand the problem. Other primary and secondary sources which were helpful are listed below.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A: Letter of Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of
Essex, dated July 19, 1599.

We have perceived by your letters to our Council, brought by Henry Carey, that you are arrived at Dublin after your journey into Munster; where, though it seemeth, by the words of your letter, that you had spent divers days in taking an account of all things that have passed since you left that place, yet have you in this dispatch given us small light either when, or in what order, you intend particularly to proceed to the northern action. Wherein, if you compare the time that is run on, and the excessive charges that is (sic) spent, with the effects of anything wrought by this voyage (howsoever we may remain satisfied with your own particular cares and travails of body and mind), yet you must needs think that we, that have the eyes of foreign Princes upon our actions, and have the hearts of people to comfort and cherish, who groan under the burden of continual levies and impositions, which are occasioned by these late actions, can little please ourself hitherto with anything that has been effected. For what can be more true (if things be rightly examined) than that your two months' journey hath brought in never a capital rebel, against whom it had been worthy to have adventured one thousand men. For of their two comings in, that were brought unto you by Ormonde (namely, Mountgarrett and Cahir), whereupon ensued the taking of Cahir Castle, full well do we know that you would long since have scorned to have allowed it for any great matter in others, to have taken an Irish hold from a rabble of rogues, with such force as you had, and with the help of the cannon, which was always able in Ireland to make his passage where it pleased. And, therefore, more than that, you have now learned, upon our expenses, by knowledge of the country, that those things are true, which we have heretofore told you, if you would have believed us, how far different things would prove there from your expectation. There is little public benefit made to us of any things happened in this action, which the President, with any convenient addition to his numbers by you, might not have effected, either now or hereafter, in a time more seasonable, when it should less have hindered the other enterprise, on which depends our greatest expectation. Whereunto we will add this one thing, that doth more displease us than any charge or expense that happens, which is, that it must be the Queen of England's fortune (who hath held down the greatest enemy she had), to make a base bush kern to be accounted so famous a rebel, as to be a person against whom so many thousands of foot and horse, besides the force of all the nobility of that kingdom, must be thought too little to be employed. For

we must now remember unto you, that our cousin of Ormonde, by his own relation when you arrived, assured us that he had delivered you a charge of a kingdom, without either town maritime, or island, or hold, possessed by the traitors. But we did ever think that Tyrone would please himself to see such a portion of our fair army, and led by the person of our general, to be harassed out and adventured in encountering those base rogues, who were no way strengthened by foreign armies, but only by such of his offal, as he was content to spare and let slip from himself; while he hath lived at his pleasure, hath spoiled all where our army should come, and preserved for himself what he thought necessary. Little do you know how he hath blazed in foreign parts the defeats of regiments, the death of Captains, and loss of men of quality in every corner; and how little he seemeth to value their power, who use it so as it is likely to spend itself. It is, therefore, apparent that all places require not one and the selfsame knowledge, and that drafts and surprises would have found better successes than public and notorious marches; though, where the rebel attends you with greater forces, it is necessary that you carry our army in the form you use.

But it doth sound hardly in the ears of the world, that in a time when there is a question to save a kingdom, and in a country where experience giveth so great advantage to all enterprises, regiments should be committed to young gentlemen that rather desire to do well than know how to perform it. A matter wherein we must note that you have made both us and our Council so great strangers, as to this day (but by reports) we know not who they be that spend our treasure and carry places of note in our army. Wherein you know we did by our instructions direct you as soon as you should be arrived, seeing you used your reasons why it could not be done so conveniently beforehand. These things we would pass over, but that we see your pen flatters you with phrases, that here you are defeated, that you are disgraced from hence in your friends' fortune, that poor Ireland suffers in you; still exclaiming against the effects of your own causes. For if it be not enough that you have all, and more than, that which was agreed on before you went, concerning public service, but that you must, by your voluntary actions there in particular things (which you know full well are contrary to our will and liking), raise an opinion that there is any person that dare displease us, either by experience of our former tolerations, or with a conceit to avoid blame by distinctions; then must we not hide from you (how much soever we do esteem you, for those good things which are in you), but that our honour hath dwelt too long with us, to leave that point now uncleared, that whosoever it be that you do clad with any honours or places wherein the world may

read the least suspicion of neglect or contempt of our commandments, we will never make dainty to set on such shadows, as shall quickly eclipse any of those lustres. And, therefore, although by your letter we found your purpose to go northward, on which depends the main good of our service, and which we expected long since should have been performed; yet because we do hear it bruited (besides the words of your letter, written with your own hand, which carries some such sense), that you who allege such weakness in our army by being travailed with you, and find so great and important affairs to digest at Dublin, will yet engage yourself personally into Offaly (being our Lieutenant), when you have there so many inferiors able enough to victual a fort, or seek revenge of those that have lately prospered against our forces; and when we call to mind how far the sun hath run his course, what dependeth upon the timely plantation of our garrisons in the north, and how great a scandal it would be to our honour to leave that proud rebel unassailed, when we have, with so great an expectation of our enemies, engaged ourself so far in the action, so as without that be done, all these former courses will prove like via navis in mari; besides that our power, which hitherto hath been dreaded by potent enemies, will now be even held contemptible amongst our rebels; we must now plainly charge you, according to the duty you owe us, so to unite soundness of judgment to the zeal you have to do us service, and with all speed to pass thither in such order, as the axe may be put to the root of that tree, which hath been the treasonable stock from whence so many poisoned plants and grafts have been derived. By which proceeding of yours, we may neither have cause to repent our employment of yourself for omitting those best opportunities to shorten the war, nor receive (in the eye of the world) imputation of too much weakness in ourself to begin a work without better foresight. What would be the end of our excessive charge, the adventure of our people's lives, and the holding up of our own greatness, against a wretch whom we have raised from the dust, and who could never prosper, if the charges we have been put to were orderly employed?

For the matter of Southampton, it is strange to us that his continuance or displacing should work so great an alteration, either in yourself (valuing our commandments as you ought), or in the disposition of our army, where all the Commanders cannot be ignorant that we not only not allowed of your desire for him, but did expressly forbid it; and being such a one whose counsel can be of little, and experience of less use; yea, such a one [as], were he not lately fastened to yourself by an accident, wherein, for our usage of yours, we deserve thanks, you would have used many of your old lively arguments against him for any

such ability or commandment; it is, therefore, strange to us that we (sic), knowing his worth by your report, and your own disposition from ourself in that point, will dare thus to value your own pleasing in things unnecessary, and think by your private arguments to carry for your own glory a matter wherein our pleasure to the contrary is made notorious. And where you say further that divers, or the most, of the voluntary gentlemen are so discouraged thereby, as they begin to desire passports, and prepare to return, we cannot as yet be persuaded but that the love of our service, and the duty which they owe us, have been as strong motives to these their travails and hazards as any affection to the Earl of Southampton, or any other. If it prove otherwise (which we will not so much wrong ourself as to suspect), we shall have the less cause, either to acknowledge or reward it.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B: Letter of Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Essex,
dated July 30, 1599.

We have seen your letters written to our Council, by which we find many lacks represented; although, upon examination thereof, we find those things only wanting of that which was resolved, by those accidental causes which accompany sea transportations. And yet we understand by our Council that, upon calling to account the inferior ministers, to whom those cares were left, that (sic) most of those proportions of victuals, which were certified from remote garrisons to the Comptrollers there to be unarrived in Ireland, have long since been shipped here in several ports, so as they do assure themselves that long before this time they are in their appointed places. But of these things, and of your demand of 2,000 Irish more to be in charge for this present service, with enlargement of our allowance for your concordatums, our Council shall deliver you our pleasure, it being our purpose only now to deliver you our conceit of the course already holden, and what is our further determination.

First, you know right well, when we yielded to this excessive charge, it was upon no other foundation than [that] to which yourself did ever advise us as much as any, which was, to assail the Northern Traitor, and to plant garrisons in his country, it being ever your firm opinion, amongst others of our Council, to conclude that all that was done in other kind in Ireland, was but waste and consumption.

If then you consider what month we are in, and what a charge we have been ever at, since the first hour of your arrival, even to the greatest proportion that was intended, when the general prosecution should be made, and what is done of effect in any other place (seeing every Province must require so great numbers as by your letters is set down), you may easily judge that it is far beyond our expectation to find you make new doubts of further proceeding into Ulster, without further increase of numbers, when no cause can be conceived by us, that you should hold the traitor's strength at higher rate than when you departed; except it be that by your unseasonable journey into Munster, and by the small effects thereof (in comparison of that we hoped this great charge should have effected), you have broken the heart of our best troops, and weakened your strength upon inferior rebels, and run out the glass of time which hardly can be recovered. For the present, therefore, we do hereby let you know, that the state of things standing as they do, and all the circumstances weighed, both of our honour and of the state of that kingdom, we must expect at your hands, without delay, the passing into the North, for accomplishment of those counsels

which were resolved on at your departure, to the intent that all these six months' charges prove not fruitless, and all future attempts there as little successful; especially when these base rebels shall see their golden calf preserve himself without taint or loss, as safe as in his sanctuary, and our treasure, time, and honour, spent and engaged in other enterprises, which were always concluded to be of no difficulty, till the capital Rebel had been attempted.

In which respect, because we know that on your continuance there doth now depend the order and conduct of this important affair, and by your return suddenly (till the northern action be tried), many and great confusions may follow our will and pleasure is, and so we do upon your duty command you, that, notwithstanding our former license provisionally given, whereby you have liberty to return, and constitute some temporary Governor in your absence, that you do now in no wise take that liberty, nor adventure to leave that State in any person's government, but with our allowance first had of him, and our pleasure first known unto you what order you shall leave with him. After you shall have certified us to what form you have reduced things in the north, what hath been the success, and whom you and the Council could wish to leave with that charge behind, that being done, you shall with all speed receive our warrant, without which we do charge you (as you tender our pleasure) that you adventure not to come out of that kingdom, by virtue of any former license whatsoever.

It seemed strange unto us that in none of your letters we could find any advertisement of the arrival of the 2,000 last sent over, nor of your purpose to go into Offaly, when the messenger you sent did deliver both of them for certainty to divers that spake with him, which, we must tell you, we did disdain to do ourself (his quality and his own conditions considered), and though in his own presumption he desired it, as a matter which he pretended you desired, yet we cannot believe that you would deliver any matter of importance to such a man's relation, whom both our city and court know and speak to be unfit to come into our presence.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C: Letter of Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Essex,
dated August 9, 1599

The letter which we have read this day from you of that Council concerning your opinions for the northern action, doth rather deserve reproof than much answer; and therefore you shall hereby understand that when we examine all parts of your writings, and lay them together, we see nothing but insinuations to dissuade that which should be done in that point of greatest consequence, because we should not find the error of those former courtesies, which have made it now of greater difficulty. A matter which in you (whom we have held worthy to advise in the causes of that kingdom) might seem much more strange unto us than they do, if we could forget most of the examples of your proceedings in former times, which (sic) the late Deputies Russell and Fitzwilliams, even when the prevention, or rather absolute cure, of all the maladies in that kingdom was put into your hands. Of which if we had taken straight account in Russell's time, the expense, the danger, and the dishonour succeeding, would not thus have multiplied. But we do see bitter effects of our long sufferings, with which things we could as well in our own natural dispense as any Prince that liveth, because we presume that they proceed, not out of lack of duty, but of circumspection. Yet may not our kingdoms, our honour, and the lives of our subjects, both at home and abroad, be still dallied withall. God hath given us those upon other conditions, and whilst He vouchsafeth to continue us over them, we will not be accusable for anything within our power to perform.

Is it not enough for you of that Council to have been the greatest causes of that corruption in matter of religion (whereof the contagion reigneth in that kingdom) by your former suffering (nay, favouring) Popery, and the cause of many disasters to our people, by lack of discipline, order, and direction? but that you must, at the landing of our Lieutenant, who came with no other purpose but to do us service in the place of greatest peril, seek to divert his course, when our army was in greatest strength, by persuading so long a journey into Munster, and leaving that prosecution (for which we have been only drawn on by you all to assent to send over so great forces), but that even now, on the 7th of August, we must receive new arguments framed to keep an army out of the north, thereby to increase the rebels' pride, and frustrate one whole year's charges. Observe well what we have already written, and apply your counsels to that which may shorten, and not prolong, the war, seeing never any of you was of other opinion, than that all other courses were but consumptions,

except we went on with the northern prosecution. Do you forget that, within these seven days, you made a hot demand of 2,000 men for this action, and now, before you have answer, send us tidings that this huge charge must leave Tyrone untouched? What would you have us believe, if we did not think you loyal, but that either some of you [the Irish Council] cannot forget your old good wills to that Traitor, or else are insensible of all things, save your own particulars? For if these courses hitherto taken have well settled any of those Provinces, where your advices have carried our army (though contrary to the opinion of you, our Lieutenant, at your first arrival), then seeing this was also accounted your fittest time, what can be the reason of your stay? If, otherwise, it hath abated our strength, and given more means to the Traitor to fortify himself by all kinds of practice against our army, then must you confess, that these difficulties are not found, but made by yourselves. For we do know it, and must believe it, till we see the contrary proved, that whatsoever was appointed by us for this service hath been more than fully completed. Lastly, for Lough Foyle, which still you ring in our ears, to be the place that would most annoy the rebel, we doubt not but to hear by the next that it is begun, and not in question.

It remaineth now that we do return to your letter (our Lieutenant) such answer as is convenient, considering the contents of the same, but also that you may know what we resolve. First, it appeareth that all that Council have united themselves to dissuade the northern journey, after they had joined with you seven days before in a request for greater numbers. Secondly, yourself express that you hold it pro bono augurio that we so much affect the journey, and that you do desire it, and resolve it, and yet demonstratively point at the danger in the consequence, seeking thereby to shew intention to do that out of obedience, against which, in your ominous parenthesis, you make direct protestations. But herein we would have you know, that howsoever we do like obedience as the sacrifice which becometh all good subjects, yet such are, and shall be ever, the rules of our directions in things of this nature, as none that serveth us in that place you do, shall even win honour by obedience, where our country shall receive harm by our commandments. And where you describe unto us how strangely our Presidents of Munster and Connaught are mastered in those provinces without doing anything upon the rebels; that Offally with 1,500 cannot save themselves; that the northern garrisons are able to do nothing with 8,000 men; that within two miles of Dublin there are daily stealths and incursions; if it grow out of negligence of our Governors, it were fit to know it; if otherwise, then we wish they had occupied

fewer numbers, seeing they ran no worse fortune before this great army arrived. And for the places which you have taken, we conceive you will leave no great numbers in them, seeing other provinces where they are seated receive no better fruits of their plantation, nor that we can hope of more success (by the Council's writing) than to be able to keep our towns, that were never lost, and some petty holds of small importance, with more than three parts of our army; it being decreed for the head of the rebellion (as it seems by them) that our forces shall not find the way this year to behold them. What despair this will work in our subjects' minds, that had greater hopes; what pride it will raise in the rebels, that had greater fears; and what dishonour it will do us in foreign parts; we had rather you had prevented, than we had noted. And surely when we fall in this calculation of the numbers you write of, howsoever you seem to apportion the numbers only of 4,750 foot and 340 horse for the journey of Ulster, yet ought you to reckon the greatest part of the forces of Connaught, as one of the portions always designed to correspond that service, to which if you shall add these 2,000, which we have granted you, with such extractions as upon better consideration you may draw both from divers places, that serve rather for protections of private men's countries and fortunes, than for the good of the public cause, besides what you may carry out of the frontier northern garrisons, when you are so near his country; you may not reckon under ten or eleven thousand for that service. All which considered, although we will not particularly enjoin you to this way or that course of undertaking him, if the carriage of your own actions have changed the reason of some former counsels; yet have we thought it fit to make you see that out of your own letters we may sufficiently gather the small success of your painful endeavours; wherein we confess our army hath lost no honour under your person; and that out of our letters you may collect some sufficient matter to prove that we command you no impossibilities. Which being all that at this time we think fit for this letter, we end.

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D: Letter of Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Essex,
dated September 14, 1599

Having sufficiently declared unto you before this time how little the manner of your proceedings hath answered either our direction or the world's expectations, and finding now by your letters by Cuff a course more strange, if strange may be, we are doubtful what to prescribe you at any time, or what to build upon your writing unto us in any thing. For we have clearly discerned of late, what you have ever to this hour possessed us with expectation (sic) that you would proceed as we have directed you; but your actions always shows (sic) the contrary, though carried in such sort as we were sure to have no time to countermand them. Before your departure, no man's counsel was held sound, which persuaded not presently the main prosecution in Ulster; all was nothing without that; and nothing was too much for that. This drew on the sudden transportation of so many thousands, to be carried over with you; and when you arrived, we were charged with more than the list on which we resolved, by the number of 300 horsemen above the thousand, which was assented to, which were only to be in pay during service in Ulster. We have been also put in charge ever since the first journey, the pretence of which voyage (as) appeared by your letters, was to do some present service in the interim, whiles that grew more commodious the main prosecution. For which purpose you did importune with great earnestness that all manner of provisions might be hastened to Dublin against your return. Of this resolution to defer you going into Ulster you may well think that we would have made stay, if you had given us more time by warning; or if we could have imagined, by the contents of your own writing, that you would have spent nine weeks abroad, and your return when the third part of July was spent; and that you had understood our mislike of your former course, and made your excuse of undertaking it only in respect of your conformity to the Council's opinions, with great protestations of haste to the north. Then we received another letter of new reasons to suspend that journey yet awhile, and to draw the army into Offally, the fruit whereof at your home coming was nothing else but new relations of further miseries of our army and greater difficulties to perform the Ulster wars. Then followed from you and the Council a new demand of two thousand men, to which if we would assent, you would speedily undertake what we had so often commanded. When that was granted, and your going onward, promised by divers letters, we received by this

bearer new fresh (sic) advertisement, that all you can do is to go to the frontiers, and that you have provided only twenty days victuals. In which kind of proceeding we must deal plain (sic) with you and that Council, that it were more proper for them to leave troubling themselves with instructing us by what rules our power and their obedience are limited and bethink them of the courses that have been only derived from their counsel, and how to answer this part of theirs, to train us into a new expense for one end, and to employ it to another, to which we never would have assented, if we could have suspected it should have been undertaken before we heard it was in action; and therefore we do wonder how it can be answered, seeing your attempt is not in the capital traitor's country, that you have increased our listed. But it is true and we have often said, that we were ever won to expense by little and little, and by protestation of great resolutions in generalities, till they come to particular execution, of all which course whosoever shall examine any of the arguments used for excuse, shall find that your own proceedings beget the difficulties and that no just causes do breed the alterations of lack of numbers. If sickness of the army be the reason, why was there not the action undertaken when the army was in better state? If the spring were too soon, and the summer that followed otherwise spent, if the harvest that succeeded were so neglected as nothing hath been done, then surely we must conclude that none of the four quarters of the year will be in season for you and that Council to agree of Tyrone's prosecution, for which all our charge is intended. Further, we require you to consider whether, we have not great cause to think that your purpose is not to end the war, when yourself have often told us that all the petty undertakings in Leix, Munster and Connaught, are but loss of time, consumption of treasure, and most of all (of) our people, until Tyrone himself be first beaten, on whom all the rest depend. Do not you see that if this course be in all parts by his sinister seconding all places where any attempts be offered, who do not see that if this course be continued, that it is like to spend us and our kingdom beyond all moderation, as well as the report of their success in all parts hath blemished our honour, encouraged others to no small presumption? We know you cannot so much fail in judgement as not to understand that all the world seeth how time is delayed, though you think that the allowance of that Council.

How often have you told us that others that preceded you had no judgment to end the war, who often resolved us (that) until Lough Foyle and Ballyshannon were planted there could be no hope of doing service upon the capital rebels? We must therefore let you know, as it cannot be

ignorance so it cannot be want of means; for you had your asking, you had choice of times, you had power and authority more ample than ever any had or ever shall have. It may well be judged with how little contentment we seek this and other errors. But how should that be hid which is so palpable?

And therefore to leave that which is past, and that you may prepare to remedy matters of weight hereafter, rather than to fill your papers with impertinent arguments, being in your general letters savouring still in many points of humours that concern the private of you, our Lord Lieutenant, we do tell you plainly, and you that our Council, that we wonder at your indiscretion to subscribe to letters which concern our public service, when they are mixed with many matters private, and directed to our Council table, which is not wont to handle things of so small importance.

To conclude, if you say that our army be in a list nineteen thousands, (and) that you have not, we answer then to you, our Treasurer, that we are evil served, and that there needs not so frequent demands of full pay. If you will say that the muster-master is to blame, we much muse then, why he is not punished. We say to you, our General, if we would ex jure proprio judicarie, that all defects by muster, yea though never in so remote garrisons, have been affirmed to us to deserve to be imputed to the General. For the small proportion you say you carry with you of 3,500 foot, when lately we augmented you 200 (sic; error for 2,000) more, it is past comprehension, except it be that you have left too great numbers in unnecessary garrisons, which do increase our charge, and diminish our army; which we command you to reform, especially since by your continual report of the state of every province, you describe them all to be in worse condition than ever they were before you put foot in that kingdom. So that whosoever shall write the story of this year's action, must say that we were too great charge to hazard our kingdom, and you have taken great pains to prepare for many purposes, which perish without undertaking. And therefore, because we see now, by your own word, that the hope is spent of this year's service upon Tyrone and O'Donnell, we do command you and our Council to fall jointly into present deliberation of the state which you have brought our kingdom unto, and that by the effect which this journey hath produced, and why these garrisons which you will plant so far within the land, in the Brenny and Monagham, as others we have written, shall have the same difficulties. Secondly, we look to hear from you and them jointly, how you think fit that the remain of this year shall be spent and employed, in what kind of war, and whose and with what numbers; which being done and sent hither in

writing with all expedition, you shall then understand our pleasure in all things fit for your service: until which time we command you to be very careful to meet with all inconveniences that may rise in the kingdom, where the evil-affected will grow desperate, when they see the best of our defending them. We have seen a writing, in manner of a catalogue full of challenges, that are impertinent, and of comparisons, that are needless, such as hath not been before this time presented to a State, except it be done more with a hope to terrify all men from censuring your proceedings. Had it not been enough to send us the testimony of the Council, but that you must call so many of those, that are of so slender judgement and none of our Council, to such a form of subscription? Surely, howsoever you may have warranted them, we doubted not but to let them know what belongs to us to you and them. And thus, expecting your answer, we end at our manner of Non-such, the 14th of September, 1599.

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E: Letter of Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Essex,
dated September 17, 1599.

Right trusty and well beloved cousin and chancellor, we greet you well. By the letter and the journal which we have received from you, we see a quick end made of a slow proceeding, for anything which our forces shall undertake in those quarters which you pretended to visit, and therefore doubt not but before this time you have ended the charge of the last two thousand which we have yielded for other purposes, and of the three hundred horse only destined for the Ulster service. It remaineth therefore that we return you somewhat of our concept, upon this late accident of your interview with the rebels.

We never doubted but that Tyrone whensoever he saw any force approach, either himself or any of his principal partisans, would instantly offer a parley, especially with our supreme Governor of that kingdom, having often done it to those who had but subaltern authority, always seeking these cessations with like words, like protestations, and upon such contingents, as we gather these will prove, by your advertisement of his purpose to go consult with O'Donnell. Herein, we must confess to you that we are doubtful lest the success will be suitable with your own opinion heretofore, when the same rebels held like course with others that preceeded you. And therefore to come to some answer for the present, it appeareth to us by your journal, that you and the traitor spake together half an hour alone, and without anybody's hearing: wherein, though we trust you with our kingdom, are far from mistrusting with a traitor; yet, both for comeliness, example, and for our own discharge, we marvel you would carry it no better, especially when you have seemed in all things since your arrival to be so precise to have good testimony for your actions; as, whensoever there was anything to be done to which our commandment tied you, it seemed sufficient warrant for you if your fellow councillors allowed better of other ways, though your own reason carried you to have pursued our directions against their opinions; to whose conduct if we had meant that Ireland (after all the calamities in which they have wrapped it) should still have been abandoned, (to whose course never any could take more exceptions than yourself), then was it very superfluous to have sent over such a personage as you are, who had deciphered so well the errors of their proceedings, being still a hand with us and of our secretest council, as it had been one good rule for you amongst others, in most things to have varied from their resolutions, especially when you had our opinion and your own to boot.

Furthermore, we cannot but muse that you should recite that circumstances of his being sometime uncovered, [Tyrone took his hat off to Essex at their meeting at the stream] as if that were much in a rebel, when our person is so represented, or that you can think that ever any parley (as you call it) was upon less terms of inequality than this, when you came to him and he kept the depth of the brook between him and you; in which sort he proceeded not with other of our ministers, for he came over to them. So as never could any man observe greater form of greatness than he hath done, nor more to our dishonor, that a traitor must be so far from submission, as he must have a cessation granted because he may have time to advise whether he should go further or no with us. And thus much for form. For you have dealt so sparingly with us in substance, by advertising us only, at first, of the half hours conference alone, but not what passed on either side; by letting us also know you sent commissioners, without showing what they had in charge; as we cannot tell (but by divination) what to think may be the issue of their proceeding. Only this we are sure of, (for we see it in effect) that you have prospered so ill for us by your warfare, as we cannot but be very jealous lest you should be as well overtaken by the treaty; - For either they did not ill that had the like meetings before you, or you have done ill to keep them company in their errors; for no actions can more resemble others, that have been before condemned, then these proceedings of yours at this time with the rebels. For you must consider that as we sent you into Ireland, an extraordinary person, with an army exceeding any that ever was payed there by any prince for so long time out of this realm, and that you ever supposed that we were forced to all this by the weak proceedings even in this point of the treaties and pacifications. So, if this parley shall not produce such a conclusion, as this intolerable charge may receive present and large abatement, then hath the managing of our forces not only proved dishonorable and wasteful, but that which followeth is like to prove perilous and contemptible. Consider then what is like to be the end, and what will be fit to build on. To trust this traitor upon oath, is to trust a devil upon his religion. To trust him upon pledges is mere illusary, for what piety is there among them that can tie them to rule of honesty for itself, who are only bound to their own sensualities, and respect only private utility. And therefore, whatsoever order you shall take with him of laying aside of armies, banishing of strangers, recognition of superiority to us, or renouncing of rule over our rights, promising restitution of spoils, disclaiming from Oneilship, or any other such like conditions, which were tolerable before he was in his overgrown pride, by his own

success against our power, which of former times was terrible to him: yet unless he yield to have garrisons planted in his own country to master him, to deliver O'Neil's sons, (whereof the detaining is most dishonorable), and to come over to us personally here, we shall doubt you do but piece up a hollow peace, and so the end prove worse than the beginning. And therefore, as we well approve your own voluntary profession, (wherein you assure us that you will conclude nothing till you have advertised us, and heard our pleasure), so do we absolutely command you to continue and perform that resolution. Allowing well that you hear him what he proffers, draw him as high as you can, and advertise us what conditions you would advise us to afford him, and what he is like to receive: yet not to pass your word for his pardon, nor make any absolute contract for his conditions, till you do so particularly advertise us by writing, and receive our pleasure hereafter for your further warrant and authority in that behalf. For whatsoever we do, ought to be well weighed in such a time, when the world will suspect that we are glad of anything out of weakness, or apt to pardon him out of mistrust of our power to take due revenge on him: considering that all which now is yielded to on our part succeedeth his victories and our disasters. In our letters of the fourteenth of this month to you and that Council, we have written those things that are fit for them to answer and understand: and therefore we will expect that they can say to all the parts of that letter, with which our pleasure is that they be fully acquainted, as well as for your discharge another time, if you vary from their opinions, (when we direct otherwise), as also because we would be glad to receive their answer as well as yours.

Given under our signature, at Nonsuch, the 17th day of September, 1599, in the 41st year of our reign.

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Robert E. Morris has been read and approved by the following Committee:

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

February 25, 1974
Date

William R. Trimble
Director's Signature