The Public Career of John, Second Earl of Stair to 1720.

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# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations and a Note on Dates

Summary

**Chapters**

1. The Prologue
2. The Apprenticeship
3. The Prelude to the Mission to France
4. Stair at the Court of Louis XIV
5. A Pursuit of a Rapprochement with France
6. The Jacobite Rebellion
7. The Rapprochement with France
8. Stair on Leave
9. The Quadruple Alliance
10. The Declaration of War
11. The War against Spain
12. The Dismissal of Stair
13. The Conclusion

Bibliography

Map of Dunkirk
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Abbreviations and a Note on Dates.

The following abbreviations are to be found in the footnotes:

A.A.E. (Archives des Affaires Etrangeres)
B.M. (British Museum)
H.M.C. (Historical Manuscripts Commission)
P.R.O. (Public Record Office)
S.R.O. (Scottish Record Office).

As Stair's public career to 1720 was spent abroad, all dates referred to in the text are given in New Style with the exception of those of his birth and death and of certain incidents in his childhood for which the eleven day conversion seemed unnecessary. However, where a letter was converted from Old Style, its unconverted date is recorded in the footnote reference suffixed by the initials, o.s.
The Public Career of John, Second Earl of Stair

This is a study of Stair's career as a diplomat at the courts of Poland and France but it includes sketches of his youth, his soldiering under Marlborough and his life and service after his dismissal in 1720 until his death in 1747.

The narrative proceeds chronologically. His youth and war-service in Flanders form the content of the first chapter, which attempts to show that his friendship with Marlborough and the latter's patronage afforded him his opportunity for a first experience of diplomatic service. Though he was only briefly in Poland, in the winter of 1709-10, he established a reputation sufficient to ensure, when added to his affiliation with the Whigs and with Marlborough's support, his selection as George I's envoy to France.

The purpose of his mission was to force Louis XIV to comply fully with the terms of the Utrecht treaty and in particular to complete the demolition of Dunkirk. The acrimonious argument over this issue was succeeded by an even more violent one resulting from Britain's attempt to secure a peaceful termination of the Majorcan rebellion. The consequence was that Stair was estranged from the French court.

But by then, mid-1715, the Jacobites were seeking to raise a rebellion, and Stair was employed in penetrating their secrets. At the same time he had been secretly establishing a rapport with France's future Regent, the Duke of Orleans, and, when the old king was dead, he attempted to effect a rapprochement with France. He failed, and after the Jacobite rebellion had collapsed, it was Stanhope who personally conducted the negotiations that resulted in the Triple Alliance with the Dutch and the French in January 1717. Stanhope's
efforts to secure a balance of power in Europe, with a wider treaty embracing Austria and perhaps Spain, occupied Stair until the signing of the Quadruple Alliance in August 1718. Thenceforward he was charged with the task of ensuring that the French supported Stanhope's efforts to persuade and then to coerce Spain into embracing the alliance, abandoning her efforts to secure Sicily and settling her differences with Austria. But in September 1719 Stair embroiled himself in a personal argument with John Law, the banker, who was then in virtual control of France's finances. The quarrel embarrassed both governments, and, with peace in the offing, Stanhope sought to placate the French by dismissing Stair. Though the latter remained in France until he was replaced in June 1720, he was unable to restore his credit sufficiently to ensure that he was given alternative employment.

In the final chapter the remainder of his life is briefly traced and his career to 1720 assessed. The narrative content of this chapter is largely drawn from secondary works and collections of printed manuscripts as it is really outside the purpose of this thesis to treat it in detail. The rest of the narrative is based upon the Stair Manuscripts in the Scottish Record Office and the State Papers in the Public Record Office and is complemented by the French official records in the Archives des Affaires Etrangères and other manuscript and printed sources.
CHAPTER ONE

THE PROLOGUE

A dearth of evidence obscures the first twenty nine years of John Dalrymple's life, and the failure of the surviving correspondence to provide even a glimpse of his youth forces us to scan the formal records of his progress through life, of his birth and education, and to sift an enemy's satire and the questionable accounts of his contemporary biographers.

An entry in the Parochial Register of the County of Edinburgh reads:

"2 August 1673. Sir John Dalrymple, younger of Stair, Dame Elisabeth Dundas, a s(on) n(amed) John." The contemporary writers give the date of the birth as 20 July and the number of witnesses' names entered in the register, ten in all, suggests a baptismal congregation rather than an audience at a delivery. The baby was the fourth born to the marriage in as many years, but the only one to survive to date.

The single known childhood incident is in accordance with the family's tragic tradition, which gave rise to such tales as "The Bride

4. Stair himself seems to have been vague about his birth date; he wrote to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, on 19 July 1738, "They tell me this is my birthday ..." (Blenheim Palace MSS. E.36.
1. Stair to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, 19 July 1738.)
5. Scottish Record Society, Register of Interments in the Greyfriars Burying Ground, Edinburgh, 1902, p. 165.
6. Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury and historian, has a gruesome tale to tell of the childhood fates of three of Stair's uncles, how his father had ridden down one, how another had poisoned himself with cantharides intended for a blistering plaster and how a third had burnt off half his face by rolling into the fire (Burnet's History of My Own Time, ed. Osmund Aixy, Oxford, 1900, vol. 2, p. 54; AE.J.G. Mackay, Memoir of Sir James Dalrymple, Edinburgh, 1873, p. 87, who quotes Burnet.)
of the Lammermoors" (the boy's aunt), for in the spring of 1682, while at play, John Dalrymple killed his younger brother James by the accidental discharge of a pistol. This mishap afforded the satirist further evidence of the baleful influence of his grandmother, Margaret Rosa of Balneil, "the Witch of Endor."

All sources are agreed that the grief of the parents necessitated the removal of John from their sight. Legend has it that he was dispatched to his grandmother's house of Carsecreugh, in Wigtonshire. There, Sir Andrew Agnew claims, her distress at the enforced departure of her husband for Holland in October 1682 provoked this child of nine to seek out the couple's persecutor, the formidable John Graham of Claverhouse, then commissioned by the Privy Council with the suppression of the rebellious covenanters in the West of Scotland. Challenged and with his face spat upon, Claverhouse - Agnew contends -

5. The details of this accident are the subject of dispute. Firstly we are provided with three possible localities. J. Murray Graham (Annals and Correspondence of the Viscount and the 1st and 2nd Earls of Stair, Edinburgh, 1875, vol. 1, p. 224) places it at Carsecreugh, the Rev. R. Law (Memoriales, Edinburgh, 1818, p. 225) favours John Dalrymple's father's house of Newliston, Midlothian, while the New Statistical Account of Scotland (ed. John Gordon, London & Edinburgh, 1845, vol. 5, p. 643) and James Patterson (History of the Counties of Ayr and Wigton, Edinburgh, 1863, vol. 1, pp. 715-6) stake a claim for his other house at Stair in Ayrshire. Secondly J. Murray Graham claims that an elder brother James was the victim. This is to be disputed as no elder child was alive at the time of John's birth, and thus I side with G.E.C., The Complete Peerage (ed. G.H. White, London, 1953, vol. 7, p. 207) in assuming that the victim was the child, born 24 June 1676 and known to have died young. D'Iberville, the French ambassador in London, was to bring this story to light in 1715 in the midst of John Dalrymple's first controversial year at the French court (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f. 274, D'Iberville to Torcy, 12 August 1715). Details of the incident are provided by AE..J.C. Mackay (op. cit., p. 87); the Rev. R. Law; and Sir Andrew Agnew (A History of the Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway, Edinburgh, 1864, p. 398), who gives a highly-coloured version.


quailed before the boy's mature reputation as a swordsman.  

The grand-father, Sir James Dalrymple, the distinguished jurist and scholar, had a sufficiently pliable nature to serve under Charles I's administration, the Commonwealth, and the Restoration, and to profit from all three. Yet curiously in 1661 he could not allow himself to accept the "Test Oath" to be taken by all holders of public offices for the purpose of ensuring the succession of James Stuart, Duke of York, despite the latter's catholicism. And yet he, a member of Parliament for the county of Wigton, had sat upon the Committee of Articles, the body that drafted legislation, to which came the original draft of the "Test Oath". Its design was to ensure royal supremacy and, by declaring void "the covenants", to undermine Protestantism in Scotland. Through Sir James' influence the latter purpose was obscured - perhaps perverted in the eyes of the Duke of York by the inclusion of an obligation for the swearer to denounce Popish and other deviations by affirming his Protestantism in terms of the Confession of Faith of 1567. Sir James' refusal to take the oath even in this form cost him his position as Lord President of Session. 

A retreat to the seclusion of his estates did not spare Sir James and his family from governmental persecution. Sir James was brought

10. Graham, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 64; the Duke of York is said to have proclaimed that "Stair has ruined all honest men."  
before the judiciary, the Privy Council and the Parliament without formal charge being laid, and his family, even his servants, were examined and re-examined. Finally, warned by Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, the current Lord Advocate, that a charge relating to the activities of the religious dissidents in the region of his estates would be pressed, Sir James fled to Leyden, where he later joined the growing ranks of fugitives from Stuart rule forming at the court of William, Prince of Orange.

The charge which could not be pressed against the father was visited on his son, Sir John Dalrymple, who had just caught the public eye with his able performance as junior defence council for the Earl of Argyll in the action brought against him after his attempt to amend his "Test Oath". By December 1682 Claverhouse could recount to the Privy Council his year-long feud with the Dalrymples. He claimed that they had hindered his commission, that they had connived at their tenants' attendance at the outlawed conventicles by limiting punishment, as Baillies of Glenluce, to light fines, and had even derided his solemn proclamation of a court. Sir John was fined £500 sterling and had to endure a short term of imprisonment in the winter of 1682.12

John Dalrymple's education is said by J.M. Graham to have been dictated by the distress his presence caused his parents. He was boarded out with James Kirkwood,13 the master of the burgh school of Linlithgow and the foremost grammarian of the day, before being sent to join his grand-father at Leyden, where a place was found for him at the University in the autumn of 1684.14

While his son was being introduced to the study of Law and the Classics, further indignities were being heaped upon Sir John. Though named a conspirator against the crown by William Spence, the Earl of Argyll's chamberlain, and by William Carstairs, the prominent Presbyterian churchman, both under the stress of judicial torture, Sir John was not charged with any offence. But that did not save him from being seized at Newliston on 11 September 1684 to be brought before the Privy Council at Holyrood House and asked to give evidence against the Lord Chancellor, Lord Aberdeen, who was then under suspicion of being lenient towards religious dissenters. Being unable to comply, Dalrymple was punished by being taken on foot to the Tolbooth, where he was confined for three months until a £5,000 bail was raised by friends. Even then he was confined to the vicinity of Edinburgh for a year.

Yet such was the nature of the man that in 1687 he was able to return from a journey to London with his fine refunded to him, his expenses found, bearing a blanket pardon to the Dalrymples of both sexes for all their crimes, including his son's part in his brother's demise, and appointed Lord Advocate in the place of Mackenzie of Rosehaugh who had been dismissed in May 1686 for refusing to concur with James VII & II's policies. Sir John held this office for only

18. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 579, (the Earl of Lauderdale and Sir John's brother-in-law, Lord Creighton "becoming caution to present him whenever called for, under payne of 5,000 lb. sterling.").
a year, for in February 1688 Mackenzie regained favour and replaced him while he filled the vacancy of Lord Justice Clerk left by the death of Foulis in the previous month.22

The landing of William II & III, bringing with him Sir James Dalrymple, in no way confounded Sir John. In April 1689 he was to be found making his way south as representative of the Burgesses, in company with the new Earl of Argyll, the delegate of the Lords, and Sir James Montgomerie of Skelmorie, that of the Barons, to offer the throne of Scotland to William and Mary in accordance with the recently concluded convention of the Estates. To such practised exploiters of change, the opportunity was one to be grasped, and the Dalrymples joined Melville in securing an ascendancy over Argyll and Montgomerie with the king. Sir James Dalrymple regained his Presidency of the Court of Session, while Sir John first became Lord Advocate and then in 1691 shared the Secretaryship of State with Melville.23

The appearance of John Dalrymple's name appended to the theses presented at the University of Edinburgh for examination in 1688 and 1690 and its absence from the graduation rolls for those years makes it more difficult to ascertain exactly when he returned to Scotland.24 His signature does appear in the Matriculation Album25 under the date 12 March 1686, which indicates that in the previous autumn he had joined

the second year of the class that had begun under the regent Alexander Cockburn in the Michaelmas term of 1684. His studies abroad would have exempted him from the first year of the class, though to have joined the class in the autumn in 1685 would have given him only a year at Leyden University and it would have meant that he would have anticipated his pardon which his father obtained in 1687. The most likely explanation of his whereabouts seems to be that he did in fact join Cockburn's class in 1685 but failed to qualify for graduation in 1686 by being abroad - as Crawfurd claims\(^{26}\) - visiting his grandparents. Crawfurd's contention that John was back at University that autumn is borne out by his father's rental of rooms there for the years 1689 and 1690 for an unnamed son,\(^{27}\) for the class that he would have then joined graduated in the latter year. His failure to sign the graduation roll in that year might be explained by one of his anonymous biographers' claim that he was fighting in William II & III's bodyguard at the Boyne in the summer of 1690.\(^{28}\) The curiosity in Crawfurd's account is that there is no mention of Cockburn, for the credit for John Dalrymple's education is given to Herbert Kennedy, the regent in charge of the class that graduated in 1690 with assistance from David Gregory (the professor of mathematics and friend of Newton) and from his successor of the same name. Although Crawfurd antedates the battle of Steenkirk by a year and claims that John fought there as a volunteer with the Camerons (the Earl of Angus' regiment), a fact

\(^{26}\) Crawfurd, op.cit., p. 462. Mackay, op.cit., p. 213, has John Dalrymple embarking with his father and grand-father in William II & III's own ship at Helvoetsluys on 16 October 1688.

\(^{27}\) Edinburgh Corporation Archives, Shelf 36, bundles 14 & 20.

\(^{28}\) Anon., Earl of Stair, p. 19.
that defies substantiation, Crawfurd correctly places him back in Leyden at the close of 1691, resuming his studies of Law.

As John Dalrymple's education embraced the Classics, Philosophy and Law, it is reasonable to assume that he was destined to follow the family tradition. It is in his extra-curricular studies of Mathematics, History, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Spanish and the study of military science which he is reputed to have undertaken under the great Dutch engineer, Coehorn, that the roots of the twin careers that John Dalrymple would make his own, in the army and in diplomacy, can be discerned. As we are denied any facts relating to John Dalrymple in the last decade of the 17th century, we are bereft of means to dispute contemporary claims that the basis of these careers was laid by war service in Flanders, by diplomatic experience in Vienna and by a Grand Tour. However if he either accompanied Robert Sutton, the second Baron of Lexington, to Vienna or visited him there, it was not in 1700, as Crawfurd states, for Sutton's mission had been completed.


30. Leyden University, op. cit., p. 719.


32. There is one omission, the irrelevancy that John was named a commissioner of supply for the shires of Ayr, Wigton and Linlithgow in 1690; (Acts of Parliament, Scotland, Col. T. Thompson, Edinburgh, 1822, vol. 9, pp. 374-5 (hereafter referred to as Acts of Parliament Scotland)).

three years previously. Further Crawfurd would have him return to Scotland in 1701, but John Dalrymple was in Edinburgh in 1700; his deposition alleging misconduct contributed towards the annulling in December of a recent election in Wigtonshire.

The handful of letters from John Dalrymple to James Graham, 4th Marquis of Montrose, written during the period immediately prior to the War of the Spanish Succession suffices to illustrate family life at Newliston. There Sir John Dalrymple - second Viscount Stair since his father's death in November 1695 - lived the private life into which he had been forced by the exposure in 1695 of his part in the massacre at Glencoe in February 1692. One letter, headed "Friday morning", relates that dinner ended at 2.30 p.m. "in the most sober manner imaginable, but, the Lord forgive us, we forgot to drink the King's health, we sat down to that and used our time so very well that before four a clock, My Lord, upon my word all this family was most prodigiously drunk and none more than your humble servant. You may easily imagine the conversation was not considerable, we behave(d) ourselves like people that knew that talking spoiled company, 'here's to ye' and 'I pledge', was the great subject matter of our discourses ...". Another dinner had a more sober ending: "... and my mother being gone to visit at Niddry, we drank and roared most plentifully ... my father was the prettiest youngest fellow imaginable but just when our mirth was rising to its pitch, the Lady returned.

and dispelled us."

A third letter called upon Montrose to "come and fling George's periwig in the fire." There is an air of dissipation - doubtless exaggerated for Montrose's benefit - in these ribald and slanderous accounts of mutual acquaintances and their womenfolk, though on one occasion, while his father and uncle, Hugh Campbell, the 3rd Earl of Loudoun, pursued their inebriation at Craighall, John Dalrymple's lot was "to remain at home in a sober manner."

The prospect of war ended this idleness. In February 1702 John Dalrymple journeyed to London to seek a commission in the newly raised regiments. Crawfurd writes: "The King received him very graciously, but a scheme of officers was formed for these regiments. His Majesty having observed it (sic), told, that he was resolved to provide for Mr. Dalrymple, who by that scheme was neglected, and for that reason His Majesty resolved to make him Second Lieutenant-Colonel of his Regiment of Foot-Guards in Scotland." To this commission was added the donation of the new 17th company of the regiment and both these appointments were confirmed in the new reign which began in early March.

Fortune continued to smile on Dalrymple, for he was promised the first vacant colonelcy (as a regiment was a source of lucrative gain,

this was a sought-after prize) and the first diplomatic employment of envoy rank. He considered that the taking up of one option would not harm the other and he was determined "to go make a campaign this summer. I don't know what to do with myself at home and the people here promise me very good encouragement; if I stay here or go abroad they promise the first regiment that falls abroad and that I shall be the first envoy the Queen sends anywhere." He told Montrose that he felt that "being in the Army I think 'twould not be very decent for me to stay at London, so I think of going over: that does not hinder my being sent to any court. Don't you think I'm in the right?"

His cheerful philosophy was, "I shall be knock(ed) in the head or get myself into a way of living better than what I used to be in." 44

The practical detail of equipping for war delayed Dalrymple's progress to the front. Writing on 19 July to an unnamed uncle from the allied camp at Hasselt in Flanders, Dalrymple stated: "I have been longer of (sic) getting to the army than I expected, for I found twenty stops in getting my little equipage ready ..." 45 He wrote for the purpose of exacting a second instalment of a thousand guilders from his family in order to have some money on hand to cover any losses of horses or equipment in action. The first thousand guilders, which Mr. Carstairs had provided at The Hague in late May, had been spent on clothing, equipment, on three riding horses, the groom's horse, two pack horses, provisions for four servants and forage for which the Dutch were unsportingly charging their allies. Though money was uppermost

45. Nat. Library of Scot. Jacobite Papers, MS. 1695, f. 14/15, John Dalrymple to his uncle, 19 July (1702). Dalrymple had even found himself delayed by the weather during a return visit to London to collect horses (S.R.O.: G.D. 220.5.S, John Dalrymple to Montrose, 9 June (1702) o.s.)
in his mind, Dalrymple also provides us with some illuminative information; his tail-piece describing the trouble that Marlborough took in receiving him - finding him quarters, having him to dinner and showing "a great deal of concern about me" - offers confirmation of Crawfurd's assertion\(^46\) that at this time the foundation of the friendship, which was to underpin Dalrymple's military and diplomatic careers, was laid.

Louis XIV's masterstroke at the outset of the campaign by his seizure of the Spanish Netherlands, coupled with the Elector of Cologne's complicity, enabled his main army under Marshal Boufflers to position itself in the Duchy of Cleves, between the Meuse and the Rhine, thus threatening the allied communications with Vienna and poised to cut Dutch territory in two. Although Kaiserwerth on the Rhine had yielded to the Allies after a slow siege, and the Dutch garrison in the fortress of Maestricht held out in isolation on the upper Meuse - hampering the full French exploitation of that waterway - the performance of France's enemies did little for their self-respect. Indeed the attempt of the Dutch commander, Ginkel, to exploit the capture of Kaiserwerth merely provoked a French pincer-movement which almost outflanked him and left him dispiritedly cowering under the guns of Nimwegen.

It was here that Dalrymple joined the army at the moment when it came under Marlborough's command and thus he was able to participate in the southerly feint on 15 July to Grave on the Meuse and its forty mile extension towards Maestricht, as Marlborough sought to tempt the French from their defensive line on the Meuse into the open where he might be able to deliver a devastating blow. Boufflers was drawn and

\(^{46}\) Crawfurd, op.cit., p. 462.
twice offered the Allies their opportunity, on 2 and 3 August at Peer and Zonhoven, only to escape through the timidity of the Dutch deputies assigned to Marlborough to oversee his use of their forces. Dalrymple, witnessing this farce, rued the passing of William II & III, for under him, he thought, the advantage would have been pressed and the French army, exhausted after a four days march, would have been effectively destroyed instead of escaping into Brabant.  

Dalrymple had been driven from the Meuse, but the use of it below Maestricht by the Allies was inhibited by the three French strongholds of Venloo, Ruremonde and Stevensweert. The clearance of these obstacles was therefore given priority, and Dalrymple was quick to secure his stake in future glory by volunteering for the attack on Venloo. As he did so he cautioned an unnamed uncle, from whom he sought more money, that "you need say nothing to my father of my going to Venloo, if you think fit, there is no great danger in the matter, 'tis not my business to be much exposed."  

But before the sieges began, Boufflers - heavily censured by his monarch for the recent reverses - chose in mid-August to interfere with the primary Allied supply route, to Bois-le-Duc, along which Lord Albermarle was convoying food and a month's pay for the army. A cavalry force under Boufflers' subordinate, the Duke of Berwick (the bastard son of James VII and II and nephew of Marlborough), backed by the French main army, hazarded an interception. To effect Albermarle's relief, Marlborough dispatched the Dutch general Opdam with 6,000 men including, as volunteers, Dalrymple, Thomas, Earl of Huntington, and Sir Richard Temple. But as the four forces closed, Boufflers became aware that Marlborough had used Albermarle as a

stalking horse and was about to fall upon Berwick from the rear with the main body of his army. Alerted, Berwick extracted himself from the trap, though with little time to spare. 49

In the midst of the ranks of Opdam's force Dalrymple was denied any vantage point from which to view the picture. All he would experience was the unaccounted-for sounds and movements of an enemy manoeuvring for position, and the chilling confusion of the moment is caught in his account of 16 August. On the previous night Opdam's men had slept secure in the knowledge that the French were three miles off across a river, only to waken to find themselves caught in the open, "in a plain heath", with the French horse within half a mile. "We heard a devilish fanfare. A kettle-drums boom come in from all sides with intelligence (that) the French army was in motion. To tell you the truth we believed them already upon our backs and (sic) to make the best of our way towards a defile where we hoped to maintain ourselves till our Grand Army should come to our assistance." A warning was passed to Marlborough, "but Monsieur de Boufflers had meant us no harm, for the dragoons that frightened us had only been sent out to intercept Lord Albermarle. Mr. de Boufflers thought his design discovered and without pretending to meddle with us called back 7,000 men." 50 The renewed march towards Albermarle cost Dalrymple the loss of two baggage horses and it was fruitless, for, though the rendez-vous at Helmont was reached at mid-night, Albermarle had earlier turned back.

The convoy secured, Dalrymple and his fellow volunteers 51 found employment in the preliminaries of a siege at Venloo. But Marlborough

wished to test Boufflers' credulity again and retreated southwards exposing a rearguard under Opdam. On the heaths at Helchteren, Boufflers again found himself trapped, only to be saved by the further timidity of the Dutch deputies. Frustrated, Marlborough assumed a blocking position to the west of the Meuse and reinforced the siege party at Venloo with Opdam's men.

There, after weeks of dissension within the inept Dutch command, an Anglo-Irish brigade under the redoubtable Lord Cutts demoralised the defenders by a remarkable coup; his close pursuit of a withdrawal of troops manning the outer defences of the cross-river Fort of St. Michael prevented the raising of a drawbridge, and the consequent quick penetration of the fort's remaining defences brought its immediate surrender. 52

Dalrymple's own account of the breaching of the walls of the main fortress and of its prompt surrender contradict the established theory 53 that the dispirited garrison capitulated upon hearing the cannon salutes fired on 22 September to celebrate the news of an Allied success at Landau. In 1719, prompted by a new war, Dalrymple was to expound on the vulnerability of fortresses with water frontages, should the water be forded or exploited by a ship-borne battery, for he pointed out that architects normally backed these frontages with single walls and reserved their sophisticated art for the landward defences. Though William Coxe claims that the breach was made by cross-river fire from the captured fort, 54 Dalrymple recalled how Goehorn, by moving men and

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guns by means of trenches and the cover of the river-bed itself, had breached the wall and had induced the governor to surrender by confronting him immediately with the storming force.  

It is unfortunate that Dalrymple did not likewise recall his own part at St. Michael and so end the conflict between Lord Cutts' and Richard Kane's accounts, for Cutts would have himself and the gentlemen volunteers lead the attack, while Kane would have the storming party left to its own devices while Cutts and his noble friends skulked in the trenches for the duration of the attack - with the single exception of the lame Huntington, who contrived by the bodily assistance of bribed soldiery to keep in the lead.

Marlborough put aside his thoughts of terminating the year's campaign at Venloo when the speedy collapse of the lesser French positions on the Meuse placed within his grasp the great fortress of Liège which dominated the supply route to the French strongpoints on the Rhine. Having overcome the Dutch fears that a defeat might negate the year's gains, Marlborough marched on Liège. This embarrassed Dalrymple who, anticipating an end of the campaign, had sent his servants and baggage ahead to Holland, leaving himself ill-equipped for service. With Boufflers threatening an interception, the speed of march denied Dalrymple a bed: "... we lay after marching from 12 o'clock the night before till 6 this day, (which) you'll think 'tis time for a man, that has dried himself very well at the fire and eat(en) his supper heartily, to go to bed. I was perfectly of your opinion

but unluckily I had neither supper nor bed, for the march was so long
the baggage was not arrived. So went to sleep upon straw in an open
house where I was wet before morning ...". To recover, Dalrymple
rested for a day "and lived upon apples which I did not find a good
diet.". To escape further discomfort, hearing that six battalions
were to take possession of the town of Liège, which the burghers had
yielded, Dalrymple "flung myself à corps perdu into that detachment
in hopes of a supper and a bed" but through the "mistakes of guides
and generals" the town was only reached on the morrow. The ordeal
continued, for "at 7 this night we were alert and durst not pull off
our boots and for beds we saw none. We walked in that same equipage
... till 9 at night I happily found a bed." Still in possession of the
bed at the time of writing, 16 October, 57 Dalrymple found that "but
for a kind of ague" his health was unaffected. Yet he granted himself
two days respite from duty and perhaps he extended it, for when the
citadel was stormed on 23 October he was a spectator. 58

The opening of the campaign of 1703 found Dalrymple doubly endowed
with a title and a regiment: for his father's elevation to an earldom
meant that the Viscountcy of Stair fell to him, while in the same
month, April, Marlborough secured for him the colonelcy of the Scots
regiment in the Dutch service which Lord Portmore had vacated for that

57. S.R.O.: G.D. 220.5.5, John Dalrymple to Montrose, 18 October
(1702).
58. S.R.O.: G.D. 220.5.5, same to same, 23 October (1702). This
document disputes the legend cited by Graham, op.cit., vol. 1,
p. 226, that with an opportune pistol-shot Dalrymple saved the
life of the future king of Sweden, the Prince of Hesse-Cassel.
of the British 2nd of Foot. It is one of Dalrymple's men - John Scott the soldier - poet and author of the Remembrance, a metrical account of the regiment's service under Marlborough - who provides us with our single glimpse of Dalrymple in this year.

The regiment, after wintering at Bois-le-Duc, found itself caught in the path of a French advance, a bid to distract Marlborough from his design to clear the Rhine, and immediately from the siege of Bonn, which he had undertaken after the Dutch had recoiled from his notion of a coast-wise thrust against the great ports of Antwerp and Ostend.

The French, wheeling upon the Allied holding force on the Meuse, came first upon the poorly defended town of Tongres. Here a gallant 24 hour delaying action on 9 May allowed the Allied commander, Overkirk, to reach the safety of Maestricht's defences. When the single wall of Tongres was breached, the commander, Brigadier Elst, had little option but to surrender and the garrison, Dalrymple's battalion and a Dutch battalion, passed into captivity.

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As a colonel entrusted the direct command of his regiment to its lieutenant-colonel, Dalrymple would not have been at Tongres and doubtless spent the summer in Marlborough's company, perhaps as an aide-de-camp, and saw the fruitless and confused fighting around Antwerp as Marlborough's designs continued to be frustrated as much by the timidity and incompetence of his allies as by the artfulness of his enemies. In August Marlborough again abandoned bold manoeuvre in order to clear the Meuse of yet another French fortress, Huy. Ten days sufficed for the siege, and on 25 August the French capitulated.

Scott claims for Dalrymple the blow that precipitated the end, believing him to be motivated by feelings of revenge for the loss of his regiment; "His regiment being tan he had not them seen/ At which he was grieved true-lie/ To make some redress he now up did pass/ To atacque upon the Picarde (one of three outlying forts) ...".

By dint of climbing upon the shoulders of members of his volunteer party Dalrymple managed to clamber up the rock which was topped by the fort and effect the surrender of the surprised garrison. "To Marlborough in haste the news is now past/ That Dallrimple had taken a fort/ With him came enew to se this news true/ And they heartillie laught at the sport ...". Fort Joseph next came under attack, and, success having been achieved there, the French fell back into the citadel which fell under the weight of the bombardment.

The eye-witness accounts of Samuel Noyes, chaplain to the Royal Scots, offer contradictory evidence and never mention Dalrymple's coup. In fact the first defence work to yield was Fort Joseph and not to surprise but to the demoralizing effect of allied fire upon the nerves

of the commander, whom Noyes derides as a merchant's son who had purchased his promotion. On the same day the two other forts, Picard and Rouge, surrendered, apparently for the same reason. There remained the citadel, on which "our guns play again very smartly and we don't doubt but a few hours will bring down their stomachs." Noyes had under-estimated, for the guns played for another day before the garrison submitted to Marlborough's terms of honourable captivity which enabled him to exchange the Tongres garrison. That exchange was effected in October. Dalrymple reviewed his men as they moved to winter-quarters, though he brought them no material solace for their ordeal, as they had to sell their old coats in order "to wet our throats."

Dalrymple's men seem to have fared little better at the next review on 4 May, for their colonel's promise of new shoes does not seem to have been kept. But at least the record of the review gives us the single glimpse of Dalrymple between his departure from England for Holland in late March 1704 and Argyll's statement in December that Dalrymple would not go home that winter. The regiment is known to have been with Overkirk's holding force in Flanders after Marlborough had divided his army for his celebrated Blenheim campaign, but there is nothing to contradict the anonymous biographer who

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69. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temporary no. (until catalogued) m.m. 1871/4, Argyll to Mar, 9 December 1704.
places Dalrymple in the van at Schellenburg and on the right at Blenheim. Likewise the spring review of 1705 is our single reference until the winter. And again we cannot disprove that Dalrymple participated in Marlborough's masterly crossing of the Lines of Brabant.

Perhaps the supply of new stockings, shoes and hats in the spring of 1703 of arms, side-arms, belts, haversacks, tents, poles, pins and mallets in the next spring and coats and caps in 1705 so strained his resources as to occasion Dalrymple's remark to his old friend, John Erskine, 6th Earl of Mar, that "my Regiment is far from giving me bread." The vacancy of colonel of the Scots Foot Guards created by the death of General George Ramsay in September 1704 seemed to present to Dalrymple the opportunity of securing the financial return that he had expected. He importuned Marlborough with the argument that his father's services to the Queen merited recognition and that his father was happy that any benefit should fall to his son. Marlborough seems to have avoided a commitment yet he contented Dalrymple with "a very good answer". The discovery of a rival in George Murray - who was given like expectations with the proviso that he secured the support of the Scottish government - led Dalrymple to offer to withdraw from the suit. But Marlborough would not be drawn to comment on the merits of either claimant and delayed his decision until his return to London.

75. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 349.
76. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 359-60.
77. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temporary no. m.m. 886/1-4, John Dalrymple to Mar, 10 November (1705).
79. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temporary no. m.m. 886/1-4, John Dalrymple to Mar, 10 November (1705).
80. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temporary no. m.m. 886/1-4, John Dalrymple to Mar, 10 November (1705).
Though Marlborough was to leave the Scots Foot Guards under the command of their Lieutenant-Colonel, William Ramsay, Earl of Dalhousie, until 1707, his response to Dalrymple's renewed bid in the winter of 1705 is of interest. In the course of his careful preparations - this time he secured the support of the joint secretaries of state for Scotland, the earls of Loudoun and Mar - Dalrymple noted to Mar in passing that "there were many pretenders to Ferguson's regiment". He remarked too that "they were all put off till the general day of distribution, which is commonly just as his Grace leaves London." On Boxing Day the late Brigadier Ferguson's regiment, the 26th (the Cameronians), was given to a man who had risen up through its ranks, its Lieutenant-Colonel, William Borthwick, despite fierce competition from Lieutenant-Colonel George Preston, Colonel George Macartney, Lord Mark Kerr and Lord Edward Murray supported by their patrons, Brigadiers Palmes, Meredith and Cadogan. Five days later Borthwick exchanged his new acquisition for Dalrymple's unremunerative Scots-Dutch regiment. Major S.H.F. Johnston's assumption that Borthwick had flung away the richer prize because his promotion had offended "an influential group in the army and at home" is disproved by Dalrymple's revelation.

82. Enclosed in S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temporary no. m.m. 886/1-4, Mar to Loudoun & Loudoun to Mar, both enclosures undated and both written on the same piece of paper.
83. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temporary no. m.m. 886/1-4, John Dalrymple to Mar, 10 November (1705).
85. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 87.
that Marlborough had given Borthwick the regiment "upon condition that he shall exchange with me when and in what manner I please." He wrote this two days after the donation from The Hague where he had tarried with Marlborough, waiting only for the Dutch to sanction the exchange. Unfortunately he left no clue as to the reason for the choice of method, but we may safely surmise that, as Dutch regiments were not bought and sold, barter was the only way to dispose of a regiment and that Borthwick had to be provided with the means to complete the deal.

The 26th was to see little of Dalrymple during his short tenure of its colonelcy. And what he did in that time is not known, beyond his brief return to Scotland in late winter and his unscathed emergence.

86. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temp. no. m.m. 886/1-4, Dalrymple to Mar, 28 December 1705.
87. Dalrymple had been advised to press his suit in London, (S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temp. no. m.m. 886/1-4, Dalrymple to Mar, 10 November 1705 and enclosures), and in fact had set out for London (ibid. temp. no. m.m. 886/1-4, Dalrymple to Mar, 17 November 1705) but clearly it was wiser to return to The Hague while Marlborough lingered there.
89. Sir William Fraser, Memorials of the Family of Wemyss of Wemyss, Edinburgh, 1888, vol. 1, p. 341. En route for Scotland, Dalrymple wrote to Mar from Durham of his weariness at travel, "a pox on your bodily exercise say I. I'm sure he that said t'was good for nothing was in the right." Weary, yet he had had "an adventure of my own upon the road" worthy of a warrior home from the wars. "In a certain place where I lay all night I found a delicious young girl just a woman. I kissed her two, three times; in passing gave her a guinea which won her heart; ... made her promise to come to bed to me when her father and mother should be asleep; in hopes of this, happier than any statesman, I slept from 9 till onwards twelve in expectation of my dear, when behold the most unmerciful maiden had locked the door, which I never knew till morning, having passed the greater part of the night between expectation and believing myself jilted ..." (S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temporary no. m.m. 958, Dalrymple to Mar, 19 February 1706 o.s.)
from the field at Ramillies in May. His precise role in the latter is obscure, for we have only his contemporaries' accounts, and they contradict each other in crediting him with being in command of an infantry brigade, with having been an aide-de-camp and with having led the charge of the Royal Scots Greys upon the routed enemy.

Yet, if a preoccupation is discernible in this year, it was with advancement both his own and that of his impoverished friend John Murray, 2nd Marquis of Tullibardine. Dalrymple pressed for a grant of £400 from the Queen so that Tullibardine might buy the equipage that would enable him to accept the captaincy of the company in the 26th that Dalrymple offered. Succeeding, Dalrymple then sought for Tullibardine a more remunerative military employment. In his own interest, Dalrymple was by June pointedly noting the shortage of brigadiers, there being only three. In September he was promoted to that rank.

The death of Lord John Hay, the colonel of the Royal Scots Greys, on 24 August, presented a further opportunity. Within three weeks Dalrymple, with the blessing of his potential rival, Argyll, had secured

92. Anon., Earl of Stair, pp. 77, 79.
93. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temporary no. m.m. 956/1, Tullibardine to Mar, 13 February 1706; temp. no. m.m. 956/2, Tullibardine to Mar, 24 February 1706; temp. no. m.m. 1035/1, Dalrymple to Mar, 30 April 1706; temp. no. m.m. 1035/3, Dalrymple to Mar, 9 September 1706 (printed in Graham, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 228); temp. no. m.m. 1103, Mar to Marlborough, 28 September 1706.
94. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temp. no. m.m. 1035/2, Dalrymple to Mar, 14 June 1706.
95. H.M.C. War & Kellie MSS., London, 1904, p. 279, Sir David Nairne to Mar, 17 September 1707 o.s.; Graham, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 228, misread "brigadiers" as "battalions".
Marlborough's sanction for his bid. Tullibardine was not so fortunate, as Dalrymple's parallel attempt to get him the abandoned 26th was frustrated by Marlborough's insistence upon an exchange with the Grey's temporary commander, their lieutenant-colonel, George Preston.96 The Scottish Secretariat of State lent its support,97 and on 1 November Dalrymple could elatedly announce "I have got the regiment."98 Thanking Mar for his support, which Marlborough had said was unnecessary but which Dalrymple was satisfied had been of assistance, Dalrymple gave a glimpse of the struggle: "I am very glad it falls as it does, for I should have been devilishly embarrassed if, after balancing so long, Preston had been preferred to me, I could not afford to quit, and yet it is pretty certain I would have served no more; but this is a great deal better." Marlborough's first order, on 5 November, to the new colonel was to effect a review of his acquisition.99

No evidence has survived of what part Dalrymple played in the campaign of 1707. His two letters from the field contain only irrelevancies; the first is concerned with a gift of champagne and burgundy for Montrose,100 while the second, written in July, deals with the current political situation - Dalrymple flippantly commented to Mar that, as the Union between Scotland and England had been effected

96. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temp. no. m.m. 1033/3, Dalrymple to Mar, 9 September 1706.
97. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temp. no. m.m. 1103, Mar to Marlborough, 28 September 1706 o.s.
98. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temp. no. m.m. 1033/4, Dalrymple to Mar, 1 November 1706.
100. S.R.O.: G.D. 220.5.S, Stair to Montrose, 30 June 1707. Mar, too, had been a recipient of similar gifts with some ill-luck which had led to an apology from Dalrymple "but champagne and burgundy will play the devil with these thin bottles in the summer time." (S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temp. no. m.m. 1033/4, Dalrymple to Mar, 1 November 1706).
and the first British Parliament would meet in the autumn, "I see you North Britons are put into the Alforse for the end of September. You know Alforse is a machine a monkey has for putting his provisions that are not for present use." But he misled, for he had a place in that pouch. The sudden death of his father on 8 January, as the debate of the treaty of Union was successfully concluded in the Scottish Parliament, had brought Dalrymple the earldom just in time for him to assume his seat in that body before its dissolution. And it was undoubtedly the posthumous influence and merit of his father, not least his work for the Union, that caused Dalrymple to be selected from a middle mass of uncommitted peers to be one of Scotland's representatives in the House of Lords. There in October Stair heard his first debate - on the security of maritime trade.

The assumption of the earldom when he was as yet unmarried raised fears about the extinction of the family name, for Stair's heir, his brother George, had married the possessor of a more ancient title, the Countess of Dumfries. Thus Stair immediately, in February, resigned his title in order to have it restored to him on terms that provided no

101. Defined as a word of Arabic origin, meaning store, supply or provision and used in English to denote a wallet, leather bag or a cheek pouch of a baboon (A New English Dictionary, ed. Sir James Murray, Oxford, 1888).
102. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temp. no. m.m. 1229/2, Stair to Mar, 14 July 1707.
103. H.M.C. Portland MSS., vol. 4, 1897, p. 1380, Defoe to Harley, 9 January 1707 o.s.
105. H.M.C. Mar & Kellie MSS., 1904, pp. 370-2, Mar to Sir David Nairne, 5 February 1707 o.s., and p. 374, Mar to Nairne, 13 February 1707 o.s.; "Everybody must acknowledge that my Lord Stair behaved to be one both upon his own account and his father's ...". H.M.C. Portland MSS., vol. 4, 1897, pp. 389-90, Defoe to Harley, 23 February 1707 o.s.
male heir should be born to him he could name an uncle as heir to the
title or allow it to fall to his youngest brother William, then to
William's second or subsequent son after which it would go to the
direct descendant of the 1st Viscount - Stair's grand-father. 107
Prompted further by this dynastic sentiment - and, perhaps, by a
consciousness that he could not always rely upon his father's reputation
to further his career - Stair sought to win the support of Marlborough
and Sydney, Lord Godolphin, the Lord Treasurer, in obtaining a British
peerage as an acknowledgement of his father's services. 108 Stair
was among the first Scottish peers to seek this method of securing a
permanent seat in Parliament but the moment was inopportune; the
Union was not yet an actuality and he was fobbed off with the statement
that the Queen needed her Scottish advisers about her before contemplating
such a request. 109

In the following spring he married Eleanor, widow of James, 1st
Viscount Primrose, and the youngest daughter of James Campbell, 2nd
Earl of Loudoun. 110 The fact that the wedding took place in London,
at St. Peter's-upon-Cornhill, has led to speculation as to whether it
was clandestine. 111 But there is no reason why it should not have been
mere convenience; Stair had often wintered in London 112 and could have

108. A Selection from the Papers of the Earls of Marchmont, ed. Sir
22 February (1707 o.s.), (hereafter referred to as Rose,
Marchmont Papers). Blenheim Palace MSS.; A2-31, Stair to Marl-
borough, 22 February 1707 o.s.
109. The Letters and Dispatches of John Churchill, 1st Duke of
Marlborough to Stair, 6 March 1707 o.s.
111. Ibid., vol. 12, p. 207.
112. S.R.O., G.D. 124, temp. no. m.m. 1229/1, Stair to Mar, 9 June
(1707).
met his bride there whilst her brother was Scottish Secretary of State. That they married in London throws doubt upon the traditional tale told by Chambers: that to overcome his beloved's aversion to re-marriage - she having nothing but bitter memories of her first liaison, which was the source of Sir Walter Scott's short story, My Aunt Margaret's Mirror - Stair had to display himself in his night-shirt in her window to the morning crowds in Edinburgh's High Street after which she had to agree to quell the subsequent scandal.¹¹³

Stair's burgeoning prestige within the army found him a two month appointment, beginning on 14 April, to the Clothing Board (a sub-committee of the Board of General Officers) which was constituted to reduce the chaos in the system of supplying clothing to the individual regiments. Though Stair's personal contribution is unknown, the Board, through its examination of clothing, approval of patterns, vetting of contracts and perusal of the handling of regimental finances, had in a year brought such order that only two regiments remained in financial straits.¹¹⁴

We are allowed three glimpses of Stair in the confusion of the battle of Oudenarde on 11 July. At dawn on the day of the battle news had come in of a French raid upon the Allied generals' baggage, and it was Stair who dispatched a squadron of the Greys and one of the Royal Irish to repulse it. In the opening phase of the battle, in the cavalry action in support of Cadogan's vanguard once it was across the Scheldt, Stair, clearly at a loose end, formed a squadron from the

British quartermasters and their escorts and though poorly supported was able to press home a charge. Then as night drew on and the French were steadily encircled, a Dutch battalion balked before a wood. Stair was summoned to help, he reconnoitred and soon found "very good overtures" through which the battalion could pass. 115

In reward for distinguished service, Stair was dispatched by Marlborough to the Queen with news of the victory. 116 Becalmed off Harwich, he had time to write the account of the battle that, after careful revision by Mr. Secretary Boyle, was published as the official statement. 117 On 16 July, tired and hungry, 118 Stair reached Windsor, where his grateful queen rewarded him with a £1,000 119 and promised, albeit at her convenience, that "I will do for him what he desires; and, indeed, I think I owe it to him, he certainly having lost his election in Scotland by being at that time doing his duty in Flanders." 120 Stair's political career had been unceremoniously terminated in the previous month's general election. He had not even gained the nomination of his "friends", the old court party, who had chosen between prospective candidates by means of rolling a dice, 121 and fate had ruled out Loudoun and Stair. Marlborough excused the method as being "very equal yet not very political." 122 Stair was unperturbed, writing.

120. H.M.C. 6th Report, 1831, Appendix 1, p. 53b.
121. Ibid., Mar & Kellie MSS., 1904, p. 452-3, Mar to Sir David Nairne, 21 June 1708 o.s.
122. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temp. no. m.m. 1414/1, Mar to Stair, 20 June 1708 o.s.
to Mar "I can't blame my friends: they have done as people generally
do in a storm, fling the lumber first overboard." 123 But he was no
nearer his British peerage; for the House of Lords was resisting
Queensberry's claim to sit among them as a British peer. Godolphin,
to his credit, did not delay in advising Stair to forget for the time
being the Queen's promise. 124 Stair was resigned to his fate: "If
my affair won't do, by the Queen, I'll make my court no other way;
so there I leave it without moving any more in it." 125

In early August Stair was back with the army 126 and his letters
relating to the siege of the great French fortress of Lille have been
of great service to historians. 127 Stair played no part in the actual
operations at Lille, for he served with Marlborough's forces whose
task was to prevent the French field army from either interfering with
Prince Eugene of Savoy's conduct of the siege or interrupting the flow
of supplies from the north. Action came Stair's way twice. At
Frethin on 8 September while Marlborough's force, inferior to the enemy
but occupying a superior position, stood athwart of a French thrust
towards Lille, Stair, Argyll and Webb were sent to join Lieutenant-
General Wood's force of two battalions which was driving off the French
foragers from the fringes of the area. 128 Further French efforts in
November to secure supplies brought Stair a second taste of action and

123. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temp. no. m.m. 1494/2, Stair to Mar, 5 July
1708 o.s.
124. Private Correspondence of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, London,
1837, vol. 2, p. 267, Godolphin to Marlborough, 6 July 1706 o.s.
125. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temp. no. m.m. 1494/3, Stair to Mar, 15 October
1708.
Cranston) to Robert Cunningham, 25 July (1708).
127. S.R.O.: G.D. 124, temp. n.e. m.m. 1494/3, Stair to Mar, 15 October
1708 (partly printed in H.M.C. Mar & Kellie MSS., 1904, p. 466-7);
temp. no. m.m. 1494/4, Stair to Mar, 24 October 1708, (partly
printed in H.M.C. Mar & Kellie MSS., 1904, p. 466).
his first command in the field. The town of Lille had yielded on 24 October, but the obstinate resistance of the citadel kept the armies in the field until the year's end. On 7 November Marlborough was camped at Rousselaer when the news came from the west that the French had placed the area around Furnes and Dixemude under contribution. Stair was dispatched with a small force of ten squadrons and ten battalions to secure the area for the Allies. By the threat of summary execution Stair was successful in getting the inhabitants to supply the Allied army instead. Stair then successfully attacked the minor fort of Haut-Pont, taking a lieutenant-colonel and 400 men prisoner and, having been reinforced by a further battalion and 500 horse under Lieutenant-General Evans, on 10 November moved his foraging operations to Loo.129. There kinder methods of persuasion worked equally well - he held back his cavalry so that the "boors" would not flee and even paid for the corn.130 But the French soon intruded. On 13 November 7,000 French threatened a Prussian detachment gathering supplies at Hondeschoote - where, incidentally, the village was burnt in order to coerce the inhabitants to give up their grain. Stair dispatched a squadron of Greys to recall the Prussians. The refusal of their colonel, Catte, to obey led to their capture; which event Stair was unable to prevent as his relief force was delayed by having to rout a body of French horse and demolish an intervening barricade.

130. Blenheim Palace MSS.: B. 1-9, Stair to Marlborough, 13 November (1708) 6 a.m.; B. 1-9, Stair to Marlborough, 13 November (1708) 8 a.m.
Confronted himself by the French, Stair withdrew his expedition and its supplies to Rousselaar. In the aftermath a duel between Stair and Catte was only prevented by the intervention of Brigadier Sybourg.

Though the old "court party" had felt no need for Stair's presence at Westminster, the strength of the Dalrymple family in Scotland was only to be illustrated in November. A customs official, coincidentally named Dalrymple, had the temerity to search one of Stair's country houses for smuggled brandy and earned a sharp reprimand from the Lord President of Session, Sir Hew Dalrymple, Stair's uncle. And Stair's political ambition, despite earlier attempts to assume an air of complacency, remained undimmed. In January 1709 Marlborough pleaded again for something to be done for Stair.

The winter passed, the peace talks with the shaken French broke down and Stair found himself charging at the head of the Greys against the elite French cavalry, the Maison du Roi, in the final cavalry stroke across the blood-drenched heaths of Malplaquet. The campaign's end brought the part-realisation of Stair's ambitions; for with the affairs of northern Europe threatening to intrude upon the effort against France, Marlborough sought to have an envoy dispatched to the court of Augustus II, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, to secure at least the continuance in the supply of Saxon troops for Flanders, and had Stair appointed to that office. Thus Stair was at last given his long-awaited chance to serve his diplomatic apprenticeship.

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CHAPTER 2

THE APPRENTICESHIP

When Stair reached his destination, Warsaw, in February 1710, he wrote: "'tis impossible to imagine the misery and desolation of the country of Poland I passed through, and in many places the plague is now actually raging, 'tis indeed no wonder it should be so, for the people are unprovided of all sorts of necessaries for life and are nasty above belief." He had not simply seen the devastation of war heightened by winter but he had come amongst a nation whose decline had been only accelerated by the election to its throne in 1697 of Augustus II, Elector of Saxony. This choice was to be an unmitigated disaster for Poland. Augustus had been possessed of more land than any other of Europe's monarchs despite the century's losses to Poland's acquisitive neighbours. The nation's decay had seemed to have been arrested by the vigour of the late king, John Sobieski. Indeed Sobieski's legacy, the prestige earned by his stemming of the Turkish tide before the gates of Vienna in 1683, was to endure to the Peace of Karlowitz in January 1699 when Poland was rewarded with the recovery of territories lost to the Ottoman Empire in Podolia and the Ukraine. But nothing that Augustus was to do in the intervening years was to be of benefit to himself or Poland.

2. Since the early 17th century territory had been lost to Sweden, which had come to control the greater part of Livonia; to the Elector of Brandenburg, who had acquired most of East Prussia in 1657; and to the Tsar, who, through the Peace of Andrusow, 1667, received the portion of White Russia that comprised Smolensk, Czernigov, Kiev and Poltava.
3. This is said to have been Sobieski's original intention; editors: W.P. Reddaway, J.H. Penson, O. Halecki, A. Dyboski, Cambridge History of Poland, vol. 2...1697-1935, Cambridge, 1941, p. 5. (Hereafter referred to as Cambridge History of Poland.)
Any king-elect faced the problem of finding a method of effective government within the strictures of the constitutions of the republic's twin states (the kingdom of Poland and the duchy of Lithuania) which were designed to protect the "golden freedom" of the electorate, the nobility, and which have been described as "chaos thinly gilded". Not only was the principle of unanimity applied both in the local political assemblies - the dietines - and in the national biennial diets, but in the latter dissent was made effective by such instruments as the liberum veto (or the right of a single delegate to nullify all legislation which had been passed by or was before the current diet) and the liberum conspiro (under which a body of dissenting delegates could form an armed confederation to resist the application of policy). While successive monarchs had been progressively shorn of their powers by means of the pacta conventa (the contract concluded with each monarch upon election), the officers of state had grown so powerful that the Great General, having complete control of the army, could conduct his own foreign policy, and the Great Treasurer and Great Chancellor could obstruct the royal purpose by refusing to sign decrees. As these officers owed only their appointments to Augustus, the power to dismiss them being retained by the diet, it is small wonder that he is said to have regretted, in retrospect, his failure to aspire to become the Great General instead of king.

5. There was an upper house, the senate, where sat the holders of certain of the higher offices both lay and ecclesiastical, and though it was designed to assist the executive, in practice it was of little significance.
6. In 55 biennial sessions, after 1652, 48 were destroyed by the application of the liberum veto (Cambridge History of Poland, vol. 2, p. xvi.).
Augustus not unnaturally sought to break loose from these bonds and become an absolute monarch, but his course of action was singularly unfortunate in the light of his other ambition to share out the Swedish empire between himself, the Tsar and Frederick IV of Denmark. He attempted to employ outside pressure to cow his subjects by conniving at a surprise attack on Elbing in 1698 by the Elector of Brandenburg. The Poles retook the city in 1700, and the disrepute that Augustus had earned within his kingdom served him ill in the next year when Sweden's young king, Charles XII, turned upon him after having defeated the Danes and Russians. Although at first his subjects rallied to him, by 1704 Augustus' support had been divided by a rebellion in favour of the Swedish puppet, Stanislaus Leszczynski. Two years of civil war were ended by Charles XII's invasion of Saxony and his humiliation of Augustus by forcing him to acknowledge Stanislaus as king on 24 September 1706 at Altranstädt.

8. The excessive zeal of Augustus' supporters in granting him, at the Diet of Lublin in June 1703, a large levy of troops and the power to negotiate treaties, provoked a dissenting minority under the Cardinal-Primate to apply the liberum conspiro. There followed, with Swedish encouragement, the formation of a confederation of Great Poland and to the calling of a General Assembly in Warsaw in January 1704. At the latter the oath of obedience to Augustus was withdrawn and Stanislaus was elected to succeed him. Augustus' followers, who had formed the Sandomierz Confederation in 1702, thereupon declared war on the Warsaw Assembly.

9. Ironically Augustus was to score his first victory over the Swedes a month after Altranstädt. He had remained in the field, leaving the negotiations to his envoys, and to avert his arrest by his allies, the Russians, he had kept his silence about the events at Altranstädt. Thus when the Swedish general Mardefelt confronted by the Russo-Polish army at Kalisz on 19 October, all Augustus would do was to apprise him of the truce in the hope that he would avoid the battle. Mardefelt did not and was defeated (R.W. Hatton, Charles XII of Sweden, London, 1968, p. 216 (hereafter referred to as Hatton, Charles XII). F.G. Bengtsson, The Life of Charles XII, London, 1960, p. 225).
Stanislaus was never to be secure upon his throne because he failed to win over Augustus' former supporters who represented a majority of his subjects. His major prop remained the Swedish army and by the winter of 1708/9 it was isolated in the south-east of the Ukraine whither Charles XII had been drawn by his effort against the Tsar. Augustus was alive to the weakness of his rival's position and in that winter began to plan the recovery of his crown.

Encouraged from within Poland, Augustus prepared an army, found an ally, Denmark, and, when the Russians had decimated Charles XII's army at Poltava on 8 July 1709, decided to strike. Unopposed, Augustus' army moved swiftly along prepared routes to Lublin. On 17 October the ignominy of Altranstädt was erased at the meeting between the Tsar and Augustus on a bridge of boats across the Vistula a mile below Thorn by the signing of a treaty cancelling all former compacts. Backed by the Tsar and with Stanislaus skulking in Pomerania supported only by his plague-ridden Swedish body-guard, Augustus had no serious rival when he made his bid for re-election at the Diet at Lublin which had no hesitation in accepting him. Augustus' re-accession must have been tinged with regret, for he and the Tsar had planned:

10. The Sandomiers Confederation ignored Stanislaus and having cast around fruitlessly for a replacement for Augustus, declared an interregnum. Its army continued to support the Tsar (B.M.: ADD. MSS. 38500, f. 19, John Robinson to Horatio Walpole, 7 June 1709).


12. B.M.: ADD. MSS., 38,500 f. 35-6, Wich to (H. Walpole?), 28 June 1709; f. 19, Robinson to H. Walpole, 7 June 1709.


15. Van 't Hoff, op.cit., p. 467, doc. no. 799, Heinsius to Marlborough, 28 September 1709.

16. P.R.O. S.P. 88/116, Stair to Boyle, 20 Feb. 1710. The Diet of Lublin is here mentioned but no date is given; I have presumed that it was held in the closing months of 1709, for by February 1710 another assembly had been convened to meet in Warsaw.
that his subjects should grant him Podolia as a hereditary possession and should proclaim his son, the Electoral Prince of Saxony, as his heir in Poland, yet these ingrates had made no change in his pacta conventa. Augustus had to be content with the return of his throne.

In 1706 the presence of Charles XII in Saxony on the Emperor's flank and in position to strike at the German princes who supplied the bulk of Marlborough's recruits, had occasioned such alarms amongst the Maritime Powers that they had dispatched a stream of diplomats, including ultimately Marlborough, to the young Swede's camp to discover whether he had any intentions of siding with France.

Now in early 1709 these Powers were anxious to avert a fresh disturbance in the North. Their motive was the same. From this area came much of Europe's wheat as well as the vital commodities of timber, flax, tar and iron that kept her fleets at sea. But though a disruption in trade was no new experience in long years of war, the Maritime Powers could not view a potential loss of manpower as calmly. Charles XII was still undefeated. Denmark had recently re-emerged as a belligerent by committing herself to the recovery of her former province of Scania. The renewal of Poland's civil war could precipitate a major conflict in the Baltic periphery. The consequent alarm of the German princes could cause a withdrawal of their forces in Allied service in Flanders, where they constituted 60,000 of Marlborough's

19. Van 'T Hoff, op.cit., p. 451, doc. no. 768, Marl. to Heinsius, 5 Aug. 1709. Danish, Prussian and Saxon mercenarys numbered 40,000 and those from Holstein and Brunswick 20,000.
110,000 men. Augustus betrayed his awareness of the Allied anxieties by stipulating in the treaty of 28 June 1709 with Denmark that the neutrality of the Empire should be respected. 20

The Russian success at Poltava presented Augustus with a clear opportunity. It thwarted the Maritime Powers' plan to have Marlborough (Augustus' host in the previous campaign at the siege of Lille) dissuade him from pursuing his ambition. 21 They hesitated too long and were left with little choice in awaiting Augustus' attempt 22 but to cling to the Saxon and work to retain him as an ally 23 in order that he might be persuaded towards neutrality and thereby not only rob Denmark's belligerent king of support but ensure continuing peace along the German frontiers. To this end a guarantee was sought from the Regency in Stockholm, governing in the absence of Charles XII, that Krassau's army in Pomerania would remain inactive unless compelled to defend itself and its charge, Stanislaus. 24 Efforts were made to separate Augustus from Frederick IV, 25 while the latter was subjected to pressure designed to prevent his invasion of Sweden. 26 But allied threats to fulfil treaty obligations and go to Sweden's aid 27 backed by the pressure of a British squadron in the Sound 28 were to count for nought. The Danish invasion was effected in September.

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20. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/204, Boyle to Robinson, 31 May 1709 o.s.
24. B.M.: ADD. MSS., 38,499, f. 175, Townshend to Boyle, 18 December 1709.
25. Van 't Hoff, op.cit., p. 466, doc. no. 796, Heinsius to Marlborough, 21 September 1709.
27. On 17 January 1700 a treaty of mutual defence had been signed between England and Sweden.
To encourage further Augustus' co-operation, the Grand Pensionary of Holland, Antonie Heinsius, proposed on 19 September that an Anglo-Dutch diplomatic mission should be sent to the Saxon's court. The British response was favourable, but Marlborough immediately resisted Heinsius' suggestion that the task suited John Robinson, later to be Bishop of Bristol. Marlborough's opposition on the grounds that Robinson's long service at the Swedish court ruled against him was promptly supported by the Russian ambassador at The Hague. Yet, though Heinsius could not have been more prompt in his acceptance of that verdict, the British delayed naming another envoy for a month. Perhaps Robinson had found a patron at home, for on 8 November Marlborough thought it necessary to follow his letter to Sunderland of the previous week concerning the unsuitability of Robinson by declaring with Charles Townshend, the British ambassador at The Hague, that as none of the northern princes favoured Robinson he should return home. Eighteen days later, on 26 November, Cardonnel, Marlborough's secretary, was enlightening Count Lagnasco, Augustus' representative at The Hague, as to the acceptability of Stair.

29. Van 't Hoff, op. cit., p. 465, doc. no. 794, Marlborough to Heinsius, 19 September 1709.
31. Van 't Hoff, op. cit., p. 466, doc. no. 796, Heinsius to Marlborough, 21 September 1709.
32. B.M.: ADD. MSS., 38,498, f. 85, Townshend to Boyle, 8 October 1709.
33. Perhaps Robinson had found favour with the Queen, but he was hardly a controversial figure, for his selection as Edward Villiers', Ist Earl of Jersey's, replacement as Lord Privy Seal in 1711 has been described as the employment of "a blameless cleric" (G. Holmes, British Politics in the Age of Anne, New York, 1967, p. 202).
34. Marlborough was undoubtedly assisted by a call from ecclesiastical circles for Robinson to return to church duties (J.J. Murray, George I, the Baltic and the Whig Split of 1717, London, 1969, p. 69 - hereafter referred to as Murray, George I.)
36. B.M.: ADD. MSS., 38,499, f. 137, Townshend & Marlborough to Boyle, 6 November 1709.
On 10 December Johan Haersolte, heer van Cranenburg, was named as the Dutch envoy, and ten days later instructions were issued to Stair as British envoy to the court of Poland, to which Marlborough added letters of recommendation to Augustus and his minister, Fleming. The British choice was not as surprising as it may seem, for, leaving Marlborough's patronage aside, Heinsius himself had proposed to use Stair in 1708 on a mission to Charles XII, and Stair may have met Augustus when he visited the siege of Lille.

The mission's purpose was succinctly put in Stair's instructions as being to keep Augustus "steady to the interests of the Allies" and was explained by Marlborough as "to endeavour to prevent the northern war spreading into the Empire ..." Thus Augustus was not only to be reassured of the Maritime Powers' benevolence and of their gratitude for his regard for their interests, but was to be told of the Allies' determination to preserve the peace of the area, as expressed in the Dutch declaration on 14 December. Attention was to be called to the

37. Van 'T Hoff, op.cit., p. 473, doc. no. 813, Heinsius to Marlborough, 10 December 1709. Van Cranenburg was a diplomat with experience in the North dating back to 1700 (Hatton, Charles XII, p. 156).
38. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/209, Queen's Letter Book Northern, 9 December 1709 c.s.
39. Murray, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 663-5, Marlborough to Augustus and to Fleming, both letters on 13 December 1709 c.s.
40. Correspondence of Colonel N. Hooke, 1703-07, ed. Rev. William Dunn Macray, Roxburghe Club, London, 1871, vol. 2, p. 79. Nathaniel Hooke, a follower of Monmouth who was converted to Catholicism and Jacobitism to later enter French service to act as a liaison officer to the Scottish Jacobites, was to report to France that in 1706 Stair and William Cadogan were the foremost of Marlborough's favorites.
41. Van 'T Hoff, op.cit., p. 363, doc. no. 601, Heinsius to Marlborough, 7 February 1708. It is not clear how Stair had become known to Heinsius.
42. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/209, Queen's Letter Book Northern, 9 December 1709 c.s.
43. Murray, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 670, Marlborough to Lord Raby, 20 December 1709 c.s.
44. Van 'T Hoff, op.cit., p. 475, doc. n. 815, note 2.
pressure being exerted upon the Regency in Stockholm to have Krassau prevented from using his force against Danish, Polish or German interests, and it was to be plainly stated that the Maritime Powers would go to any lengths to allay the fears of the northern princes. In return Augustus was expected to encourage the Tsar and the Kings of Prussia and Denmark to honour the neutrality of the Empire.

That the intention behind Stair's mission was merely to persuade Augustus to remain neutral and not to set up a permanent diplomatic post at the Polish court was indicated at the outset by Marlborough who stated that the envoys should be sent for "some little time." And the duration of the mission was determined by the selection of Stair, for Marlborough required him to be back with the army for the new campaign; he expected him at the beginning of May should the peace negotiations with France fail. Hence the surprise of Boyle, the Secretary of State, when Stair at the end of March 1710 requested permission to return to the army, for Boyle had understood that as the mission's length had been so exactly defined, the Queen's formal permission to stand down was not required. It is possible that an effort was then being made to retain the British mission, for Marlborough had to remind Augustus of the original terms on which Stair had been sent.

45. Van 'T Hoff, op.cit., p. 465. doc. no. 794, Marlborough to Heinsius, 19 September 1709.
47. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/121, Boyle to Stair, 18 April 1710 o.s.; S.P. 88/116, Stair to Boyle, 30 March 1710.
letters of revocation, but they had in fact already gone. However, Marlborough's agitation was due to another aspect of the mission, for he intended Stair to bring back with him to Flanders the Saxon contingent of two battalions. This suggests a possible reason why Stair in particular was sent to Poland. Marlborough was anxious that Augustus, despite the distraction of the re-accession, should meet his commitment lest he set an unwelcome precedent for lesser princes to follow. Augustus' unreliability in easier times had led Marlborough in 1708 to go as far as to draw up a treaty to make certain of the delivery of the Saxon troops. In this more difficult winter the annual letters to the German princes would, in Augustus' case, be reinforced by the physical presence of Stair.

Leaving London on 23 December, Stair journeyed to The Hague, where he was presented by Townshend to Heinsius on 3 January. With the desired feeling of cordiality and sense of purpose achieved Stair

50. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/121, Boyle to Stair, 21 April 1709 o.s.
51. Van 't Hoff, op.cit., p. 475, doc. No. 815, Marlborough to Heinsius, 12 December 1709 o.s.
53. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/209, f. 323, Queen Anne to the Directors of the Upper Circle of Westphalia. A similar letter was sent to Augustus as a Director of the Upper Circle of Saxony (P.R.O.: S.P. 104/120, Boyle to Stair, 27 December 1709 o.s.). Marlborough also urged Schulemburg, the Saxon commander to see that the requirements were met (Murray, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 665, Marlborough to Schuylembourg, 13 December 1709 o.s.).
55. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/121, Boyle to Stair, 3 January 1710 o.s. Later Stair was ordered to work in close collaboration with Townshend at The Hague in order to effect the co-ordination of Anglo-Dutch policy on the north. Townshend's orders were to be acted upon by Stair as if they came from the Secretary of State (P.R.O.: S.P. 104/121, Boyle to Stair, 7 February 1710 o.s.).
with Heinaius and Townshend sought out Augustus' representatives, Lagnasco and Gersdorf. Stair's purpose was to dissuade the Saxo-Polish court from making its intended claim upon Sweden for indemnification for the events of 1706, for such action could only imperil peace in the north as the Swedes would never submit to that indignity. Stair must have had some effect, because Augustus played this issue down at their first meeting.

Lagnasco and Gersdorf too had a purpose, for Augustus had expressed doubts in the previous month about the Anglo-Dutch declarations of intent to preserve the neutrality of the Empire and now sought a guarantee that positive steps would be taken to prevent an irruption of Krassau's corps onto either the Saxon or Polish scene. Augustus was considering primarily his own security but, with an eye cocked to the approaching Polish Diet, he hoped too to allay his subjects' fears and spare himself strident criticism. On 8 January before Augustus' envoys had secured their objective Stair withdrew from the conference to continue his journey, heading for his next prescribed objective, Hanover.

56. Stair had been furnished with a letter of recommendation by Marlborough (Murray, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 664, Marlborough to Lagnasco, 13 December 1709 c.s.).
57. Murray, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 680, Marlborough to Stair, 10 January 1710 c.s.
59. B.M.: ADD. MSS., 38,499, f. 175, Townshend to Boyle, 18 December 1709.
60. Van 't Hoff, op.cit., p. 478, doc. no. 819, Heinaius to Marlborough, 7 January 1710.
The single communication received from Stair en route came from Zruul where, perhaps because he feared the king of Prussia's current truculence, he claimed to be unhappy with the breadth of his and Cranenburg's instructions, but he failed to convince his government that they should be revised. His gracious reception by the Hanoverian Electoral family is revealed by letters from his cousin and companion, Major Charles Cathcart of the Scots Greys. Cathcart fell under the spell of the Electress Dowager Sophia, even discovering in her an affinity for Scotsmen, and he found "her son, the Elector, is much more upon the German, very reserved but civil in his way." Though Stair disappointed Marlborough by failing to persuade the Elector to take command of the force which was proposed to be formed in Germany to meet a rumoured French threat in that direction, he was otherwise successful; he presented the Queen's letters and his instructions were displayed and favourably commented on. Then Stair hurried on to Dresden.

By late January at The Hague conferences Russia, Denmark, Saxony-Poland and Prussia were demanding a more specific commitment from the Maritime Powers to intervene in the North. But the Maritime Powers were determined not to be drawn into further burdening their overtaxed resources and could claim a new commitment was made unnecessary by the Swedish Regency's agreement to stay Krassau's hand.

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62. Murray, op.cit., vol. 4, pp. 674-5, Marlborough to Saby, 6 January 1710 o.s.
63. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/121, Boyle to Stair, 10 January 1710 o.s.
65. Murray, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 685, Marlborough to Stair, 28 January 1710 o.s.
66. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/121, Boyle to Stair, 27 January 1710 o.s.
67. Van 't Hoff, op.cit., p. 479, doc. no. 822, Heinsius to Marlborough, 21 January 1710.
68. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/209, f. 297, Stair's Instructions, 9 December 1709 o.s.; S.P. 104/121, Boyle to Stair, 3 January 1710 o.s.
69. Murray, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 665, Marlborough to Stair, 28 January 1710 o.s.
the pressure exerted by the northern princes at The Hague was severe enough to prompt Boyle to urge Stair to make haste to reach Dresden before Augustus left for Poland in the hope that Stair might procure some first-hand information that might afford Townshend some relief. But hurry, though he might, Stair, delayed by as many as twenty accidents, reached Dresden on 31 January to find Augustus gone.

However, awaiting Stair was a delegation headed by Count Fleming, the first minister of the Saxon court, who, Stair found, had secured such a grasp of affairs that he had aroused the jealousy of his monarch. Indeed Augustus' absence was to prove no impediment. Stair made it plain that his purpose was to obtain for his government an accurate version of the proposals being advanced by the Saxo-Polish delegates at The Hague but not to negotiate on them. Such a request should not have surprised the Saxons, for Fleming himself was to express dissatisfaction with his delegates who were exceeding their instructions and annoying the Pensionary. There was no hesitation; on 3 February Augustus' scheme for the preservation of the peace of northern Germany was in Stair's hands. Augustus felt that, as any act of the Regency in Stockholm was liable to be revoked if Charles XII survived his retreat into Turkish territory, the peace should be secured by a treaty between the Maritime Powers and their allies on the one hand and Poland and hers on the other. Under this, all the

70. B.R.O.: S.P. 104/121, Boyle to Stair, 27 January 1710 o.s.
73. P.R.O.: S.P. 68/116, "Account of the E. of Stair's Conference with the Ministers of Poland, Dresden..." copy sent to Boyle, 4 February 1710.
signatories, with the exception of Augustus, would provide quotas of troops to form a force which could act against whoever broke the peace, Saxon or Swede. In return the Allied troop requirements would be met and Sweden could retain her provinces within the Empire. 74

Stair was asked to comment on the proposals on behalf of his government. He refused on the grounds that he was not competent, under the terms of his appointment, to do so as there was no other British diplomat with whom he could consult. All that he would offer was his private opinion which was that the Maritime Powers were likely to regard their standing guarantee as sufficient in the circumstances. 75 The conference itself was productive in so far as it revealed the underlying motives for the current attitudes of the northern princes. Stair gathered that Augustus' attitude was founded on a need to placate the Danes and Prussians, who were pressing for an attack upon Pomerania and expected Poland to join that attack if her demands were not acceded to immediately. Pressed, Stair grew angry when one delegate let slip that the king of Prussia was delaying the renewal of his contract for supplying troops for Flanders until the result of the Anglo-Polish negotiations was known. He learnt further that the withdrawal of those troops was under consideration. Fleming hastened to make "great apologies and said the man who had told me so had done it indiscreetly and without his order." 76 But this did not placate Stair who warned his government that thus the means of coercion had been revealed.

74. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/164, Stair to Townshend, 4 February 1710, (code), the covering letter to the latter.
75. P.R.O.: S.P. 88/116, "Account of the E. of Stair's Conference with the Ministers of Poland, Dresden ..." copy sent to Boyle, 4 February 1710.
Outside the conference room Stair found that the Saxons were sympathetic to the Maritime Allies' aspirations, especially in regard to the preservation of peace in the area and that they were opposed to Augustus' endangering of it. The Poles appeared to be already uneasy at the presence of Saxon troops and were expected to demand their withdrawal. And Stair was given to understand that there was a deep mutual suspicion between Augustus and the Tsar.77

Stair did not neglect the social arena while in Dresden. On the evening of 3 February he dined with the king's favourite mistress, the Duchess of Cosle. This was an astute move, for she was a woman of some influence - and of her Stair was to become wary because she was believed to be in the French interest.

Fleming had started for Poland on 2 February and Stair followed on the night of the 4th.78 This last stage of Stair's travels earned him Boyle's sympathy for it was "a tedious and hazardous journey through a miserable, desolate and infected country. I hope the reception and entertainment you will meet at the king of Poland's court will make you some amends for what is past."79 Reaching Warsaw on 14 February,80 Stair had but two days to wait before he was conducted by the Great Chamberlain Lubomirski to an audience with Augustus. Finding the king in good humour, Stair delivered his credentials, his letters from the Queen, and paid the appropriate compliments. Augustus responded by stressing his good intentions towards the Maritime Powers; he pointed to his efforts to preserve peace in Germany,

79. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/121, Boyle to Stair, 21 February 1710 o.s.
to his unfailing provision of troops for Flanders and to how he was currently pressing Prussia to continue to supply men for the Imperial effort in Italy. Responding to the letter addressed to him as director of the Circle of Upper Saxony, Augustus promised at least part of his contingent for the coming campaign in Flanders and averred that he would persuade his fellow princes to dispatch theirs. But the discussion centred on the real point-at-issue, the Maritime Powers' guarantee of the neutrality of the Empire. Augustus spoke of his need for a further commitment by the Maritime Powers to neutralize Krassau, thereby removing the Prusso-Danish excuse for an attack upon Pomerania, answering the Poles' call for measures to prevent further disruptions and providing the peace that would allow Augustus to consolidate his position within Poland. As to the subject of indemnification sought by Saxony for the events of 1706 Augustus did not elaborate - nor did Stair prompt him to - beyond indicating that he would be grateful for British assistance if an opportunity for making such a claim presented itself. 61 In the course of Stair's mission the indemnification issue was not to be forgotten but it was never to be elaborated upon. This suggests that the claimants themselves were not clear what they sought.

Although Augustus' reception had been cordial, the entertainment offered in Warsaw soon bored the fretting Scot. "Time hangs heavily" he wrote to Horatio Walpole, then Townshend's secretary at The Hague, Despite the nightly masquerades and balls, Stair continued, "a man has his bellyfull of Polish eloquence in two or three meetings of the council. Tockay is our only relief and even that loses a good deal of its flavour when one must bring their toasts from so far." 82 He unbent as he

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described for Walpole the great ladies of the court, the merry time they had and the great distances they travelled in pursuit of pleasure. He ended rakishly "... you can't imagine how my neighbour Mally's eyes sparkle and how her cheeks glow in this fine frosty weather." It is possible that he was not as bored as he would have Walpole believe him to be.

The opinion Stair had formed in Dresden was confirmed in Warsaw; he found the Poles unhappy with their roles as hosts to three foreign armies, one Saxon and two Russian, especially as the latter's soldiery was living up to its reputation for brutality. The recognition of the national need for provision to be made for a regular army, the existence of which would provide the pretext to call for a Russian withdrawal, underlay the calling of a Great Council, the delegates to which thronged the capital. A council rather than a diet had been chosen in order to avoid the necessity of obtaining absolute unanimity, for though a council could only advise it required only a simple majority to reach a decision. The design was that the council should complement the earlier Diet of Lublin, which had confirmed Augustus' re-accession. The council sat intermittently until mid-April, rising at times to report to the dietines or to form committees to weigh up policy. Typically the progress to a decision was hesitant, for the delegates knew of the impoverished state of the court and

87. G.D. 135/146, Stair to H. Walpole, 27 February 1710.
89. P.R.O.: S.P. 88/116, Stair to Boyle, 23 February 1710. S.R.O.
90. G.D. 135/146, Stair to Townshend, 17 April 1710.
92. G.D. 135/146, Stair to Townshend, 16 March 1710.
suspected that the money raised\(^90\) and placed in the Great Treasurer's hands might be misappropriated.\(^91\)

Another issue that attracted the council's attention was a conflict between Augustus and Poland's great port and commercial centre, Danzig; doubtless the council, in appointing a commission "against the town of Danzig,"\(^92\) wished to have a say in any division of spoils. Stair, who was instructed to attempt to protect the city as well as to conserve the rights of the long established British mercantile colony within it,\(^93\) soon grasped the situation; he found that the people of Danzig "... are guilty of a crime, that is at present, to be laid to the charge of nobody else in Poland! They have money."\(^94\)

For a monarch of the calibre of Augustus and a country in as ruined a state as Poland, Danzig's comparative affluence offered a temptation that was hard to resist. And Augustus' demands for monetary compensation rested on the flimsiest of pretexts; for he sought recompense for his "equipage", which had been handed by the city to the Swedes when Augustus had been driven out of his kingdom, and for the annual dues that had been paid to Stanislaus during his short reign after Augustus had abdicated to him by the terms of the treaty of Altranstädt.\(^95\)

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90. New taxes on paper, leather, cattle and tobacco were proposed (P.R.O.: S.P. 88/116, Stair to Boyle, 20 February 1710.).


92. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/209, Stair's Instructions, 9 December 1709 o.s.


The exact nature of the dispute was obscure in England at the time of Stair's departure, but before his journey had been completed Danzig itself had defined it in an appeal for British mediation. Though Boyle was aware of the illegality of Augustus' claim, he knew enough of Poland and its king to understand that Danzig would have to meet the demands made upon her. All that Boyle could do was to place the British mission at the city's disposal as a means of communication with the court in the hope that British prestige might soften the blow.

Discussions with the Danzig deputies and the Polish court after the arrival of Cranenburg in late February promptly yielded confirmation of Boyle's opinion; Stair concluded that "we can help them in moderating the sum but they must." Further Stair could see that delay was useless and could be disastrous if Augustus chose a physical solution. As others - the bishop of Kujawia, who held two suburbs of the city in fief; the Great Treasurer; and the Russians - all began to press their real or pretended claims for compensation for past injuries, Stair and, after his departure in May, his secretary George Mackenzie, who remained behind, tried to make the city face the realities of its position. Their argument was that to gain Augustus' protection the city should submit rather than risk his carrying out his threat to quarter troops in it if there was no settlement by the winter. Understandably the Magistrates

96. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/209, Stair's Instructions, 9 December 1709 o.s.
97. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/121, Boyle to Stair, 17 January 1710 o.s.
100. P.R.O.: S.P. 88/116, Stair to Boyle, 17 April 1710.
103. P.R.O.: S.P. 88/18, part 1. Mackenzie to Tilson, 8 July 1710.
viewed Augustus' threat with some disbelief, for his *Pacta Conventa* contained a clause exempting Danzig from quartering his troops, and they were anxious not to set a precedent for payments beyond the annual dues. In the event Stair could announce the success of his diplomacy, for the city accepted his advice however reluctantly. In July Danzig would consider no more than 200,000 crowns as against the court's price of 300,000 to 500,000. In August, with Danzig loud in her praise for the alleviation brought by British diplomacy, an agreement on the amount was reached. Though the amount paid remains a mystery, settlement was made two months later after quibbling over the moment and method of payment.

Britain's concern for the fate of Danzig was bound up with her long-established trade links there. An appeal to John Robinson in May 1709 from the British community for assistance in preventing the city from withdrawing recognition of the British chapel there, led not only to a protest from Robinson but to instructions to Stair to preserve British mercantile privileges in the city. But Stair seems to have put the Polish-Danzig issue first, for he referred only once to his task in April when he thought Danzig's deadlock with Augustus could be exploited to the British factory's advantage. By July the merchants had stated their demands, five which had been pressed for a century aimed at giving their factory equal status with

111. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/204, Boyle to Robinson, 17 May 1709 o.s.
112. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/204, Stair's Instructions, 9 December 1709 o.s.
those other Baltic ports. A paper was dispatched to Stair in Flanders and he merely relayed it to the Secretary of State, the Duke of Queensberry. Thus it was Mackenzie who, after the Board of Trade had deliberated, had to face the city and he only secured the concession on the chapel issue - little sacrifice as in effect it had already been conceded to Robinson in the commercial treaty with Danzig on 22 October 1706.

But Stair's major pre-occupation was of course the preservation of the neutrality of the Empire, and with this end in view he strove to placate Augustus and to counter the influence of the bellicose Danish envoy who sought the distraction of the Swedes' attention from his monarch's expeditionary force across the Sound in Scania. For relief was soon at hand; on 2 March news arrived of a fresh declaration by the United Provinces on 13 February of their intention to defend the neutrality of the Empire, and simultaneously the Swedish general Stenbock drove the Danes from Scania. Thus strengthened, Stair moved to oppose the Danish call for reinforcements of 12,000 Russo-Polish troops as stipulated in their treaties of alliance, and found Augustus, when the extent of the Swedish victory...
was known, only too willing to retract his earlier statements of support for Denmark and of intention to march his men across Imperial territory. But in Augustus' view his own position remained unrelieved and he sought means to prevent the reinforcement of the Swedes in Pomerania and, for the sake of the area's stability, to prevent attacks from there on Danish territory. He proposed alternatives: either a defensive alliance with Britain or the recruitment of Krassau's corps by the Maritime Allies for service in Flanders. Both ideas found favour with Stair; the latter simply removed the threat from Krassau to Poland while the former could be moulded into such form that Britain committed herself to no more than she had done in the existing declarations and at the same time was assured of the Saxon contingent for Flanders. But the Maritime Powers had already considered the idea of recruiting Krassau, and their answer to northern misgivings was merely to give further ground at The Hague and to declare jointly with the Emperor on 31 March their intention to defend the neutrality of the Empire, including the Swedish provinces, by force. However Marlborough saw in Augustus' proposals an opportunity to allay further Polish fears by a pretence of giving the defensive treaty serious consideration, and he made Stair dispatch in early April the relevant details to The Hague.

129. P.R.O.: S.P. 88/116, Stair to Boyle, 6 April 1710.
130. Murray, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 708, Marlborough to Boyle, 1 April 1710. Murray, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 707, Marlborough to Stair, 1 April 1710.
April favoured Augustus. The council confirmed the previous Diet's recognition of his re-accession. France, being anxious to be allowed to establish diplomatic relations with Poland, accorded him formal recognition. The Swedish regency indicated its willingness to permit the recruitment of its army in Pomerania, and the Maritime Allies by their latest commitment to the defence of the Empire were nearer to Augustus' view of the requirements for the maintenance of peace on the German borders. Though Augustus feared that the council would not pass the army estimates if it learnt of the news from The Hague, he was canny enough to have Stair keep it to himself. But Stair found that April's "long days and fine weather make me very uneasy here, especially now there appears little more to do at this court." In accordance with the original schedule, on 1 May Stair took leave of Augustus' court and hastened back to Marlborough's army, which was already in the field. Yet he found time on his return journey to perform certain duties which ensured the safe arrival of the two designated Saxon battalions to Flanders. At Leipzig he advanced money to this corps, while it was drawn up on the Polish frontier awaiting Augustus' order to march, and from the Hanoverians he sought permission for it to cross their territory. On 21 May he reported for duty at the camp before Goulezin. Five days

133. P.R.O.: S.P. 88/116, Stair to Boyle, 14 April 1710.
139. P.R.O.: S.P. 88/116, Stair to Boyle, 10 May 1710.
later, supported by the Earls of Orkney and Orrery as knights brethren, Stair was invested by Marlborough with the Most Noble Order of the Thistle. A dinner in his honour followed, and his promotion to Lieutenant-General was back-dated to 1 January. Such was his reward for his winter's service.

As Stair's responsibilities on the Anglo-Dutch mission at the Polish court had been assumed after his departure by his secretary, George Mackenzie, it was to the latter that Augustus submitted the second draft of his proposed treaty, under which Britain would be committed to diplomatic intervention in any future conflicts and, should that fail, to supporting Augustus with military or financial aid. More immediately Augustus sought British mediation in the war with Sweden; British underwriting of Saxony's (as yet unspecified) claim for indemnification for the events of 1706; and British commercial concessions for Poland. In return Britain could expect support for the Protestant Succession in the form of military aid if attacked; the contingent in Flanders would be maintained, even enlarged in the event of peace with Sweden; and wider commercial facilities and privileges would be available to British subjects living and trading in Poland.

Mackenzie dispatched these proposals to Stair, who relayed them to Boyle on 26 May. But they were hardly welcome to the Maritime Allies who, to the undoubted delight of the French, had already committed themselves further than they had ever intended by their declaration on the defence of the Empire at The Hague on 31 March. Boyle merely offered to study the project. However Augustus was not to be put off and in September had Fleming resubmit the treaty draft, to which was added the curious threat, in the light of the purpose to secure British mediation with Sweden, that the withdrawal of the Saxon contingent in Flanders might be considered because Britain was not at war with Sweden. Stair, who had previously advised the revival of the idea of recruiting the Swedish corps in Pomerania, now proposed that Britain should take sides in the northern war. He was ignored, as was the Polish proposition, for already, on 4 August, the Maritime Powers and their allies had signed a convention at The Hague under which each would contribute men to form a force to defend the neutrality of the Empire. Though the emptiness of this latest gesture was exposed by Marlborough's assertion that he had not the reserves from which to supply Britain's six battalion

146. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/121, Boyle to Stair, 3 June 1710.
147. P.R.O.: S.P. 88/116, "Remarks upon the two projects of a Treaty of Defensive Alliance between the Queen and the king of Poland" (undated); Stair to ?, 25 September 1710.
148. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/146, Stair to Townshend, 21 August 1710. It was a suggestion that was attracting serious discussion; B.M. ADD. MSS., 33, 273, f. 74, Townshend to Boyle, 29 August 1710 (copy).
149. P.R.O.: S.P. 88/116, Stair to Queensberry, 21 July 1710.
150. B.M. ADD. MSS., 33, 273, ff. 44-5, Townshend to Boyle, 1 August 1710; f. 48, Townshend to Boyle, 5 August 1710.
contingent and though the Tsar and Augustus protested at the lack of provision in the convention for the defence of Poland, the Maritime Powers would be drawn no further.

After his return to the army Stair was retained as envoy to Poland and continued to exploit the goodwill he enjoyed at the Polish court in correspondence with Fleming, to advise his government on Polish matters and to be beset with pleas for assistance from the oppressed Protestants of Lithuania, the Scottish merchants in Warsaw and the British factory at Danzig. But the passage of time meant that Mackenzie, the man on the spot, assumed more and more of his role. By the end of July Stair was complaining of the difficulty of proffering advice when Townshend's embassy at The Hague was dilatory in supplying him with news of the North. In these circumstances it was not surprising that Stair's envoyship was terminated on 17 March 1711 and that Mackenzie was at the same time promoted to full diplomatic rank as the Queen's Secretary to the court of Poland.

If there is one constant theme running through the entire Stair correspondence, it is his own financial affairs which are mentioned frequently in the letters from Poland. Marlborough's prediction that

151. Murray, op. cit., vol. 5, pp. 101-2; Marlborough to Boyle, 18 August 1710; and p. 159, Marlborough to Raby, 24 September 1710, in this Marlborough stated that Townshend would try to raise the six battalions in Germany.
152. B.M. ADD. MSS., 33,273, f. 56; Townshend to Boyle, 12 August 1710 (copy).
154. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/121, Boyle to Stair, 3 June 1710.
155. P.R.O.: S.P. 88/18, part 1, Mackenzie to Queensberry, 12 November 1710.
156. P.R.O.: S.P. 88/116, memorandum "in Ld Stair's of the 23 June 1710 ..."
Stair would be at "great expense" was soon borne out, for Stair found that there was nothing on hire in Warsaw and that every essential had to be purchased. For the entire mission Stair had only the Treasury's provision of £500 and its advance of three months' salary, £455, to supplement his private resources for he had to wait until 28 September before his salary for the second quarter, March to June, was paid. As the Treasury Board minute in September, a response to Stair's agitation, allowing the payment of £500 for his extraordinary expenses was not implemented until 4 April 1712, one can hardly blame Stair for the desperate tone in which he referred to money matters. Yet he does not appear to have lost in the end; in March 1711 he received £1,375 as salary for the remaining nine months of his employment and a Royal Bounty of £1,500, which meant that he received in all £4,820 to cover expenses of a like amount. But a profit was unlikely in view of the suspension of his army pay while he was away, and he had a life-long reputation as a spendthrift. In any case he could count himself lucky to recover anything in the light of the notorious niggardliness of the Treasury of his day.

160. Murray, op. cit., vol. 6, pp. 674-5, Marlborough to Raby, 6 January 1710 o.s.
164. Calendar of Treasury Books, vol. 24, part 2, pp. 585 & 594; Stair seems to have provoked four meetings of the Treasury Board in September to consider this matter; pp. 67, 83, 589 & 594.
Stair undoubtedly gained new prestige from this diversion from his military career and, though the political consequences of his attachment to Marlborough would preclude him from further employment until the death of Queen Anne, he had gained sufficient reputation to be chosen to represent George I at the court of Louis XIV.
CHAPTER THREE
THE PRELUDE TO THE MISSION TO FRANCE

To his uncle, Sir David Dalrymple, the Lord Advocate, Stair expressed his view of the ousting in 1710 by Robert Harley of the uneasy alliance of Godolphin and the Whig Junto; he claimed that he could not believe that the forthcoming elections -

"will be managed with so high a hand as that I, who have nothing to do with (sic) in all the late squabble and who have never been a party man and never had any sort of connection with the Junto, shall be excluded because I'm a friend of my Lord H(arlborough). If that be the case, my party is taken. I do not intend to come into the House at that rate but I own I can have no notion that the reward of all my Lord Marlborough's good service and his good fortune will be his being turned out. The more that anyone that knows anything of our affairs on this side knows that it is a jest to think of carrying on our affairs on this side, (sic) just as great as to imagine that the Elector of Hanover will take party with the new undertakers."

He was to be proved wrong in the first two assumptions; he was not elected and Marlborough was dismissed. But the Tories were all too aware of the futility of continuing the war. He was right as to the Hanoverian attitude and, though he suffered nothing but reverses in the remaining years of Queen Anne's reign, his freedom from the stigma of Toryism plus his astuteness in maintaining the correspondence that he had established while in Poland with Jean de Robethon, the Elector's private secretary, undoubtedly secured him his appointment as George I's envoy to the court of Louis XIV.

The campaign that Stair had been in such haste to join in the spring of 1710 was to prove to be the dullest of the war, matching the fruitlessness and indecision of the concurrent peace negotiations at Gertruydenburg. Marlborough was aware that the French were intent

on peace (albeit on as advantageous terms as possible) and, conscious of the public revulsion at the scale of the loss of men at Bléneau and of his own weakened political position, steadily undermined by Harley, he was unwilling to hazard a repetition of such losses. Thus he refused opportunities of facing the French army in the field and chose instead further to destroy the fortress shield of northern France. In the accounts to his correspondents of the three sieges of Douai, Bethune and Aire Stair did not presume to criticize Marlborough's strategy, though he confessed that his involvement in northern affairs relieved the tedium of camp life. Perhaps this boredom underlay Stair's proposal that Marlborough should exploit the season's gains by a thrust at Paris, a proposal which was in keeping with Stair's penchant for bold military stratagems. For this revelation we are indebted to Voltaire, whom Stair would soon befriend.

By late summer it was plain that the scale of change wrought by Harley was such that a more sympathetic composition of Parliament was required if the new ministry was to survive. As Godolphin hastily attempted to match Harley's careful preparation, it is not surprising to find that, concurrent with the dismissal of Godolphin from the post of Lord Treasurer on 7 August, Stair's uncles were

2. E.g. P.R.O.: S.P. 88/116, Stair to Boyle, 26 May 1710; Stair to Boyle, 23 June 1710; Stair to Queensberry, 21 July 1710; Stair to Queensberry, 30 July 1710; Stair to Queensberry, 18 August 1710.
4. Voltaire, Histoire du Siécle de Louis XIV, Pitt Press Series, Cambridge, 1897, p. 124. In 1719 Stair wrote to Cragga "I hope the King will make ... my little poet ... a present, tie the best poet maybe ever was in France, he is just now writing an epic poem Henry le Grand, he has read pieces of it to me that are most wonderfully good" (B.M.: Stowe MSS., 247, f. 123, Stair to Cragga, 2 April 1719). George I agreed and asked what was appropriate (S.R.O.: O.D. 135/141, vol. 19b, Cragga to Stair, 26 March 1719 o.s.) and Stair chose a watch (S.R.O.: O.D. 135/141, vol. 23, Voltaire to Stair, 20 June 1719).
canvassing support for the election of their nephew as a representative peer even though the existing parliament had not yet been dissolved. 6 Marlborough did not retain Stair for the entire campaign but in mid-September, dispatched him to Scotland, entrusted with his proxy as Lord Churchill of Aymouth and instructed to collaborate in its use with Godolphin's ally and former agent, the Earl of Seafield. 7 This commission reflected the political change in Scotland, where the remnants of the old Court party, including the Dalrymples, now found common cause with their recent opponents in the Squadrone. 8 Marlborough had been the recipient of Marlborough's proxy in 1708. 9 But now, in seeking to compensate for his loss of office by the post-Union abolition of the Scottish Privy Council and Secretaryship, he joined his fellow opportunists and defectors from the old Court party, the Campbell brothers, John, 2nd Duke of Argyll, and Archibald, 1st Earl of Islay, to promote Harley's interest. If Defoe is to be believed, this defection earned Marlborough and Argyll a severe rebuke from Stair, 10 despite Argyll's success at the election (from which Stair and the Squadrone abstained themselves) in securing a unanimous vote for his proposed list of candidates through his browbeating of other prominent members of the opposition including Seafield. 11

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8. H.M.C. Townshend MSS., 1807, p. 73, Stair to H. Walpole, "Friday 10 a clock"; MSS., of Countess Dowager of Seafield, 1894, p. 224, Marlborough to James, 1st Earl of Seafield, 13 September 1710; p. 211, Godolphin to Seafield, 12 October 1710 o.s.; Blenheim Palace MSS.; B2-2, Stair to Marlborough, 26 October 1710 o.s.
9. A nickname earned by this party since its inception in 1704 by its succession of temporary alliances with the conflicting interests in Scotland.
At the election Mar had regretted that of all the peers "Stair is most out of humour in appearance of any of them, and I must confess I'm sorry he is so, but I hope it will go over ...". Mar did not hope in vain; within a month suspicion was rife that Stair would be reconciled to the new administration, and in February 1711 Defoe, Harley's agent, in reviewing possible candidates for the post of Commissioner of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, came to the conclusion, "the only person I think remaining that both sides would trust is the Earl of Stair, of whom there is only this objection, his late engagement with the Squadron." In March Stair urged his uncle, Sir David Dalrymple, the Lord Advocate, not to contemplate resignation so long as the ministry did not call for a sacrifice of principle, arguing "the government will easily part from a man they don't find fit for their purpose ...". Ironically his argument was soon proved right, for Sir David Dalrymple was dismissed later in the year for lack of vigour in the prosecution of the case of the Duchess of Gordon's donation of the Pretender's medal to the Faculty of Advocates.

But before that blow fell, Stair proclaimed openly, from Flanders, in early June, his change of attitude:

"Last year I thought myself obliged not to meddle in the change, though I had no connection of any kind with the junto, yet I was in friendship and had obligations to people who opposed the alterations, I was not clear-sighted enough, to see they could be made without some danger to the public but rebus sic stantibus, for the very same goodwill I have to my country I should be very sorry to see any considerable alteration in the ministry now, and if I can be protected I shall be very glad to give my small assistance to the supporting of it."

15. H.M.C. Portland MSS., vol. 4, 1897, p. 661, Defoe to (Harley) 19 Feb. 1711 O.S.
16. S.R.O.: 0.B. 135/144, Stair to Lord Advocate, 31 March 1711 O.S.
It was fortunate for Stair's future relationship with the Hanoverians that little notice was taken of this recantation as he made it to reinforce his renewed bid for a British peerage \(^{19}\) when the issue of James Douglas', the 4th Duke of Hamilton's right to a seat in the House of Lords as the Duke of Brandon was already exciting controversy. Harley was not prepared to do anything for Stair until the fate of Hamilton was known. \(^{20}\) The house of Lords ruled against Hamilton in December and nothing more was heard from Stair on this subject.

Stair's friendly feeling towards the administration had been encouraged by Harley's payment of most of the arrears owing to Stair in respect of the Polish mission and by his being passed over in May for John Robinson's nominee, James Scott, as the new envoy extraordinary to the Polish court at which he was much relieved. \(^{21}\) But there is no evidence that it lasted long. In July Stair was quick to provide the Hanoverians with a defence of Sir David Dalrymple's integrity after his dismissal. \(^{22}\) Later in the month Stair was fully identified with Marlborough's efforts to repair his personal fortunes and to bring France to the conference table by decisive military effort; Marlborough had no knowledge that Harley now the Earl of Oxford, and the Secretary of State, Henry St. John, had been secretly negotiating with France since the winter. Seeking out Stair in his quarters at the camp at Cotte where he was convalescing from a fever \(^{23}\) after a fall from his horse, \(^{24}\) Marlborough proposed to use the furlough in Britain he had granted Stair to his own advantage. \(^{25}\)

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22. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 224, f. 232, Stair to (Robethon?), 10 July 1711.
Marlborough carefully elaborated to Stair the contents of the letters that the latter was to carry to Oxford and St. John in order to have a fully instructed advocate in London to defend his ideas. Marlborough was frustrated by his estrangement from the government, despite a superficial improvement of late in his relationship with Mr. Secretary St. John when, unknown to him, it was held that success at the secret peace negotiations depended on a continuing prospect of allied military achievement. Thus he requested that either he should be replaced by someone who enjoyed the government's full confidence or that Oxford should raise their relationship to a parity with that which he had enjoyed with Godolphin. He entrusted Stair too with his plan for decisive success in the campaign of 1712 under which the allied army would winter in the field, despite the additional cost, in order that an early start might anticipate the French preparations.

So Stair left the campaign and the preparations for Marlborough's most brilliant coup, the bloodless penetration of Marshal Villars' fortified *Ne Plus Ultra* lines, confident that a few days in London would suffice to settle Marlborough's future. But if Stair was in haste, Oxford was not. He turned Stair from his door saying any letters must first be delivered to the Queen. A day later Stair was brought before the Queen to explain his purpose and to answer questions on secrecy and whether the assembling of the magazines required for wintering in the field might arouse French suspicions. In accord with

the Queen's orders Stair faced Oxford, St. John and the Duke of Shrewsbury on the following day and was led to believe that they were convinced of the soundness of Marlborough's proposals. Then Stair gave an account of the war and pressed this trio to encourage Marlborough by an indication that they were willing to sanction some risk in order that the enemy might be brought to battle and the Dutch informed that they were expected to provide support. Such a proclamation was promised and the meeting terminated. But Stair was further delayed, as at another meeting, Oxford, though he did not appear to shift his ground, would not firmly commit himself to Marlborough's plans. Stair was to wait a full month while the secret conversations with the French were expanded into secret negotiations through the combined mission to Paris of Matthew Prior, the poet and friend of St. John, and the Abbe Gaultier, the French agent who had been conducting those conversations since the winter. Then in September Oxford felt it was opportune to allow Marlborough a guarded view of the diplomatic effort and dispatched Stair with what the latter was to describe in later years as "a bamboozling letter" even though at the time he was sufficiently encouraged to urge Oxford to effect a further rapprochement with Marlborough.

Stair was back in Flanders in time to join the siege of Bouchain though it is likely that illness denied him an active part. 

Be was to continue to serve in Flanders until mid-1713 despite his distaste for the Utrecht settlement and the plain dislike with which his new commander-in-chief, James Butler, 2nd Duke of Ormonde, regarded him. In November 1713 Stair sought personal gain by requesting that the money due to his regiment which was still in Flanders should be paid to him in London in order that he might have his agent in the United Provinces exchange it there at the favourable rate then to be obtained. This earned him a rebuke from Oxford who told him that any profit made with public money remained public property. Still Stair had been exempt - perhaps because he counted for little - from the repercussions of the dismissal of Marlborough in December 1711 which had affected others such as Sir Richard Temple and Cadogan. But the nearly fatal illness of the Queen in the winter of 1713 led Oxford in March 1714 to purge the army of unreliable elements. Thus the remainder of Marlborough's men were dismissed, including Major-General Davenport, Argyll, who had been recently reconciled to Marlborough and was offering the government nothing but obstruction, and Stair.

34. Rose, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 79.
35. "I have been likely to visit the dark region of oblivion by making a little too bold with myself one poor time." H.M.C. Portland MSS., vol. 5, 1899, p. 96, (Stair) to (Mar), 13 October 1711.
Argyll was stripped of all his offices and, like Stair, lost his regiment. Oxford was to claim that in fact Stair had been in need of the £6,000 he obtained for the Greys from Lord Portmore and had been happy to sell. However, though it was true that Stair was in financial difficulties, a later memorial from Stair makes it plain, as do his family's comments, that he was compelled to sell.

Stair was to remain unemployed until the Queen's death at the beginning of August brought George I to the throne. In the intervening period he was farrighted enough to underwrite his prospects of re-employment by providing Robethon with a political survey of Scotland which offered the reassurance of the strength of the anti-Jacobite faction despite the current division between the supporters of Argyll and the Squadron. As the king placed his trust in the judgement of Robethon as well as in that of his agent in London, the Hanoverian envoy, Count Bothmer, it is not surprising to find Stair's name among the flood of new appointees from the ranks of the Whigs to positions at court, in the army and in the administration.

Stair was appointed to the Bedchamber and to the Privy Council; he regained his Lieutenant-Generalship of Foot; and a regiment was to be found for him in the coming year. For a brief moment it seemed that he would be promoted to Commander-in-Chief in Scotland, because in August Robethon indicated that George I had advanced Stair's name as his choice to the Lords Justices. Though that particular post was to be regained by Argyll, another task was assigned to Stair.

43. B.N.: Stowe MSS., 227, f. 129, Stair to Robethon, 9 June 1712 o.s.
44. The Complete Peerage, vol. 12, p. 207.
Clearly George I's strong dislike for Tories, coupled with his distaste for the Utrecht settlement, meant that Matthew Prior could hardly expect to continue in his capacity as British plenipotentiary in Paris, an appointment he had held since 1712. Nor could General Charles Ross, a Tory, hope to assume his appointment, made in May 1714, of envoy-extraordinary to France. In mid-October Stair was selected for the ostensible purpose of presenting George I's compliments as king to Louis XIV, and any hopes that Prior had of serving his new master were dashed by Charles, 2nd Viscount Townshend, now the Secretary of State for the North, who made it plain to Prior in November that he would be recalled. And the breadth of the content of Stair's instructions and the fact that — though he did not assume any diplomatic rank until later in 1715 — Stair was advanced money in accordance with the rate for envoy-extraordinaries of £5 a day and for plenipotentiaries of £3 a day were clear indications that Stair's mission was intended to encompass more than the mere paying of compliments. Indeed the mission was to last for six years, and Stair was to become so enmeshed in his task that two years were to pass before an opportunity could be found to allow him home on leave. Though in the end Stair's own rashness was to earn him the ignominy of dismissal, he was now to exploit fully the opportunity offered to participate in the affairs of state and to raise himself in a key diplomatic post from partial obscurity to the forefront of society.

47. Horn, British Diplomatic Representatives, pp. 13, 14.
48. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, James Stanhope to Prior, 15 October 1714 o.s.
49. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Townshend to Prior, 11 November 1714 o.s.
50. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stair's Instructions, 22 November 1714 o.s.
CHAPTER FOUR

STAIR AT THE COURT OF LOUIS XIV

Even though Louis XIV appeared to Stair at their first meeting in January 1715 to be in vigorous good health,1 he was to be dead by the autumn. No radical departures from the established French policies could have been expected so late in a reign. Yet, commissioned to resolve certain problems arising out of the Utrecht settlement - notably the demolition of Dunkirk's harbour and the Spanish seizure of Majorca - and faced with the task of spoiling the Jacobite design to unseat George I before he became too secure upon his throne, Stair was to find full employment albeit in an atmosphere of unrelenting hostility. Although Stair's tenacity, brashness and his unyielding and zealous prosecution of his instructions had produced within six months a virtual severance of diplomatic relations - at least between his mission and the French court - Stair had accomplished enough by September and the old king's death to ensure not only his continuing presence in France but his promotion to ambassadorial rank.

Honoured by his king with a gift of £1,000 over and above the Treasury's provisions for his mission2 and preceded by a scurrilous tale that he had earned courtly disfavour by tactlessly introducing George I to three women of ill-repute,3 Stair set out for Paris on

1. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 5, Stair to (Stanhope), 29 January 1715.
2. Calendar of Treasury Books, vol. 29, Part 2, pp. 184, 190, 195, 199, (Stair received £500 for equipage and an advance of salary for the first quarter of £728, paid at the rate of £5 as an envoy-extraordinary and £3 as a plenipotentiary).
3. Add.E.: C.F. Ang. 266, f. 60, ? to ?, 24 January 1715; f. 10, d'Ibberville to Torcy, 9 January 1715 o.s.
17 January 1715. The wind being fair, the journey was uninter-
rupted, and six days sufficed to see Stair reach his destination.

Eager to fulfill his commission, Stair wasted no time in seeking
an audience with Louis XIV in order to transmit George I's salu-
tations. On the evening of 24 January, a day after his arrival,
he was at Versailles in the company of Matthew Prior in pursuit of
the French Secretary of State, Jean Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de
Torcy, but the latter made pressure of work an excuse for refusing
to see him. On the morrow the refusal was repeated, and Torcy only
relented after Stair had sent in Prior alone with the letter from
George I. A cold but civil interview resulted at which the
following Tuesday was set for Stair's audience. This coldness
was unexplained, but it was perhaps a manifestation of French
suspicions of the new order in Britain, both Hanoverian and Whig,
of which Stair was the representative. It was to persist while the
old king lived. Indeed, warmth was only engendered when Stair
succeeded in goading Torcy into losing all his self-control! On
the other hand British wariness perhaps explains the postponement of
the naming of Stair as envoy-extraordinary and plenipotentiary (even
though he was paid as such) until the demise of Louis XIV.

6. Hardwicke State Papers, vol. 2, p. 528, Stair's diary "Wed-
nesday, January the 23rd, at night, arrived at Paris ...".
7. H.M.C. Stuart Papers, vol. 1, p. 1902, Berwick to James III, 26
January 1715.
Dangeau avec Les Additions Inédites du Duc de Saint-Simon, ed.
E. Souché & L. Bussieux, Paris, 1858-9, vol. 15, p. 349 (Sunday
27 January 1715, "Milord Stairs est arrivé à Paris; il est nommé
ambassadeur d'Angleterre en France, mais il n'en prendra pas
encore sitté la qualité.") St. Simon, Mémoires, Paris, 1955
ed., vol. 5, p. 155, ("Le comte Stair est en France de la part
du roi Georges plus d'un an avant le mort du roi, sans avoir pris
le caractère d'ambassadeur qu'il avait dans sa poche"). A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 267, f. 308, d'Iberville to Torcy, 22 April 1718; C.P.
Ang. 268, f. 30, d'Iberville to Torcy, 6 May 1715.
was thus denied the security of a formal relationship because Stair could be withdrawn swiftly, without warning or formality.

On the appointed day, 29 January, Stair was graciously received by the old king. He presented his complimentary address to which Louis replied that all he wished for was to live in peace with Great Britain. Having fulfilled the ostensible purpose of his mission, Stair then made it known that he had instructions to discuss several matters with the king and was told to communicate them to Torcy. Then Louis XIV led him into an adjoining chamber to witness the French court at work, to hear a "harangue" by the deputies of the province of Brittany in which they praised Louis XIV's adroitness as a statesman in securing his grand-son's throne and in leading France from the desolation of defeat to a position of strength in Europe. At the end of the audience Stair paid his compliments to the rest of the French Royal Family. Only then did he, while walking in the gardens with Torcy and Prior, have an opportunity to raise the matters of moment and the question of Dunkirk in particular. Though Torcy confirmed Britain's worst fears by stating that the new canal near Dunkirk was intended to serve as a harbour, Stair was not prompted to say more than to promise to submit shortly a written statement on the British view.9

Returning to Paris, Stair learnt of a further purpose of his mission; he received orders to take charge of those of Prior's papers that related to France and to dispatch them to London.10

10. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 2, Stanhope to Stair, 13 January 1715 o.s. (If Stair had already been briefed on this then Stanhope's letter contained unnecessary detail); f. 3, "Royal Command", 14 January 1715 o.s.; P.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Prior, 14 January 1715 o.s., S.R.O.: O.B. 155/141, vol. 1, Stanhope to Stair, 13 January 1715 o.s.; A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 266, f. 77, D'Ibberville to Torcy, 24 January 1715; ibid. f. 128, Torcy to D'Ibberville, 6 February 1715.
Prior, instructed at the same time to co-operate in this, could not have been entirely surprised as he had received a like request at the death of the queen, when the Lords Justices, while awaiting the arrival of George I, had decided to investigate the current state of foreign affairs. Joseph Addison, the essayist, as secretary to the Lords Justices, was entrusted with the research, and had turned first to the Secretary of State, Henry St. John, now Viscount Bolingbroke, who was ordered to furnish him with all relevant documents in his possession. But Bolingbroke claimed to have nothing pertinent to give, and Addison had turned to Prior, who on 29th August 1714 provided eight copies of recent correspondence.

In accordance with the instructions of James Stanhope, the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, Stair used the element of surprise to obviate any destruction by Prior, who was told that the ministry wished to familiarise itself with the roots of the problems facing it; in fact evidence was being gathered for the impeachment of the leading members of the late ministry. Nevertheless Prior was not to be gullled and, though Stair reported that he had promptly and "readily complied", he wrote in his diary that the Secretary had done so with a "good deal of pain". Not surprisingly, within hours of the transfer, Prior expressed to Stair his fears of the possible misinterpretation of the views he had expressed in his official and private correspondence, to which Stair was not unsympathetic. After promising to make Stanhope

12. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Prior, 14 January 1715 o.s.
13. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 9, Stair to (Stanhope), 2 February 1715.
at least aware of such possibilities, Stair numbered the pages of the three volumes, listed their contents and gave Prior a signed receipt for them. Then explaining that there had not been enough time to copy them, as he assumed might have been required, he dispatched them to London.

In the subsequent interrogation Prior attributed the gaps in his correspondence to his lack at times of secretaries to do the copying and he would have Stair believe that his role in the peace negotiations in 1711 had been confined to discovering the French attitude and then conducting their agent to London, where his house had served as the venue for subsequent conversations with the British government. Stair's view of the correspondence was that it revealed that the Tories had become gradually aware that they had been duped by the French; promises made had not been kept. He claimed to have found proof of this in the letters covering January 1713. If, through being unable to read Bolingbroke's correspondence, Stanhope had not been alerted to all the facts, then Stair thought that he might find "several curious things" in what Prior had written.

Delayed by Treasury tardiness and his creditors' importunities, Prior lingered in France until late March. Then, ill and in a chastened mood, he left for England to be tried in company with more prominent Tories. The prolongation of Prior's stay was to Stair's advantage as he was able to draw upon Prior's experience at the

17. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 13, Stair to Stanhope, 9 February 1715. Stair discovered that Prior's instructions had consisted of no more than "three lines under the Queen's hand" (P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 9, Stair to (Stanhope), 2 February 1715).
18. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 9, Stair to (Stanhope), 2 February 1715. Torcy would disagree, for it was his opinion that there was nothing incriminating in these letters (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 266, f. 141, Torcy to D'Iberville, 11 February 1715).
French court,\textsuperscript{19} and, despite their political differences, Stair experienced a growing sympathy for Prior; they shared, if nothing else, a common antipathy to the Treasury's financial arrangements.

In the field of international affairs two of the issues on which Stair had received detailed instructions had advanced so far by the time he arrived in France that he was hardly involved in them.\textsuperscript{20} The common factor was that both these affairs constituted part of the Utrecht settlement.

The first arose from the hoary problem of the religious make-up of the Empire. The Westphalian Settlement of 1648 had established the principle of \textit{cujus regio ejus religio}, by which a ruler of any Imperial state would decide the particular creed to be observed in it. But it had been undermined by the treaty of Ryswick in 1697 and by the treaty-making in 1714 between France and the Empire at Rastadt and later at Baden. The area now in question was the land handed back to the princes of the Empire by Louis XIV in which it had been agreed, the Roman Catholic religion would be maintained even if any of the princes were Protestants; and any right of appeal was denied by the 38th article of the treaty of Baden. Britain as a Protestant nation with an Imperial Protestant prince as her king felt bound to intervene. This was part of the reason for Stanhope's visit to Vienna in late October, and as France had reaffirmed the Westphalian formula in the 21st article of the treaty of Utrecht, Prior was ordered to press Louis XIV to reverse the clauses contradictory to it in the treaties of Rastadt and Baden.

\textsuperscript{19} P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.48, Stair to Stanhope, 8 March 1715.
\textsuperscript{20} P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stair's Instructions, 22 November 1714 o.s.
He extracted a promise from the French court to instruct its plenipotentiary to the next Imperial Diet to urge a return to the principle of 1648 and when Stair arrived there was little for him to do apart from jogging Torcy's memory.

The second issue concerned the peace settlement between Spain and Portugal - an affair in which Britain cannot be accused of over-extending herself for an ally who had shared the dangers of the late war. In January 1714, Thomas Wentworth, Baron Raby and 3rd Earl of Strafford, the British plenipotentiary to the Peace Congress at Utrecht, had been instructed to draw up a project for peace between the two Iberian nations, and the resulting formula had found a place in the peace treaty between France and Portugal signed on 13 April 1714 which Britain guaranteed. Then in November Spain, having failed to come to terms with the Emperor, sought to force her neighbour to settle by threats and the ominous signs of belligerency in the border province of Estremadura stung Portugal's ally to action. Prior was ordered to have Louis XIV acknowledge his treaty obligations to secure his grandson's recognition of Portugal's minimum requirements as embodied in the Strafford formula. Despite French reluctance to comply, Spain was in any case thawing towards her neighbour and by mid-January settlement was near. All Stair had to do was to transmit to London the news of the signing of the treaty between Spain and Portugal at Utrecht on 6 February.

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24. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 266, f.114, D'Iberville to Torcy, 1 February 1715.
25. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.17, Stair to (Stanhope), 12 February 1715.
But as to the most contentious issue of the moment, Dunkirk, Stair was not to escape so lightly. This was also a quarrel which was a consequence of the Utrecht settlement. When this was concluded France with a British force occupying Dunkirk, had had to accept British demands, but they had subsequently failed to comply with them. The root of the trouble was in the French use of Dunkirk after its purchase in 1662 and the strengthening of its defences as a haven for privateers from which to harry British trade. Dunkirk was peculiarly suited for this role as it was near enough to British trade routes for the privateers' light craft and - unlike other northern French ports - far enough to the north for them to use the east wind to best advantage (it was ironic that this wind, that carried the trading ships south from the Thames into the Channel, brought the raiders swiftly down upon them). 26

British public indignation was such that not even the late Tory Ministry could dare to miss an opportunity to end the privateers' impunity and to save Britain further heavy losses of mercantile shipping in a future war. Hence conditions were laid down in the 9th article of the treaty of Utrecht, under which the harbour had to be filled in, the sluices (maintaining a sufficient level of water to make the port viable) and its defences destroyed within six months. Further, France promised never to re-activate the harbour. But promises made in treaties, as Stair would discover, were insufficient to deprive the French of this strategic trump card. This affair was destined to be a feature of Franco-British relations until 1783, when the French obtained the final withdrawal of the British demand by the Peace of Versailles.

Ignoring their commitment, the French delayed starting on the demolitions until in the last year of Queen Anne's life the prospect of the Dunkirk occupation continuing under a Hanoverian king and a Whig government spurred them into action. They had progressed sufficiently by early 1714 for the Tories to withdraw the holding force. Tory confidence is reflected in Strafford's instructions in January 1714 in which he was told to inform the Dutch that the demolitions would be completed in a month.27

But the French were as devious as ever - as Prior soon discovered in a series of arguments with Torcy over the exact definition of the treaty28 - and were determined to retain something of the advantage that a port in that vicinity had given them. When Bolingbroke would not allow the preservation of three of the sluices,29 the French responded by digging a canal in the early spring at the nearby village of Mardyke to provide the drainage - or so they claimed - formerly supplied by the destroyed sluices.30 By the summer the French intention was plain, for the canal was clearly to be navigable; as George I was to say, they had substituted a narrow harbour for a round one.31

Torcy's claim in June that all obligations had been met was easily disproved by the resident British inspection team, which found that, though the sluices had been destroyed, the harbour was unfilled and the installations remained intact. Consequently Prior compelled Torcy to sign a convention that promised to have the demolition completed by the end of July. But in July Torcy pleaded that the expense involved was too great for France, while Prior — not wishing to appear to condone the French action — complained of the Intendant Le Blanc's pre-occupation with the canal. Such was the situation that confronted the Lords Justices at the death of Anne.

Though the Lords Justices merely called for a report on the state of the demolition, the new Whig administration demanded action. Prior was ordered to insist that the spirit of Utrecht had been contravened by the digging of the canal; "I need not observe to you how frivolous an evasion of the treaty it is to pretend that a canal of such breadth and depth is designed only for a drain ...," was Stanhope's terse comment. General Cadogan inspected the harbour only to find it crammed with shipping, and his assessment, that the most effective defence was flooding (a contention proved to be correct during the First World War) led Britain to reject as pointless a French promise never to fortify their canal. Prior in a memorial reiterated

34. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/159, f. 13, Prior to Torcy, 16 July 1714 (copy).
36. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Prior, 27 September 1714 o.s.
37. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Townshend to Prior, 11 November 1714 o.s.
the British demands without success. Then in December negotiations were suspended to await the arrival of Stair. 

Having talked with Torcy and Prior in the gardens at Versailles, Stair concluded that Prior

"seemed altogether unknowing as to the affair of Hardwicke; never to have had any instructions about the canal whilst it was making; and to have concerned himself no farther about it since the giving (sic) the memorials he had been appointed to give, without having heard one word of it since his giving in the last." 

Luckily for Prior this unfair conclusion was reserved for Stair's diary, but it is curious that he should have given this impression of ignorance of and indifference to a subject that had occupied so much of his time, especially when he had taken such pains never to appear to condone the canal's construction. A further example of the inadequacy of Stair's briefing was his questioning of Prior's inactivity since the submission of the last memorial when that inactivity had been the product of Townshend's specific delegation of further action to Stair. However Stair could have been misled by Torcy, who had used their first conversation to assert that he assumed that the silence since his reply to Prior's last memorial indicated British acquiescence; an assumption that Stanhope was to dismiss as erroneous, Prior having had repeated orders to indicate that the British answer was being postponed until Stair arrived.

58. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Townshend to Prior, 22 November 1714 o.s.
40. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 266, f.12, Torcy to D'Iberville, 9 January 1715 (To D'Iberville Torcy made it clear that he understood that the silence would be broken when Stair arrived).
Although Stair held a prepared statement on British intentions for submission to Torcy, his first move in this tedious affair was to inform Torcy of the existence of this document and then to delay its delivery\(^{42}\) while he amended it in the light of his appraisal of the French scene and added to it a conclusion which summed up the points made "in softer expressions."\(^{43}\) Yet within a week he had a brusque exchange to report.\(^{44}\) He had gone to Versailles impatient to know the French reaction only to hear Torcy declare that, as there had been nothing new proposed, he could merely proffer the standard French argument in the written reply that Stair sought. Torcy's conclusion that Britain was spoiling for war was bluntly refuted by Stair, who voiced his opinion that the French court thought the British would submit to any indignity at its hands and warned Torcy that his assumption that Britain was weakened by both financial and political strains was mistaken - an assertion that was underlined at the polls later in the month by the resounding Whig victory in which Stair shared by being returned to the Lords as a Scottish Representative Peer.

Torcy worked the conversation round to the subject of the demolition, on which he complained petulantly that Stair remained unsatisfied despite the 35 millions (unspecified) expended by Louis XIV out of his love of peace and his desire to please the British. Pulling a map from his pocket, he showed where a sand-bank had formed on the sea-ward side of the jetties, an obstacle on which three British ships had already foundered and which, he predicted, would soon block

\(^{42}\) A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 266, f.156, Torcy to D'Ibberville, 14 February 1715.
\(^{43}\) P.R.O.: S.F. 78/160, f.9, Stair to (Stanhope), 2 February 1715.
\(^{44}\) Stair had submitted his memorial on 5 February (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang.: 272, f.73, Stair to Louis XIV, (Memorial), 5 February 1715). P.R.O.: S.F. 78/160, f.17, Stair to Stanhope, 12 February 1715.
the main channel. Stair acknowledged that this was true and that it could result in Britain's saving France some of the cost of demolition by, for example, forgoing the demand for the destruction of the jetty foundations, if the work at Mardyke was but undone. Torcy enlarged upon the consequences of the sand-bank, claiming that if it blocked the channel it would meet the treaty stipulation that the harbour should be rendered useless. Further he denied the allegation that Mardyke's canal would be connected to the town of Dunkirk. But he failed to move Stair from the conviction that the harbour would have to be filled in - as specified at Utrecht - otherwise it could be re-opened at will by the French by simply replacing the destroyed sluice. Torcy claimed that expense was the inhibiting factor as the French would be delighted if they could fill in the old harbour as the water was now stagnant, beginning to smell and raising fears of disease. Stair replied that any epidemic could be averted by the observation of the treaty and filling in the harbour. He pointed out that he was not empowered to release the French from any part of their obligation; he could only suggest that Torcy might find the British more sympathetic if their objections to the canal were met. Torcy replied that Louis XIV considered himself to be well within his rights to build the canal at Mardyke and was determined not to undo anything he had done. Thus Stair had uncovered the core of the problem and if he could not find a solution, success would elude him. The meeting terminated with a request to Torcy to discuss the matter further with the king.

Stair maintained the pressure and submitted a written demand for the written reply to his memorial.\(^{45}\) The reason for his haste and

\(^{45}\) P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.23, Stair to (Stanhope), 17 February 1715; A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 272, f.93, Stair to Torcy, 15 February 1715; C.P. Ang. 275, f.177, D'iberville to Torcy, 10 March 1715 (herein D'iberville raised doubts about Stair's ability to express himself in French, suggesting that Stanhope might be the real author of Stair's letters).
aggressiveness was that the pace of the excavation of the canal had never slackened and by mid-February it was nearly open to the sea. Expressions of regret by certain members of the court that the affair had reached such an intensity induced Stair confidently to advise Torcy to weigh carefully the issues at stake before giving "his master violent counsels in so delicate an affair." The occasion of the issue of the French reply was used for another discussion at length, from which emerged the French contention that the ruins of Dunkirk no longer menaced Britain and that the purity of Louis XIV's intentions was revealed in his reinforcement of his promise never to fortify the canal by a prohibition of its use by warships. This did not answer the British fear of a port in this locality and Stair made the only possible reply: if this was a gesture of friendship then why was the canal not rendered incapable of receiving all ships? Only then would British fears be quitted. Torcy urged Stair not to be so inflexible. He realised that Britain's main concern was the use of the canal in time of war but it was not yet navigable and would be useless as a port until jetties were built, and he believed that a way could be found to satisfy her. Stair agreed to transmit this opinion to London, but he warned Torcy that the canal in the form which it then took would never be accepted and he expressed a wish that the French reply had been differently framed so that its reception might be more favourable. Yet he was not taken in by Torcy's conciliatory manner; he ended his report to

46. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 3a, Abercrombie to Stair, 28 February 1715 (announcing the completion of the new sluice and its opening on 26 February).
47. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.23, Stair to (Stanhope), 17 February 1715.
48. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.29, (Stair) to (Stanhope), 20 February 1715 (copy).
Stanhope by pointing out that the Frenchmen's remark on the port facilities opened up a new hopeful possibility, but warned that the French "have so great a facility for changing their language that its hard to know where to find them fixed ..." and of Torcy that "just as affairs happen to take their course, he'll maintain that he either did not speak to me at all or that I did not understand what he said."50

Stair's next tactic was founded on his appreciation of the feelings of the French public and its apparent lack of confidence in the ministry. The French government gave out that he had been bidden to pick a quarrel following a resolution to go to war which had already been taken in Britain,51 and Stair sought to exploit the apprehension thus aroused. He deliberately withdrew from the public scene52 in the expectation that the French government would be driven to seek him out.

Stair maintained this optimistic mood although he knew that to succeed he would have to find a way of weakening the old king's intractability.53 And Torcy fostered Stair's confidence; he ordered work on the jetties to cease and encouraged Stair to believe that a settlement was possible if small vessels serving the commerce of Lille were allowed to use the canal.54 The assessment that Stair gave Stanhope on 24 February was that the French "talked big"55 because

50. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.29, (Stair) to (Stanhope), 20 February 1715, (copy). Supported by Torcy's version of the conversation (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 266, f.169, Torcy to D'Iberville, 21 February 1715).
51. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 266, f.231, Torcy to D'Iberville, 28 February 1715.
52. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.29, (Stair) to (Stanhope), 20 February 1715, (copy).
53. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.34, (Stair) to (Stanhope), 27 February 1715 (copy).
54. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.51, (Stair) to (Stanhope), 24 February 1715 (copy).
they were advised that Britain was divided internally and ripe for revolt; and for this reason were confident that she would avoid a confrontation. Stair's advice betrayed his belligerent mood, for, convinced that France would avoid a confrontation, he suggested that the combination of diplomatic pressure from the Emperor and a naval demonstration by Britain might well produce French acquiescence.

The success of Stair's manoeuvre of withdrawal was marked by a French demand for an exact definition of his role in France. Indeed Stanhope, when questioned by D'Ibberville, was warned that if Stair was withdrawn the French public would assume that war would follow. But Stanhope, not wishing to lose the advantage gained, chose to remain mysterious.

Stalemate had in fact been reached; the British were determined to see that the terms and the Spirit of Utrecht should be observed.

56. *A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 266, f.161, Torcy to D'Ibberville, 7 February 1715.*
57. *A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 267, f.41, D'Ibberville to Louis XIV, 8 March 1715.*
58. *P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.33, Stair to Stanhope, 24 February 1715 (private).*
59. *D'Ibberville found that the Duke of Buckingham was of the opinion that, as Stair could not afford the expense of an Ambassadorship, he would delight in a war that would allow him to exploit his talents as a soldier, rather than to negotiate from weakness, without formal diplomatic rank and ill-paid (*A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 275, f.143, D'Ibberville to Torcy 28 February 1715).*
60. *S.H.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 2, Stanhope to Stair, 21 February 1715 o.s. *A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 267, f.7 and f.13, D'Ibberville to Torcy, 4 March 1715; D'Ibberville discounted the rumour in London that Stair was about to be recalled and that upon his return D'Ibberville would have to leave in 24 hours.*
61. *A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 272, f.134, Stair to Torcy 1 March 1715; C.P. Ang. 275, f.159, Stair to Torcy, 10 March 1715.*
and the French were equally determined not to abandon their stand. But Stair and Torcy continued to meet and to haggle fruitlessly.

Yet in early March the optimism which had been aroused in Stair seemed to be justified. On a visit to the French court in order to find out its reaction to his latest memorial, he was able to counter effectively its hostility by announcing the recent Whig victory at the polls. At this news, he reported, "the Court in a moment changed its tone." He sensed the French dismay as their hopes of exploiting the supposed instability of the British political scene were dashed by this proof of the strength of Hanoverian popularity.

But this Indian summer of warmth was to be brief; Torcy listened patiently to Stair's demand that the canal should be rendered useless, but, as Stair discovered in an audience on 13 March, Louis XIV remained intractable. He told him calmly (if Duclos is to be believed) "Monseigneur, j'ai toujours été maître chez moi, quelque fois les autres: ne m'en faites pas souvenir." Stair bludgeoned on, leading Torcy to call him "une trompette de guerre." He threw Prior into the fray to plead that the failure of France to comply with the British demands might well seal

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62. P.R.O.: S.P. 76/160, f. 43, Stair to (Stanhope), 8 March 1715.
65. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 267, f. 29, Torcy to D'Iberville, 13 March 1715. Torcy's handling of Stair earned him praise from Bolingbroke (C.P. Ang. 267, f. 109, D'Iberville to Torcy, 18 March 1715). While D'Iberville himself found: "Les Anglois qui se piquent de sagesse demandent pourquoi on a choisi pour cet emploi un Ecossois aussi fier qu'il y en ait dans toute la nation." (C.P. Ang. 275, f. 166, D'Iberville to Torcy, 7 March 1715).
the fate of those of the late Tory ministry who faced impeachment. 66
Stair submitted a new terse memorial which called upon France to meet her obligations 67 and he told Torcy of his confidence that Louis XIV would be forced to give way. 68 Tactless he might have been, but in this bellicose mood his determination to succeed never flagged, even though simultaneously he threatened Stanhope with his resignation because the expense of his post threatened him with ruin. 69 The French again suggested the possibility of limiting the size of the ships to be admitted to Hardyeke, but the proposal was rejected when Torcy proposed an upper limit of 300 to 400 tons. 70
Such manoeuvring would seem to bear out Stair's contention that Torcy merely sought to amuse him.

Judging that France's naval weakness - she had a bare twenty ships - exposed her possessions in North America as well as the adjacent fishing grounds, which he considered more valuable than the West Indies, Stair enthusiastically advised his government to go to war. 71 But Stanhope did not match his envoy's aggressiveness (even though he was content to allow him to continue to bully the French 72) and on 11 May he cried halt lest this issue should prejudice Stair's and Torcy's other negotiations on the question of Majorca. 73

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66. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.48, Stair to Stanhope, 8 March 1715 (private).
67. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 267, f.91, Stair to Louis XIV, 26 March 1715.
68. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.52, Stair to Torcy, 16 March 1715 (copy).
72. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 272, f.176, Stair to Torcy, 29 March 1715; C.P. Ang. 275, f.279, Louis XIV to D'Iberville, 25 April 1715; C.P. Ang. 267, f.164, Torcy to D'Iberville, 3 April 1715; f.185, enclosure Torcy to D'Iberville, 15 April 1715; f.291, D'Iberville to Torcy, 19 April 1715; f.296, Torcy to D'Iberville, 25 April 1715; f.322, Torcy to D'Iberville, 1 May 1715; C.P. Ang. 268, f.22, D'Iberville to Torcy, 3 May 1715. Dangeau, op.cit., vol. 15, p.400 (12 April 1715).
The Dunkirk issue remained in abeyance until the death of Louis XIV, but Nature succeeded where diplomacy had failed for, though the planned depth of water was attained, silting soon ensured the failure of the Hardyke venture. Yet while Dunkirk's fortifications remained only half-demolished and its harbour unfilled, the conditions of the treaty of Utrecht had not been fulfilled and Britain would not be content.

In the Spring of 1715, the Majorcan issue seemed to present Britain an opportunity to score a diplomatic advantage. Its origin dated from the War of the Spanish Succession when, after Peterborough's capture of Barcelona in 1705, the Majorcans and the Catalans had chosen to support the ill-fated cause of Charles III of Spain (in 1715, Emperor Charles VI). On 14 March 1713 at Utrecht, the British delegates, representing the Emperor, and the French, appearing for Philip V of Spain, signed the treaty providing for the Imperial evacuation of Catalonia and Majorca. Assisted by British naval transports, supplied in accordance with the treaty, the Imperial forces withdrew. But the Catalans chose to remain under arms as they knew that, despite the amnesty provided for in the treaty, Philip V would not allow them to retain their regained "fueros" (their ancient privileges) thereby setting a precedent for the loosening of his hold upon provincial Spain. Their spirited and bloody defence helped only by Majorca, while their former allies merely looked shamefacedly on, was overcome by the Duke of Berwick and a force of French auxiliaries in September 1714. Thus Majorca and her sister islands of Ivicia, Cabrera and Prenentaria were left alone to prepare to resist the inevitable invasion.

74. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.83, Stair to (Stanhope), 28 May 1715.
Spain's objective was plain; first Catalonia and then Majorca must be brought back into the kingdom and denied any privileged position within it. France considered it her duty to adhere to the evacuation treaty and to provide military assistance with which Louis XIV's grandson could secure his inheritance; she claimed that British protests were irrelevant as the use of force had not been forsaken at Utrecht. But Austria, despite her withdrawal, sensed an opportunity to block Spanish territorial ambitions in the Mediterranean and, though she had given only moral support to Catalonia, actively intervened on the side of Majorca. In November 1714 the Emperor appealed to Britain for open support of the Majorcan cause and in the following February when a Franco-Spanish invasion of the islands seemed imminent, he dispatched 2,000 men to reinforce their defences.

Before Queen Anne's death Britain complied strictly with the terms of the evacuation treaty. An offer by Majorca in 1713 to place herself under British rule in return for protection against Philip V was firmly rejected and in March 1714 Admiral Wishart's squadron was dispatched to support the land operations against Catalonia and to force Majorca's submission should persuasion by Robert Benson, Baron Bingley, the British ambassador to Spain, fail. Though in fact Wishart merely assisted in the blockade of Barcelona, this assistance of a former enemy against former allies drew an

78. Calendar of Treasury Papers, 1708-14, p. 607, "15 July 1714." P.R.O.: F.0. 90/14, Townshend to Prior, 8 November 1714.
uproc of protest from Whig public opinion.

Bowing before the clamour, Bolingbroke in early August ordered Prior to exert pressure to ensure that the Catalans were treated with leniency. This pressure was maintained by the Lords Justices, and it may have led the besiegers to exercise some restraint despite the fierceness of the struggle. Yet it is significant that the Whigs would do no more and the British squadron was ordered not to interfere with any Spanish invasion of Majorca.

Stanhope, the conqueror of Minorca in 1708, understood the complexities of British interests in the area. He was anxious that the lucrative and highly-prized Spanish trade should not be jeopardized by any ill-founded action. Further he had to consider the viability of Britain's key base in the Mediterranean, Port Mahon in Minorca, which was dependent upon the neighbouring islands for sustenance. Clearly if Majorca should remain independent of Spain and needed allies, Minorca's supply-line would be more secure in her hands than in the unfriendly ones of Philip V. But George I's general foreign policy demanded that the terms of Utrecht should be complied with; Majorca would have to return to the Spanish fold.

While she waited for Spain to make a move, Britain marked time. In late October France expressed fears that the Majoroans were

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81. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/135, Townshend to Kane, 26 October 1714 o.s.; to Bubb, 24 October 1714 o.s.
looking to Britain for support and warned that if any assistance was forthcoming she would assume that Britain was determined upon war. To aand, deputising for the absent Stanhope, denied any knowledge of a Majorcan approach and affirmed that Britain would stand by her treaty obligations.

But worsening relations with Spain (partly caused by Stanhope's visit to Vienna in October of which Philip V was highly suspicious) in no way solved the British dilemma. The solution adopted by the British ministry in early March was one suggested by the Austrians after Britain had refused them naval support which made their army's position in Majorca untenable. Their proposal (which had a precedent in the evacuation treaty) was for Britain to negotiate on the Empire's behalf with France, as Spain's advocate, for the peaceful withdrawal of the Imperial reinforcements in return for a full amnesty for the islanders and a guarantee that their "fueros" would be preserved. A successful mediation offered George I not only a chance to demonstrate his desire for peace and to uphold his treaty obligations but could perhaps gain from the consequent prestige and goodwill. If Spain could be spared the expense of a military operation, she might well have offered further commercial opportunities to both Britain and Minorca. And the Emperor, his honour saved, would be likely to be more receptive to Stanhope's idea of reviving the alliance structure that had been destroyed by Britain's making a separate peace at Utrecht. Further credit could be had if Britain

83. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/159, f.228, Prior to (Stanhope), 29 October 1714.
84. P.R.O.: P.O. 90/14, Townshend to Prior, 28 October 1714 c.s.
85. Michael, op.cit., vol,pp.265-7. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 266, f.161, Torcy to D'Iberville, 14 February 1715 (Torcy was equally suspicious).
could have initiated the long-delayed peace settlement between the Emperor and Philip V. And Louis XIV, who could be expected to be pleased with his role, might be more amenable to Britain's wishes with the result that issues such as Dunkirk could be settled.

But the Imperial origin of the suggestion was deliberately obscured by the British ministry, and when on 15 March Stanhope ordered Stair to approach the French on this subject, he claimed that he had succeeded in inducing the Imperial court to accept Britain as its advocate. But the Imperial court was content to allow the deception; Stair's old comrade-in-arms, Sir Richard Temple, now Lord Cobham and British envoy in Vienna, who was ignorant of the facts, gained the impression that it had welcomed the British initiative with relief.

The moment chosen to launch this idea was hardly propitious in view of the strain in Anglo-French relations caused by the wrangling over Dunkirk. It was probably for this reason that Stanhope carefully outlined the arguments that Stair could use to persuade Louis XIV to intervene. In regard to the Majorcan *fueros* it was to be pointed out that because George I would be able to get the Emperor to evacuate Majorca, and (assuming the inhabitants did not

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88. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 3a, Cobham to Stair, 17 April 1715. But Cobham was not alone in his ignorance, for the French were equally misled (Baudrillart, op.cit., vol. 1, p.654. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 267, f.99, D'Iberville to Toroy, 17 March 1715; f.127, Monteleon to Toroy, 17 March 1715).
fight on alone) Philip V would secure it without further expense, it was not unreasonable to ask him to consider their preservation. As proof of the sincerity of George I's peaceful intentions, Stair was to say that Britain had refused to join the Emperor in sending aid because George I had chosen not to risk endangering the peace. France was to be urged to encourage such a disposition in George I.

As had been hoped, Louis XIV saw an opportunity for France to profit by securing the desired Austro-Spanish peace treaty, which could in turn lead to a Franco-Austrian rapprochement. Consequently, while he considered the British had evaded their treaty obligations when they failed to prevent the Imperial reinforcement of the islands and had condoned the succouring of them thenceforth, the French king on 21 March ordered his ambassador to Spain, St. Aignan, to intimate to Philip V the contents of the British proposal and his recommendation to suspend the invasion while it was seen what negotiations might bring.90

Although Philip stated that he believed a swift settlement could only be reached by the use of force and that he could not see how he could grant the Majorcan "fueros" when the rest of his subjects were denied such privileges, he agreed promptly to authorise Torcy, Louis XIV's appointee, to negotiate on his behalf;91 he signed and dispatched Torcy's full powers and instructions on 2 April.92

90. A.A.E. C.P. Ang. 267, f.77, Torcy to D'Iberville, 21 March 1715; f.130, Torcy to Monteleon, 27 March 1715; f.161, D'Iberville to Torcy, 26 March 1715; C.P. Ang. 275, f.162, Louis XIV to D'Iberville, 21 March 1715.
92. A.A.E. C.P. Esp. 244, f.297, Philip V to Louis XIV, 2 April 1715; C.P. Esp. 240, f.12, St. Aignan to Louis XIV, 2 April 1715; C.P. Ang. 267, f.238, Torcy to D'Iberville, 15 April 1715.
He was anxious that time should not be wasted in case negotiations broke down and his expedition had to be sent after all, and against the defences which the Majorcans would have improved in the meantime.  

But urgency was not to be the keynote of this affair, and six weeks would pass before Stair was in a position to submit his first proposals. Although the Imperial instructions only left Vienna on 18 April, Philip V cannot be absolved from partial responsibility for the delay. This was because he, in his instructions to Torcy, and the Emperor, in the document empowering Stair to act, misused each other's titles with the result that deadlock set in the moment the latter document arrived in Paris on 17 April. France and Britain did not assist by failing to issue instructions to the delegates until 8 and 11 May respectively.

The delay prompted Stair on 12 May to ask for leave to attend to his private and regimental affairs in Britain (he had been given the Inniskillings by way of financial recompense). And he argued that, as the prospect of success was remote, the fear that his departure was in fact his withdrawal might prompt the French "to make proposals of accommodation more advantageous than any they have yet made." But the momentum was by now restored, George I having responded to a

93. F.R.O.: S.P. 94/83, Methuen to Stanhope, 15 April 1715.
96. F.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.72, Stair to (Stanhope), 17 April 1715; Torcy's full powers and instructions had arrived two days previously (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 267, f.236, Torcy to D'Iberville, 15 April 1715; C.P. Ang. 275, f.241, Louis XIV to D'Iberville, 15 April 1715).
97. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 272, f.309, Louis XIV's instructions and full-powers to Torcy, 8 May 1715; C.P. Ang. 267, f.343, Louis XIV to Torcy, 8 May 1715.
complaint from Stair of 4 May, that he was without Imperial or British instructions, by empowering him to negotiate in Britain's name alone and thus avoid the use of the contested titles.

On 16 May Stair could at last lay before Torcy a memorial containing eighteen articles based on the instructions which his Imperial adviser, Jean Amour de Soria, had brought from Vienna. The provisions for the withdrawal of armaments and troops were unlikely to excite much controversy. However the same could not be said for those which covered the islanders' amnesty and the retention of their "fueros", because, in the face of Philip V's expressed intention to deny those privileges, the Imperialists demanded the retention of the "fueros" granted by Charles III as well as those held under Charles II, and added by a like demand that a restitution of Catalan "fueros" should be made. It is not surprising that Louis XIV saw in this memorial confirmation of his belief that the Austrians had accepted the British offer in an effort to gain time.

Three days later, Torcy presented Stair with a written reply which firmly rejected the continuation of the Majorcan "fueros", especially those of the reign of Charles III, though he did agree that

99. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.72, Stair to (Stanhope), 4 May 1715; A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 268, f.86, Torcy to D'Iberville, 25 April 1715; f.103, D'Iberville to Torcy, 21 May 1715.
100. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 2, Stanhope to Stair, 30 April 1715 o.s.; Stair's Instructions, 30 April 1715 o.s. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stair's Full Powers, 30 April 1715 o.s.
101. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 268, f.48, Project on the Evacuation, 16 May 1715; f.69, Torcy to D'Iberville, 22 May 1715.
102. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 268, f.87, Torcy to D'Iberville, 22 May 1715; f.175, D'Iberville to Torcy, 26 May 1715.
rights to property would be unaltered. The demand for the restituation of Catalan "fueros" was dismissed as totally irrelevant. 103

These matters were reiterated in a conversation between Stair and Torcy on 28 May, before copies of the proposals were dispatched to Madrid, Vienna and London; 104 Stair found Torcy quite amenable with regard to several of the articles but adamant in his refusal to entertain the retention of the "fueros" on the grounds that Philip V would never grant to the Majorcans what he denied the Catalans and the rest of his subjects. Stair retorted that if this was so then the whole process of setting up this negotiation had been pointless because the Majorcans could have gained as much by simply surrendering. Further he held that it was unreasonable to expect George I to go to the trouble of securing the evacuation if he was to impugn his honour by allowing Spain to concede nothing.

By the end of the conference Stair had extracted a promise from Torcy to write to Madrid 105 to recommend that the granting of the "fueros" should at least be considered. As he believed that Spain was anxious to secure the islands and as he saw her chances of doing so by force steadily diminishing as the season progressed and the stores collected to support the invasion were rapidly consumed by the idle troops, Stair was not entirely pessimistic about the fate of the "fueros". And there was one positive outcome of this preliminary meeting, for Torcy agreed to support Stair's demand for the

103. A.A.E.: M.D. Ang. 43, f.62, Memorial, (?) 1715; C.P. Ang. 269, f.86, Torcy to D'Iberville, 22 May 1715.
104. F.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.85, Stair to (Stanhope), 28 May 1715; A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f.384, Torcy to D'Iberville, 4 July 1715.
105. Torcy had in fact already written once to Madrid, after the conference on 16 May (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f.87, Torcy to D'Iberville, 22 May 1715).
preservation of the islands' trade with Minorca (the single specifically British demand in the general instructions that had been issued to Stair) and that an article to that effect should be appended to the treaty. The negotiations were then suspended until the results of the Spanish study of Stair's proposals were known.

But, unbeknown to Stair, his negotiations were in fact at an end, for on 4 June, within days of the receipt of Stair's first proposals, Spain acted unilaterally; orders were issued in Madrid for the invasion force to embark. The fleet was at sea off Barcelona on 11 June. And the campaign was short and relatively bloodless because after his appeals to the Great Powers had produced no assistance and because there was no alternative to surrender, the Marquis de Ruby, the former Imperial Viceroy and now the elected Majorcan military leader, ended his people's brief independence on 2 July following a short siege of the capital, Palma (Alcudia succumbed first on 20 June).

Possibly because they feared naval interception from Minorca, the Spaniards took great care that the British should not be apprised of their intentions. In fact so careful were they that they even delayed informing Louis XIV of their design, despite the large numbers of French troops used in the expedition. It was to be two weeks after the orders had been issued and a week after the fleet had sailed before Paul Methuen, the British ambassador at Madrid,

had positive information of what was afoot and it was to be the month's end before - due to eighteenth century communications - the news reached Stair. The Minorcan squadron, three ships under Admiral Forbes, did intervene but to do no more than demand a truce until the outcome of the Paris negotiations was known, a request which was refused.110

Ironically on the very day, 6 June, that Methuen sought the Spanish reaction to the proposals which Stair had placed before Torcy on 16 May, the troops were boarding the transports off Barcelona. Yet Methuen had no hint of this when Spain's new first minister, Cardinal del Guidici, protested to him about the proposals, calling them "the most unreasonable in the world". The Cardinal reserved any further discussion for the negotiators in Paris, and Methuen must be forgiven for the optimism of his reply - that the future of the expedition lay in the hands of Louis XIV because of the preponderance of French troops in it.

The sailing of the Spanish fleet on 11 June112 coincided with Methuen's second meeting with del Guidici,113 in which the former proclaimed that Britain insisted that the Majorcan "fueros" be retained and would formally demand it if Spain used force. He was simply referred to the Paris negotiations. When the Spaniard hinted that something was afoot, Methuen merely supposed that he regarded

112. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 268, f.319, Monteleon to Torcy, 17 June 1715.
the negotiations as pointless. Five days later, alerted to the Spanish action, Methuen knew of the sailing and submitted his threatened demand. But, unmoved, del Guidici replied by pointing to Philip V's concession in allowing Stair to advance his ideas on a peaceful solution despite the fact that Britain had failed in her duty as a guarantor of the Evacuation Treaty. He precluded any further discussion with the usual but now incongruous statement that the matter still rested in the hands of Louis XIV (a statement which to Methuen seemed to reveal fully Spanish insincerity).

Europe's reaction to the duplicity of the Spaniards was surprisingly mild, perhaps indicating how unimportant this affair was considered to be. Indeed the mildness of the recriminations led to a rumour - in fact a baseless conjecture - alleging collusion between Austria, France and Spain. However Stair found it impossible to contain his resentment, and the consequence was the most acrimonious and, in a way, most surprising interview of his diplomatic career.

On 11 July Stair recorded in his diary that, prompted by Marshal Tallard, he had gone to make his protest to Torcy, but, because he was anxious to avert an immediate clash, he had done so.

117. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f.109, D'Ibberville to Torcy, 9 July 1715; f.149, D'Ibberville to Torcy, 21 July 1715.
by the means of a memorial covering his objections. This brief account closes with the statement that: "It did not avail. I had the most unaccountable dispute with him, when he used me like a dog, without provocation."

Inexplicably Stair contradicted this entry in regard to the actual submission of the memorial and the provocation in his account of the incident to Stanhope, and in a further statement (which is to be found with his diary) that he wrote in French and in the third person, perhaps for George I. He claimed in these that he had visited Torrey for "form's sake" and to tell him that he would present him with the memorial as soon as he had had it copied. Though it had been his intention to say no more, when Torrey had asked him to tell him the gist of the document, he had complied. Then, Stair went on, as they parted, his own demeanour faltered, for he could not resist a dig at Torrey:

"qu'on croit en Angleterre, que pendant un traité ou un effort convenir d'une suspension d'armes la bonne foi ne permettoit pas, qu'on recommence les hostilités sans avertir que le traité est rompu."

122. In this account I have amalgamated the two versions as they differ only slightly, but I have chosen to quote from the letter to Stanhope as it was written only a day after the incident and perhaps sooner than the account in the Hardwicke State Papers, which is likely to be the one dispatched by Stair to Britain on 21 July (S.R.O.: G.D. 220.5.S., Stair to Montrose, 21 July 1715). L. Wiesner, op.cit., vol. 1, p.25, favours the latter, but it is possible that the Stanhope letter was not seen by him.
Stair prodded the silent Frenchman to reply by asking whether he did not think so. When Torcy said that he did not, Stair continued:

"Il fait donc Monsieur, que les idées que nous avons de la bonne foi seront fort différentes que celles que vous en avez."

Torcy's reaction, Stair claimed, was violent. Foaming at the mouth and muttering "bonne foi" over and over, he exploded:

"Monsieur s'est bien à vous de nous parler de bonne foi, qui venez de nous tromper par des négociations feintes."

Opening the door, he ordered Stair out. The Scout, nonplussed, yet not angry and anxious to placate Torcy, immediately re-entered the room to repeat his earlier remark to prove himself innocent of any wish to offend. Torcy concurred and Stair hastened to state that he took Torcy's attitude as an indication of the sincerity of his good intentions towards the Emperor and George I.

Five days later, in welcoming the appointment of Count Königsegg as Imperial ambassador to France, Torcy wrote to D'Iberville that he needed to treat with a diplomat of Königsegg's temperament "pour moderer le feu que la conversation de Milord Stair exciteroit au milieu des glaçons de Normèige." He claimed to have never met the like of Stair and that, despite his resolutions to the contrary, he now found it impossible to control his temper in the face of Stair's provocations. Further he claimed that he ought not to have to listen to a man who dared, in the context of Majorca, to throw doubt upon the good faith of France. He surmised that if George I deliberately employed men such as Stair in other foreign posts, he was in need of numerous armies to support their actions. Thus he

comforted himself that George I did not know in fact the calibre of the man he had employed. Yet, Torcy conceded, if Stair had been set the task of making enemies, then he had fulfilled his mission perfectly. 124

Stair himself had hastened to describe the incident to Stanhope to offset the version that D'Iberville would broadcast in London. Of Torcy, he wrote innocently: "I cannot imagine what provoked the man, for generally he is not so passionate ..." He attributed his outburst to nervousness, for he knew that Torcy was worried about the success of the expedition; if it failed, he would suffer personal repercussions. The islands had in reality already capitulated; but failure was likely, said the ill-informed Stair, as the situation of the Spanish force demanded reinforcement and before this could be effected, Majorca would have been further assisted by the Emperor. On the French public's reaction to the news Stair reported:

"... everyone condemns Mr. de Torcy for the expedition of Majorca, which exposes him to the just reproach of their neighbours, and to the evident danger of losing a considerable body of troops." 125

In his account of the affair to Montrose on 21 July, Stair even claimed that his handling of the negotiations had prompted Torcy to advise the Spaniards to use force to secure the islands. He wrote:

"Monsieur de Torcy, who did not love me before, is mightily f'en'd that I reduced him to the necessity of attacking Majorca without so much as a plausible pretext of doing that fairly ... everyone even here blames him so much for this affair ..." 126

124. A.A.E. C.P. Ang. 269, f. 119, Torcy to D'Iberville, 16 July 1715. Saint-Simon speaks of Stair upsetting Torcy's calm and placid nature to the point that Torcy no longer wished to deal with him (St. Simon, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 657).


Reproach from France's neighbours was in fact forthcoming, for Stair's upbraiding of Torcy earned him the sympathy and support of both his principals, George I and the Emperor. But neither monarch went further than this, and in the case of George I, he provided naval assistance for the Imperial withdrawal and muted his reproaches in view of a prospect of improved trading relations with Spain.

The incident itself was soon noise abroad. Prince Eugene of Savoy claimed that Torcy had seized Stair by the shoulders and had flung him bodily from the room, which Torcy denied though he did admit that he had lost his patience with the aggressive Scot. And the clash had wider repercussions than the estrangement of two angry men, for it occasioned a virtual severance of diplomatic relations between their countries.

127. S.R.O.: C.D. 135/141, vol. 2, Stanhope to Stair, 9 July 1715 o.s.; vol. 4, L'Abbé Tonnes to Stair, 4 August 1715; Jean Amour de Soria to (Stair), 29 August 1715; G.D. 135/145, (Charles Cathcart) to Stair, 3 July 1715 o.s. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f.202, Torcy to D'Ibberville, 7 August 1715; f.126, D'Ibberville to Louis XIV, 17 July 1715 (D'Ibberville warned that the Whigs would not denounce Stair's action, nor would they decry Marlborough whose protege and choice Stair had been).


130. A.A.E.: C.P. Aut. 103, f.74, Du Luc to Torcy, 21 August 1715; C.P. Ang. 276, f.17, Torcy to D'Ibberville, 8 July 1715. Duclos perhaps recalled this incident when he stated that Torcy had proposed to defenestrate Stair if he was insolent to Louis XIV (Duclos, op.cit., vol. 76, p.125).

131. A.A.E.: C.P. Aut. 103, f.45, Torcy to Du Luc, 5 September 1715; C.P. Ang. 269, f.119, Torcy to D'Ibberville, 16 July 1715.
In normal circumstances Stair would have been withdrawn and replaced by a man capable of working with Torcy. But in July George I was faced with a Britain torn by internal dissension which was assuming an increasing Jacobite flavour, and was to culminate in the rising of 1715. As the Jacobites looked to France for aid and sympathy, it was imperative that George I should have there a man of undoubted loyalty, capable of penetrating their designs and to provide a timely warning of them. For this reason Stair was ordered to stay at his post and to endure stoically the insults of the French court, in order that George I might benefit from his considerable knowledge of Jacobite affairs. As the death of Louis XIV on 1 September in no way dimmed Jacobite ambitions, Stair was to be retained in France. And his retention meant that the Regent, because he sought to improve relations with Britain and thus had need of someone who could work with Stair, was forced to end Torcy's long involvement in France's foreign affairs.

The intensification of Jacobite activity in the last month of Louis XIV's life was to compensate almost entirely for the curtailment of Stair's other diplomatic functions. Since the abortive invasion of 1708, the Jacobites had been largely ignored in their quiescence.

132 S.R.O. G.D. 135/141, vol. 3a, Methuen to Stair, 1 July 1715 ("... the affair of Majorca is over as far as I could relate to your Lordship or me, which makes me believe that your stay at Paris, will not be longer than mine here ...”).
133 P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 20 July 1715 o.s. Graham, op.cit., vol. 1, p.268. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 276, f.105, Torcy to D'Iberville, 7 August 1715. However Stair would not have been surprised as he had already told Montrose that it was likely that he would be retained at his post despite Torcy's pressure to have him removed, at least so as to avoid distracting the British public further by the inevitable fears that a major rupture with France was a natural consequence of Stair's removal. (S.R.O.: G.D. 220.5.3. Stair to Montrose, 21 July 1715.)
However in the latter years of Queen Anne's reign they had been encouraged by the disfavour with which certain of the Tories, including Bolingbroke, had viewed the Hanoverian Succession. The Tories had connived at Louis XIV's keeping the Pretender within the French sphere of influence, in Lorraine, despite the Utrecht treaty's stipulation that the Pretender must leave France. And at the Queen's death their hopes of a seizure of power were dashed by such factors as Louis XIV's restriction of the Pretender to Lorraine and, more important, the welcome given to George I by the bulk of the population.

The advent of George I meant that Britain would no longer accept the Pretender's presence at Bar-le-Duc; the envoy of Lorraine was declared persona non grata in London until the Pretender was expelled, while Prior was ordered to procure the necessary French sanction for the expulsion. Such treatment drew from the Duke of Lorraine a protest which emphasised his dominance by France and pointed out that he had neither invited the Pretender into his territory nor been able to expel him. The Pretender, he claimed, had come and gone like a normal traveller.

Stair's single instruction on Jacobite matters complemented that sent to Prior and, though the French made no immediate move to comply, Stair was eventually to have the satisfaction of seeing the

138. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stair's Instructions, 22 November 1714. O.S.; Stair's Additional Instructions, 24 November 1714 O.S.
Pretender forced to depart to Avignon and finally in 1717 to Italy. But at least until July when dissenion within Britain reached major proportions with the resultant fillip to Jacobite hopes, Stair did no more than keep a wary eye on the machinations of the expatriates. The degree of unconcern with which he viewed a possible Franco-Jacobite attempt on Britain is illustrated by his advice to Stanhope that a naval demonstration by half-a-dozen frigates would suffice to give such a threat its quietus. However, French sympathy for the Pretender's aspirations coloured their dealings with George I, and Stair was to complain constantly that adverse reports on British domestic politics, emanating from British opposition elements as well as from D'Ibberville, was serving to increase French intransigence, particularly on the Dunkirk issue.

Stair was careful to ensure that he was kept fully informed by placing spies in French court circles, thus founding the espionage system for which he was to be famous. He secured the services of Saladin, the Swiss diplomat, Rémond, the Introducer of Ambassadors, Stair was careful to ensure that he was kept fully informed by placing spies in French court circles, thus founding the espionage system for which he was to be famous. He secured the services of Saladin, the Swiss diplomat, Rémond, the Introducer of Ambassadors, 141

139. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.53, Stair to (Stanhope), 16 March 1715 (coded). However, in response to orders from Stanhope, Stair was quick to demand that Torcy should reprimand the author of the Almanack of France who had styled the Pretender as the British king while referring to George I as a mere Prince of the Empire; P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 24 January 1715 c.o.; S.P. 78/160, f.17, Stair to (Stanhope) 12 February 1715; A.A.E.: G.P. Ang. 267, f.162, Torcy to D'Ibberville, 14 February 1715; f.120, D'Ibberville to Torcy 4 March 1715; f.30, Torcy to D'Ibberville, 13 March 1715.


141. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.53, Stair to (Stanhope), 16 March 1715 (coded).

and of Nathaniel Hooke, an ex-Jacobite now in the service of France; and he sought to exploit Stanhope's intimacy with the Duke of Orléans' agent, the Abbé Dubois, through whom Stanhope hoped to improve relations with France in the new reign. However, the modest sum of £400 that Stair laid out on secret services in these months (it seems he could spend freely), when compared with the £800 he spent in the three months after July and the thousands that he was to spend in the next year, is indicative of his peace of mind. His comments, too, typify his mood: on 28 May he wrote to Montrose dismissing any prospect of French involvement and stating "without that I don't fancy our Highlanders will undertake anything by themselves." Even Bolingbroke's flight to France failed to stir Stair from his complacency since it would be July before Bolingbroke actively promoted the Pretender's cause. Stanhope, in warning Stair on 11 April of Bolingbroke's presence in France, was perhaps more concerned, and he had Stair employ his spies to enquire into Bolingbroke's dealings with the French court, to which Britain could not object as Bolingbroke had fled before impeachment proceedings could begin. Bolingbroke served further to convince the French of the depth of the divisions within Britain; Stair found Torcy "plus roid et plus frer"
after conversing with Bolingbroke. Yet Bolingbroke, perhaps because he was aware how closely Stair watched him, tried to avoid immediate identification with the Jacobite cause. He sought an interview with Stair, who with some hesitancy granted it. To Stair he proclaimed both his loyalty to George I and realisation that his flight had been a mistake and promised to depart immediately for Geneva. Yet, ever the opportunist, he left on 4 May for a house by the Rhône, there to await his moment.

Within Britain the Hanoverian honeymoon had not long endured and the undermining of the Settlement's popularity by social, economic and political pressures soon produced a situation where as much as two-thirds of the population was ranked among the discontented. A sizeable share of the blame for this reverse must be ascribed to the King with his inability to speak English; his flaunting of his entourage of German mistresses, his alleged ill-treatment of his wife, his Luthernanism, which provided fuel for a revival of the High Church cry of "the Church in danger", and the excessive number and

149. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.72, Stair to (Stanhope), 17 April 1715.
151. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.72, Stair to (Stanhope), 17 April 1715.
154. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.80, Stair to (Stanhope), 4 May 1715.
155. Stair's cousin Cathcart provided him with an amusing anecdote on this subject and described a scene worthy of Hogarth. The envoy of Parma, "Poor Dismal", desiring to see an election, went to Bramford "... as he entered the town a very considerable Tory mob encountering him, put the question to him immediately, High Church or Low? Poor Dismal being quite a stranger to their ways and having some complaisance for the Court, declared for the latter; upon which the incensed rabble did so equip him with dirt and stones that he returned a most ridiculous martyr for a party he wished at the Devel." (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/145, (Charles Cathcart) to Stair, 7 February 1715 c.s.).
influence of foreigners at his court. George I's adoption of the
Whigs and their persecution of the leading figures of the late
ministry made the Tories in their despair easy targets for Jacobite
seduction. Even an outbreak of cattle plague served to assist the
agitation, which by July had gained such momentum that leading
Jacobites, like the popular Duke of Ormonde, could dare openly to
declare their political views. It is hardly surprising that,
derestimating the strength and resilience of George I's Whig
backers, the Pretender, the beneficiary of barely disguised French
help, should delude himself that his mere physical presence would
bring his father's subjects flocking to his standard.

The first hint of a design to invade Britain came in late June,
when British agents discovered a marked increase in the forces
stationed at Dunkirk, and, while it was at first suspected that this
was the prelude to a resumption of work at Mardyke, a gathering of
fishing vessels seemed to indicate something more sinister. Then,
as July advanced, Stair discovered the return to Paris of
Bolingbroke. The latter had been wooed, won and appointed
Secretary of State by the Pretender and had come to Paris because
he appreciated that without French aid, whether open or concealed,
an invasion of Britain would not succeed.

vol. 2, Stanhope to Stair, 9 July 1715 o.s.
o.s.; G.D. 220.5.8, Stair to Montrose, 24 July 1715 (later
Stair considered that perhaps the work was about to restart).
o.s.; G.D. 220.5.8, Stair to Montrose, 24 July 1715. Michael,
op.cit., vol. 1, p. 141.
In the difficult circumstances following his estrangement with Torcy over Majorca, Stair attempted to uncover the Pretender's intentions. He had his spies discover what they could; he sent an agent into Lorraine and set a man to watch Bolingbroke. Further he attempted to exploit the rapport that had been established between George I and the Duke of Orléans by arranging a clandestine meeting with the Abbé Dubois in a wood. There, having expressed the British determination to give Orléans full support when the time came for him to take up his duties as Regent, Stair tried to convince Dubois that it was in his master's interest to reveal the extent of the French court's involvement with the Pretender's cause. Though the Jacobites had long been convinced of the existence of a leakage of their secrets through Orléans, this probe by Stair was to produce little satisfaction, leaving him highly suspicious of the Abbé. The cautious Duke merely thanked Stair through Dubois for the promise of support and denied the existence of any Jacobite plots.

On Stair's suggestion that Dubois should visit Lorraine as a British agent, to probe into Jacobite affairs, Orléans refused to commit.


162. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f.102, D'Iberville to Torcy, 10 July 1715; f.110, D'Iberville to Torcy, 10 July 1715; f.148, D'Iberville to Torcy, 21 July 1715.


himself; though he advised Stair that, should the Abbé go, his purpose should be concealed from the Duke of Lorraine, who was in league with the Pretender.  

Further information came from the slight, cold contact that Stair retained with the French court. There he was treated to constant denials of French involvement in Jacobite affairs, of the reinforcement of Dunkirk, and of any intention to restart work at Hardyke, which latter statement French financial circles confirmed. This was consistent with Louis XIV's approach, for, though he was sympathetic to the aspirations of the Pretender, he would not do anything that would provide George I with a casus belli and so destroy the peace he wished so much to preserve. He allowed ships and arms to be purchased and port facilities to be provided. But financial assistance had to be camouflaged by a loan from Philip V, and a request from the Duke of Berwick to join the expedition had to be refused.

Stair was surprised in early July by an impression of disenchantment in French court circles with the Pretender's enterprise when reports from Jacobite sources spoke of the latter's preparations...
for an attempt on the throne being within weeks of completion and when D'Iberville was stating that British public support for the Pretender was such that his mere presence would secure him the throne. The cause, Stair reported, was a pessimistic statement by the Duke of Ormonde. As he put it "they have felt these friends' pulses beat low, when it came to the point of drawing their swords ...". But the mood did not long endure, for, within a week, Stair was in possession of increasing evidence that the design was going forward as planned.

In London the reaction to Stair's warnings was prompt. Stanhope suspended the impeachment proceedings against Lord Oxford and ordered Stair to spare neither time, energy, nor money to uncover the Jacobite plans and, so that Britain might be prepared, to speed any forthcoming information by means of his three couriers. Such instructions underlined the reason why Stair was retained at his post in spite of his estrangement from the French court. Indeed, though open discussion might have strengthened what tenuous links remained between that court and Stair (and the latter had intended to submit a memorial to Louis XIV on the French involvement with the Jacobites), Stanhope ordered him to avoid conversing with it about Jacobite affairs. This was because George I and his ministry had decided that the most efficient way to defeat the Pretender was to

176. Williams, op.cit., p. 175.
ignore the French role and to concentrate on robbing him of support within Britain by vigorous government. He was ordered to swallow his pride and face the insults of the French, secure in the knowledge that he had earned his monarch's approbation. He could derive pleasure from knowing that the royal address to Parliament announcing the impending danger to the Protestant Succession and the measures to be taken to combat it was based upon his dispatch of 28 July. 178

Although in mid-July the Pretender had become so confident of his popularity with the British populace that he had been sorely tempted to spurn Bolingbroke's appeal for caution and launch his design against Britain, in fact his slender financial resources had been so exhausted by the purchase of the few ships he had assembled in the Seine and the small quantity of arms aboard them that he was unable to pay for their upkeep. Logically Bolingbroke turned for aid to the Pretender's protector of old, Louis XIV. As Bolingbroke did so, a memorial arrived from the Jacobites in England, who warned that sure success depended upon the support of a regular army. 179

But Louis XIV was now fatally ill and would not face the war that would have been the consequence of aid on that scale. So Bolingbroke had to be content with the payment of the port charges and the gift of a ship to convey the Pretender. 180 And herein lay the root cause of the failure of the Jacobite rising of 1715/16, for, unable to draw significant popular support, the Pretender was to be in dire need of

178. P.ECO.; P.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 20 July 1715 c.s.
French financial and military aid. Convinced that Louis XIV would have eventually supported the Pretender and made war on Britain, Bolingbroke was later to ascribe the defeat to two factors: to the death of the French king and to the flight in early August of the Duke of Ormonde, the only Jacobite in England who was capable and popular enough to lead the uprising. He overlooked the phenomenon of the hour - the re-awakening of a national spirit in face of the threat to the Protestant succession.

In Britain anxiety had led to the dispatch on 1 July of a naval squadron to cruise off the French coast to intercept the traffic in arms and Jacobite personnel to England and prevent, or at least provide a timely warning of an invasion. The depth of this anxiety was indicated by the massive response from the alarmed government and populace to Stair's warning of 28 July. The details of what Stair revealed have not survived. All we have is his letter to Montrose of the previous week in which he warned that the Jacobites and their friends in France were "very bully and ... have great expectations". And, though he felt that open French assistance for the Pretender was then unlikely, he cautioned that France's attitude was founded on her sources of information in

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184. Stair was later to claim the warning had come from a source so secret that he was unable to reveal it to George I. (S.R.O.: C.D. 220.5.S, Stair to Montrose, 15 August 1715.)
England and thus "liable to change everyday". Therefore he thought
"'tis highly reasonable that you should take all the
precautions imaginable that don't look like being
afraid. Fear is the only bad thing (which) can
happen to you and the only thing (which) can do you
hurt ...".

Vigour and firmness, he advised, would destroy all Jacobite hopes.\textsuperscript{185}

His dispatch arrived in the early hours of 31 July and the
Cabinet Council met and drafted a Royal address destined to be read
to the Parliament that afternoon. The address drew protestations
of loyalty from Whig and Tory, and the Houses' replies to it were
accepted without dissent. The Jacobite interest must have watched
with dismay as the men they must have counted on rallied behind
George I - men such as the Duke of Shrewsbury, the-Lords Strafford,
Anglesea and Peterborough, the Archbishop of York and the Bishop
of Bristol.\textsuperscript{186} The Commons suggested an augmentation of the army
and navy,\textsuperscript{187} and wide reaching measures were taken to secure the
realm.\textsuperscript{188} The government dispatched troops to disaffected areas
and disarmed and arrested papists; the Commons suspended the \textit{Habeas
Corpus Act}; the Bank of England and the City of London provided
financial assistance; and from abroad came a firm Dutch assurance
that they would lend material support in terms of their guarantee

\textsuperscript{185} S.R.O.: G.B. 220.5.S, Stair to Montrose 21 July 1715.
\textsuperscript{186} P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 20 July 1715 o.s.
Michael, \textit{op.cit.}, vol. 1, p. 145-6. Williams, \textit{op.cit.},
pp. 177-80, 183. S.R.O.: C.D. 135/145, (Cathcart) to
Stair, 31 July 1715. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f.186, Copy
of George I's address; f. 192, D'Iberville to Louis XIV,
1 August 1715.
\textsuperscript{187} Two days prior to the receipt of Stair's warning the Commons
had taken it upon themselves to urge military expansion
1715 o.s.).
\textsuperscript{188} Michael, \textit{op.cit.}, vol. 1, p. 146. Williams, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 183.
P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 24 July 1715 o.s.
of the Protestant Succession. Though after this flurry of activity the British were to experience a sense of anti-climax when it became apparent that Stair had exaggerated the imminency of the Jacobite threat, George I had much for which to be grateful to him, as his action provided two full months in which to ensure that the Pretender's aims were ultimately frustrated.

In Paris, where Bolingbroke paid him the compliment of planting a spy in his household, Stair did not experience any relaxation of the French hostility towards him even though Louis XIV stood aloof from material involvement in Jacobite plans. Indeed, he claimed that

"I'm put into the quarantine here in the most extraordinary manner, no Frenchman dare see me by daylight. They wonder that I can live under this disgrace. I suffer it with great patience and tranquility to their great surprise."

189. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f.192, D'Ibberville to Louis XIV, 1 August 1715; f.227, D'Ibberville to Torcy, 6 August 1715. Arms caches were uncovered at Oxford. And, if Charles Cathcart is to be believed, an enquiry was made into the rejection of a governmental order for arms for Carolina. The excuse given was that the gunsmiths were fully employed making 14,000 arms for private persons, but unfortunately no further information about this has survived (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/145, (Cathcart) to Stair, 20 July 1715 o.s.). Customs officers were alerted (Calendar of Treasury Books, vol. 29, Part 2, p. 748). A reward was issued for the Pretender's capture, dead or alive. D'Ibberville stated the amount to be £100,000 and Professor Michael concurs, but Cathcart, perhaps forgetting an "0", claimed the amount to be £10,000 (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f.266, Louis XIV to Torcy, 13 August 1715) Michael, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 146. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/145, (Cathcart) to Stair, 25 July 1715 o.s.). P.R.O.: P.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 24 July 1715 o.s. Michael, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 145-6. Williams, op.cit., pp. 177-80, 183.

190. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f.229, D'Ibberville to Torcy, 8 August 1715. An anti-climax not shared by the Jacobites in France, as Stair noted "'tis a comedy to see how the Jacobites here rage at the measures (that) have been so happily taken to defeat their project." Though he found "the French flatter themselves that half the troops to be raised will be for the Pretender." (S.R.O.: G.D. 220.5.8, Stair to Montrose, 7 August 1715).


Thus Stair was barely tolerated at court, where his contact was limited to the military men: the Marshals Tallard, Villeroi and Villars. Yet he hardly contributed towards easing his position by requiring Torcy's apology as a prerequisite for a renewal of dealings with him. And such a renewal was made all the more unlikely by British insistence that the Pretender should be sent beyond the Alps before the betterment of relations with France could be contemplated.

From Britain too came criticism; the opposition elements claimed that the current alarm had been manufactured out of the quarrel with Torcy and was the court's means of securing a standing army - that menace to liberty that all post-Revolution parliaments had guarded against. D'Ibberville, who averred that the only way to negotiate with him was at pistol-point, commented that, if an army was needed, it should be sent to Stair because he always spoke as if he had one at his back.

Yet Stair was secure in the knowledge that he had his government's approbation. He was reproved only for his tardiness in dispatching his couriers when he lost his sense of urgency as the French king's health failed, and (while the vigorous Hanoverian recovered his subjects' affections) Jacobite morale slumped.

196. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 24 July 1715 o.s.
Unperturbed, Stair continued to gather information and to hound the Jacobites. He had the Duke of Berwick watched and, when he heard that arms and money were being carried to the ships in the Seine, he employed an agent to discover the exact anchorages of those vessels. This agent had a dual role, for Stair instructed him that if during his searches he glimpsed the Pretender, he was to proceed with all speed to England and report his whereabouts.

Further, in response to orders from Britain, Stair sent continuous reports on the movements of Ormonde after he had detected his presence in Paris on 8 August.

In his pursuit of knowledge of the Pretender's intentions Stair did not neglect his secret relationship with the Abbé Dubois. But Dubois was of little assistance, and Stair gained the impression that Orléans was "willing to let the affair of the Pretender take its train without meddling in it ...". As events would show, this was a precise description of the Duke's policy throughout the entire course of the Jacobite rising. In the circumstances of the king's mortal illness it was unreasonable to expect Orléans to commit himself

197. The Jacobites were convinced that Stair was receiving information from his alleged mistress, Madame Ruplemonde, whose source was a niece of Madame de Maintenon (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f. 184, D'Iberville to Torcy, 29 July 1715). Torcy, himself, denied this allegation, stating that Madame Ruplemonde had no friends in the Maintenon household (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f. 202, Torcy to D'Iberville, 7 August 1715).


to a policy-line before he assumed the trappings of office. Indeed the British government, which giving him assurances of support for his candidature for the Regency, asked in return only for guarantees on the Dunkirk issue.202

Nevertheless Stair was undeterred and succeeded in persuading Dubois to meet him (albeit incognito) on 1 August.203 However, Dubois remained unco-operative; he denied any knowledge of the Pretender’s intentions or of the French court’s involvement in them. So Stair dealt coldly with him and demanded that he should go to Marly (where the French court watched its king dying) to gather information.

Dubois’ attitude led Stair to complain of it to Orleans himself when they conferred together at Versailles on 13 August. Orleans was now prepared to admit that he had known all along of the Pretender’s design, and excused his silence with the claim that had the French court backed the Pretender, he would have warned the British government. ("The excuse is a bad one," Stair noted in his diary, "but I received it ...".) But he had, he claimed, seen no point in becoming involved as Louis XIV had resisted pressure to assist the Pretender. In any case, Orleans averred, it seemed that, with the collapse of Jacobite morale, the affair was over. Stair complained that the Duke or his adherents, knowing all this, could have divulged something204 and he reiterated it when he met Dubois ten days later to discuss the conversation with his master.205

204. Hardwicke State Papers, vol. 2, p. 541, Stair’s Diary, Tuesday, 13 August 1715.
From all appearances the Duke's assessment of the Jacobite's prospects was exactly right; it did seem that they were extinguished by the death of the Pretender's harbourer and protector, Louis XIV. But Stair, in possession of information from home and from within Jacobite ranks in France, when writing to George Bubb, the British envoy in Spain, informing him of the death of the French king, warned that the Pretender would implement his plan; for, though the change in the French government ought to cause him to abandon it, "his friends here and at home seemed bent upon venturing a bold throw for their last stake." 206

On 1st September, Louis XIV died. 207 Had Stair earned Torcy's, D'Ibberville's and Saint-Simon's depiction of him as an arrogant and insolent man sent to harry the French monarch in his dotage? 208 Such a description implies that Stair had a personal relationship with Louis XIV, when in fact French court etiquette forbade audiences with diplomats of second rank and Stair, who had not even formally assumed his rank, was exceptionally treated by being granted three audiences. 209

206. B.M.: Eg. MSS., 2170, f. 113, Stair to Bubb, 1 September 1715.
207. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f. 343, Torcy to D'Ibberville, 1 September 1715. Stair, who furnished regular reports on the state of the old king's health, stands accused by Dangeau of having laid a wager in mid-year that Louis XIV would not see out September (Dom H. Leclercq. Histoire de la Régence, Paris, 1921, vol. 1, p. 28). And, despite Stair's statement to Stanhope in April that he thought Louis was dying, Louis was in May to exonerate Stair from the charge that he was the author of the rumour that had swept England that the French monarch had died (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 2, Stair to (Stanhope), 18 April 1715. P.R.O.: S.P. 78, 160, f. 83, Stair to (Stanhope), 28 May 1715. Dangeau, op.cit., vol. 15, p. 419. St. Simon, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 671.)
209. Wiesener, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 19 (an audience relating to the Dunkirk issue). A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 267, f. 31, Torcy to D'Ibberville, 13 March 1715. Stair's first meeting with the king was upon his arrival in France.
Yet there is one piece of evidence that could be used to support it. On 13 August, knowing that Torcy feared he might, Stair decided to attempt to speak to the king about the Pretender's design. On the following day he went to Versailles to seek an audience. He relates that he arrived too late for the king's levée, having been preoccupied with making notes on what he wished to say. He sought out the Introducer of Ambassadors, the Baron de Breteuil, to procure from him permission to speak to Louis. But he was told that only Torcy could grant it and, having no desire to be the first to break the silence that had ensued after the clash with the minister in July, he abandoned his purpose, despite the urging of Marshal Villeroy.

However, he stayed to dine and by doing so he seemed to have upset the desperately ill king, who "seemed uneasy to see me at the table. The courtiers looked hideously upon me ...".210 On this occasion, Louis XIV might have felt that he was hounding him. He was certainly applying pressure on the French court in his efforts to defeat the Jacobites, but there is little evidence, aside from Torcy's complaints, of his alleged arrogance or of the frequent demands for an audience that Saint-Simon claimed he made. It was true that he had been belligerent, had proved to be tenacious at the negotiating table and had mounted a sustained diplomatic offensive against the French court, allowing it neither latitude nor peace, but had done so at his government's bidding. We have only Saint-Simon's testimony that he strutted with his nose in the air.211 If he had caused the French court never to feel certain of him, it was deliberate.

210. Hardwicke State Papers, vol. 2, Stair's Diary, Tuesday, 13 August 1715; A.A.E.; C.P. Ang. 269, f. 239, Toroy to D'Iberville, 14 August 1715.
Such a policy led to his postponing the adoption of his rank, and its effectiveness was shown in May when a request from him for leave in order to re-organise the regiment that had been given to him was refused lest the French should interpret his departure as a sign that war would follow.

Yet Stair had never provoked the French court to the degree that Louis XIV might find it expedient to declare him persona non grata and his life at that court was not all strain; he was well entertained, attending plays, operas, dinners and musical evenings, usually in the company of the military courtiers. However, such camaraderie was not extended to Torcy and the rift between these two intractable men must in different circumstances have occasioned the termination of Stair's career. The twin factors of the Jacobite threat and the mortal illness of Louis XIV were undoubtedly the salvation of Stair's career, for George I had need of Stair's ability to penetrate Jacobite machinations and he could safely ignore the hostility of Louis XIV's courtiers towards Stair, as the latter was the agent on which the relationship, which was to lead to the rapprochement between Britain and France, was founded.

212. Calendar of Treasury Books, vol. 29, Part 2, p. 195: P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stair's Instructions, 22 November 1714 o.s.; Stanhope to Stair, 31 January 1715 o.s.; Stanhope to Stair, 20 July 1715 o.s.; S.P. 78/160, f. 9, Stair to (Stanhope), 2 February 1715; f. 31, (Stair) to (Stanhope), 24 February 1715 (copy); f. 34, Stair to Stanhope, 27 February 1715, (copy); f. 43, Stair to (Stanhope), 8 March 1715; f. 67, Stair to (Stanhope); 5 April 1715. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 2, Stanhope to Stair, 21 February 1715 o.s.


214. Still Stair found that "if I may reckon by my usage this court would be glad if I were gone." And Torcy was frequently to air that sentiment (B.N.: Eg. MSS., 2170, f. 27, Stair to Bubb, 24 July 1715. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang., 268, f. 91, Torcy to D'Iberville, 22 May 1715).
CHAPTER FIVE

THE PURSUIT OF A REAPPROCHEMENT WITH FRANCE

The diplomatic reapprochement between Great Britain and France, which culminated in the signing of the Triple Alliance on 4 January 1717,1 was, as Louis Wiesener has established,2 neither as surprising nor as sudden a reversal of a traditional enmity as it might appear to be, for its origin lay in political necessity, and its foundations had been laid by Stair's secret wooing of the Regent-designate, Philip, Duke of Orleans. Above all it represented success for Stanhope's sustained effort to restore to Britain the position of power that had been hers ten years previously, at the height of the War of the Spanish Succession. Perhaps swayed by ties of blood, being first cousins,3 George I and Orleans were certainly drawn together by circumstances and expediency. For Orleans the motivation was personal. Throughout his regency he was to be faced with the formidable claim to his office by Philip V of Spain and he felt the need for external support to combat such opposition which attracted wide support in France particularly amongst the former ministers of Louis XIV. Stanhope, foreseeing how vulnerable Orleans would be and how great would be his need of allies, and aware too that France, with the Regent so insecure, was unlikely to hazard other than peaceful solutions to current problems, ordered both Prior and Stair "to lay me at the feet of the Duke of Orleans ...".4 But

3. Madame, the Dowager-Duchess of Orleans, the daughter of Karl Ludwig, the Elector-Palatinate, was the niece of the late Electress of Hanover, Sophia.
Stanhope had to be patient, for, though Stair established a rapport with the Duke and though the latter's tenure of office began with a movement in the direction of the rapprochement, the Jacobite rebellion intruded, and the cautious Regent chose to await its outcome before committing himself further.

An addendum to the article in Stair's Instructions ordering him to extend formally George I's greetings to the Princes of the Blood made plain the British intention to win the Duke of Orléans and even prescribed the method by which Stair should secure him. Stair was instructed to take every opportunity to assure Orléans that material support would be forthcoming from Britain should he have occasion to press his claim to succeed the Duke of Anjou, a sickly child, to the French throne. Indeed the British suggestion was that Orleans and Stair should plan to meet that contingency. This was a reaction to the attitude of Louis XIV and Philip V who regarded the latter's waiving of his rights to the French crown, when he had accepted the terms under which the parties at Utrecht had acknowledged his possession of the Spanish throne, as invalid in terms of French fundamental law.5 British concern was further reflected in July in Stanhope's orders to Stair to unmask Louis XIV's intentions regarding the succession, by discovering, by any means, the contents of the will that currently lay in the custody of the Parlement of Paris.6 But the French king's secret seems to have remained inviolate, and Stair had to content himself with his success in establishing a clandestine relationship with Orléans.7

French suspicions about this British involvement in their domestic politics were confined to a report, spread prior to Stair's arrival, that Lord Peterborough was seeking to work with Orléans to exclude Philip V from the succession. And so well did Stair and Orléans conceal their activities that it was only an indiscretion in Britain, in late May, that caused D'Iberville to warn that Orléans was providing the British with an insight into the Pretender's affairs. This allegation, when read out by Torcy, met with Louis XIV's disbelief and, when put to him, with Orléans' flat denial. Orléans admitted to a single and impromptu conversation with Stair when they had accidentally met at his residence, St. Cloud, and when Stair had spoken only of Dunkirk. Orléans probably alluded to his entertainment of Stair on 17 April, which would have been common knowledge. Otherwise, he claimed, he had merely passed the time of day with Stair at public functions.

This explanation might have satisfied the king, but it was not the truth, for he had established, in the course of several meetings with Stair in February, a means of communication through the medium of his agents, the Abbé Dubois and Thesut. This means of concealing the dialogue proved to be remarkably secure, and Dubois had no foundation for his suspicion that the source of the D'Iberville revelation was Stair's inefficiency. Though personal contact had been limited, Stair had learnt enough of the Duke to write of him as "the prettiest man I ever saw, the best bred and the most knowing in everything ...".

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8. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 266, f. 55, (D'Iberville) to Torcy, 19 January 1715.
10. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 72, Stair to (Stanhope), 17 April 1715.
Although the exact details of what was exchanged remains obscure Stair did reveal in March that the topics discussed included the French involvement with Sweden, the Dunkirk issue and the Majorcan affair. The information provided proved reliable enough to satisfy the British government, but Stair, bent on uncovering the Jacobite design, became increasingly frustrated because Orleans was reluctant to divulge anything that might commit him to a policy before he assumed his office. To George I and Stanhope, in possession as they were of so much information from all quarters, Orleans' reluctance mattered little. Their prior concern was that he should secure the Regency and retain his feeling of trust in them. From Stair's more myopic viewpoint the Duke represented a window into the French court's affairs, particularly its involvement with the Jacobite machinations, and he tended to forget the primary task.

Stair's enthusiasm for it waned early in this relationship, and on 21 March he expressed his misgivings to Stanhope. He had shown Orleans his current dispatch on Majorca, and, though he received a sympathetic reply, it was clear that the Duke was unconcerned about this quarrel and adhered to the British line merely from a selfish desire to discredit his enemies, the Torcy ministry. Perhaps Stair had learnt to be more guarded in his dealings with Orleans, but there is no doubt that the full spectrum of Anglo-French affairs continued to be reviewed in the conversations. And despite his misgivings in May Stair found himself forced to attempt to preserve and placate Orleans after the confrontation with Torcy over the

16. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 2, Stair to Stanhope, 8 April 1715; Stanhope to Stair, 4 April 1715 o.s.
leakage of Jacobite secrets had led the Duke to suspect Stair of carelessness. Yet Stair's doubts persisted and were to deepen into anger in the crisis months of June and July, when the Jacobite threat began to be taken seriously by himself and his government and Orléans was not co-operating. Unswayed by Stair's passion and keeping his objective in view, Stanhope merely ordered Stair on 14 July to offer Orléans Britain's support should either his right to the Regency or to the succession be questioned, in return for the single concession of the settlement of the Dunkirk issue. This was the substance of the message that Stair conveyed to Dubois on 24 July at their famous secret meeting in the wood, leaving unexpressed the British fear that the assumption by Philip V of either the Regency or the throne of France would upset the intention of the Utrecht settlement which had been to separate the thrones of France and Spain. The Duke's reply, through Dubois, was enthusiastic; he accepted the British conditions and requested a personal interview with Stair. With Louis XIV clearly dying, Orléans needed to muster his strength.

Again it is difficult to ascertain just what effect the British support of Orléans had upon the events of the first two momentous days of September, when, with uncharacteristic energy, the Duke assumed the Regency and undid those clauses of the will that were designed to shackle him. Likewise it is difficult to assess what

19. Hardwicke State Papers, vol. 2, p. 533, Stair's Diary, Wednesday, 24 July 1715 (This was the meeting that left Stair bitter over Dubois' evasion in regard to the request for information on the Jacobites).
21. Leclarq, op.c.; vol. 1, Chapter 4, passim.
influence the presence of Stair - seated in a gallery - had in the Parlement of Paris when the newly-appointed Regent effected his coup before that body on the second day. Though Lamonctey claims that Orléans coldly spurned an offer from George I of British money and Hanoverian troops to secure the Regency, there can be no doubt that British support imparted confidence to the Duke and his followers in the last crucial weeks of the old king's life and contributed to the cowling of their enemies.

But it would be a mistake to think that the initiative came only from one side. In early August it was Orléans who moved to dispel Stair's exasperation when Dubois failed to divulge information relating to the Pretender. Invited by Orléans through the Duke of Bourbon, Stair went to Versailles on Tuesday, 13 August. In a lengthy discussion Orléans admitted withholding from Stair what he knew about the Jacobites, while Stair reiterated the British offer of support, provided the Dunkirk issue was settled.

Encouraged, Orléans set about widening the basis of his support. On 23 August, while Stanhope was writing from Britain earnestly trying to quash a rumour that George I had been dealing with Philip V, Dubois was able to tell Stair that his master's

25. Hardwicke State Papers, vol. 2, p. 537, Stair's Diary, Tuesday 6 August (Stair was now rightly convinced that Orleans would follow a policy of non-intervention with regard to Jacobite aspirations); p. 538, Stair's Diary, Sunday 11 August 1715.
position would not be challenged. Three days later Orléans confirmed that he knew that he was to have the Regency. He revealed, too, that the will was so drawn as to prevent him from exercising as Regent the absolute power that a monarch would have had. Yet, confident that he had won sufficient support from within the army and the Paris Parlement, Orléans was expressly unconcerned about this shackle. In response, Stair, who had hurried to Versailles after receiving a report that Louis XIV. was dead, again stated the British intention to furnish support if concessions on Dunkirk could be promised.

On the next day, 27 August, this conversation was renewed with an exchange of ideas on how trust could be engendered between Britain and France; Stair argued that it must be the expulsion of the Pretender from France, and, Orléans, having listened patiently, proposed a commercial treaty as a means to promote the necessary goodwill. If this idea was received with little enthusiasm, the announcement by Orléans that he did not intend to employ Torcy was greeted by Stair as a positive step towards creating a rapport between the two nations.

Stanhope was prepared to go further than mere discussion and attempted to force the Duke's hand by ordering Stair to demand a promise that Orléans, upon assuming office, would send the Pretender and his party beyond the Alps. Further he expected Orléans to

supply information about the Jacobites' schemes. It is apparent
that Stanhope hoped to capitalize on the Duke's reliance upon
British support. But the would-be exploiter was to be disappointed,
because Orléans was only to comply with these demands when the
Jacobite failure had conclusively proved that George I's position
was impregnable. In any case Stanhope's letter, written on 28
August, can only have reached Stair after Orléans was safely in
possession of the Regency.

If Orléans was to disappoint the British, he certainly was not
loath to use their open and declared support to best advantage. Yet
it is impossible to ascertain whether Stair's presence in that august
assembly on the occasion when Orléans negated the restricting clauses
of the will with arguments based on constitutional law, contributed
to the collapse of the opposition or whether he was a mere spec-
tator. It is possible that he was there for the same reason that
Orléans had troops drawn up in the streets of Paris. He might
have been demonstrating Britain's role in this affair, and doubtless
his fellow spectators drew their own conclusions.

Stair's single surviving comment on the transference of power
was that "everything runs quietly in the right channel ...". Yet,
in accord with his government's intention, he did not allow Orléans
much time to consolidate his position and on 4 September he was at
Versailles pressing for the destruction of Dunkirk, for the expulsion
of the Pretender and for the seizure of the Jacobite munition ships

34. B.M.: Eg. MSS., 2170, f. 113, Stair to Bubb, 1 September 1715.
that lay in the Seine. Stair had assumed that an improvement in the relations between the two nations would now follow automatically, but Orléans confined himself to acknowledging that the Utrecht treaty demanded the destruction of Dunkirk. The Regent's refusal to commit himself with regard to the urgent problem of the Pretender's aspirations indicated that he had not deviated from his policy of non-alignment; drawing from Stair the wry comment that this had been the subject of his complaints about Dubois and that it "makes me imagine they intend still to keep that game going ...". When Stair made a further request for the release of two British subjects then held in the Bastille, one of whom was an agent of Stair's, Orléans concluded the audience by asking for such requests to be postponed and for a respite from other diplomatic pressure until he had effected the ratification of his coup and had created the six councils through which he intended to govern.

35. Hardwicke State Papers, vol. 2, p. 547, Stair's Diary, Wednesday, 4 September 1715. Buvat claimed Stair met the Regent on the previous day, 3 September, to offer British financial aid (Jean Buvat, Journal de La Régence, Paris, 1865, vol. 1, p. 54). But Stair made no reference to this meeting in his diary or correspondence.

36. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f. 353, Louis XV to D'Iberville, 4 September 1715.


38. The agent was Lidderdale, a Scottish doctor of medicine, and he had been arrested at Le Havre while on a mission for Stair to discover the destinations of the Jacobite ships. The other man was a native of Guernsey named Gaignepain de Hamel and he had been arrested for vagrancy (Hardwicke State Papers, vol. 2, p. 547, Stair's Diary, Wednesday 4 September 1715. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 3b, Memorial (undated). A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 269, f. 209, Stair to Torcy, (undated); f.239, Torcy to D'Iberville, 14 August 1715; f.245, D'Argenson to ?, 14 August 1715; ff. 247, 254, 255, 256, the interrogation of Hamel (undated)).
Stair complied with this request and stayed his hand for the next two weeks. That he did so, when his government was pressing urgently for a demonstration of friendship from Orléans of sufficient magnitude to hurt Jacobite morale, reveals that he was capable of acting independently of London. Occupying himself with the supervision of his espionage network, Stair threatened only once to involve himself in French affairs. On 11 September, the day before the Lit de Justice at which Orléans consolidated his constitutional position, Stair gave the Regent notice of his intention to oppose on the morrow the attempt which it was rumoured that Prince Cellamare, the Spanish ambassador, would make to register a protest in defence of Philip V’s claim to the Regency. Cellamare however abstained from doing so and France was spared the humiliating spectacle of two foreign powers wrangling over her internal affairs at the feet of her infant king. As Stair wrote, "there everything that had been done in favour of the Duke of Orléans was confirmed. Since that time the Duke of Orléans has been in full authority of the Regency." The reason why the British government urgently sought the Regent’s co-operation in regard to the Jacobites was because on 26 August the Earl of Mar had raised the standard of revolt at Kirkmichael, in Braemar. That the British were confident that the measures which

42. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 103, Stair to (Stanhope), 14 September 1715 (copy).
43. Earlier in the year it had been Stair’s opinion that it was highly unlikely that the Highlanders would act alone (S.R.O.: G.D. 5.S, Stair to Montrose, 28 May 1715).
Orléans would take would entirely destroy Jacobite expectations is well illustrated by the fact that when the news of Louis XIV's demise reached England, the regiments marching to the north were halted. They soon however resumed their journey. As we have seen, Stair had found Orléans non-committal when the problem was brought up in open discussion, but the release of some of Stair's agents, who had been arrested by Torcy, and the easing of the restrictions placed on Stair's ordinary mail seemed to indicate a change.

With the Regent firmly established, Stair on 14 September drew up a memorial in which, by concentrating on the Dunkirk demolitions and on the expulsion of the Pretender, he attempted to indicate the best ways of improving Franco-British relations. From Britain, in response to D'Iberville's formal notification of the accession,
came George I's official condolences and congratulations and a declaration of his intent to stand by his treaties and preserve the peace of Europe. In a covering letter, Stanhope outlined for Stair a persuasive argument. He claimed that George I could not believe, in the light of Orléans' repeated assurances, the continuing Jacobite claims of French support. George I, Stanhope continued, upheld his promises; when Orléans had been in need he had befriended him and had given him support and now he expected a sincere return. Stanhope presumed that Stair would have no difficulty in convincing the Regent that it was to his advantage to live in peace with Britain. But, he warned, the opportunity to do so would not endure unless Orléans "does both by words and actions disavow the giving (of) any countenance to the Pretender or his adherents." 

The immediate aim of British policy was to prevent the ships at Le Havre from delivering their munitions to the insurgents. Thus Stanhope ordered Stair to warn the French that their failure to act or even delay acting would be construed as tantamount to a declaration in favour of the Pretender. When Stair complained, the Regent acted. He could not contemplate breaking with Britain at that moment. As the Pretender wistfully put it, "I do not see how Humphrey (the Duke of Orléans) could really do less than (sic) what he has done at (Le) Havre." Marshal D'Estrees, heading the Conseil de la Marine, ordered the Commandant at Le Havre, the Marquis

de Rouvroi, to detain the ships named by the British and to compel all ships of Irish or Scottish origin to depart. The listed ships were ordered to discharge all their arms and ammunition and deposit them in the town's magazine. Thereupon Admiral Ryng, who had had a squadron in or off the port for more than a month, immediately withdrew half his force, and on 26 September, their mission accomplished, the remaining four men-of-war stood out to sea.

An ebullient Stair, who had seen his old enemy, Toroy, reduced to the minor rank of Surintendent des Postes and now heard that the Regent was refusing audiences to either the Pretender or his lieutenants, expressed his confidence to Robethon, on receipt of the news from Le Havre, that the French would now co-operate, for "leur system a besoin de nous." On 26 September the news reached London that the orders concerning the munitions had been made applicable to the whole coast; prompting Townshend to claim that the recent events were "we reckon the foundation of such a good understanding

53. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 111, D'Estrées to Commandant de la Marine, Le Havre, 22 September 1715 (extract); f. 144, D'Estrées to Stair, 22 September 1715. S.R.O.
57. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 270, f. 105, D'Iberville to Louis XV, 30 September 1715.
between this Court and that of France, as to leave us under no apprehensions of our enemies receiving any support from France...". This was a highpoint of ministerial optimism.

The view that the Regent had been won must have been reinforced when, on the eve of the action at Le Havre, he offered Britain a commercial treaty in association with a treaty mutually guaranteeing the successions to the French and British thrones. As this would sound the death-knell to Jacobite hopes, Stanhope seized the chance; on 30 September he ordered Stair to begin negotiations at once without waiting for full powers and formal instructions. But it is significant that Stanhope made no mention to Stair that Orléans proposed a commercial treaty. Orléans had turned to Britain, after having been rebuffed by Spain, who feared upsetting the current negotiations with Britain which resulted in the signing of a commercial treaty on 14 December 1715. But he was making the mistake of approaching the very man, Stanhope, who had figured so largely in the defeat in 1713 of the Tory ministry's proposals to include a commercial treaty with France in the Utrecht settlement. Stanhope's ideas might have since altered, as the views he had expressed in 1713 merely reflected those that Addison had expounded in 1708 about French competition in the lucrative Iberian trade. However, as Bubb was near to re-establishing Anglo-Spanish trade, Stanhope would not have wished to jeopardize that effort. Thus, in a letter on the following day,
1 October, Stanhope kept such considerations from Stair and simply gave, as George I's reason for refusing the French offer, his wish to avoid the quarrels that would arise out of a commercial tie. He further claimed that in the reigns of Charles II and James II, it had proved possible to have a sincere friendship with France without a commercial treaty. Though he informed Stair that it was George I's intention to be quite open about his refusal, Stanhope stated that the guarantee treaty was very much desired and paid Stair the compliment of allowing him to adapt his tactics to local conditions to secure it. 65

Concurrent with this move towards a rapprochement, it was announced in London that Stair had been named ambassador extraordinary to Louis XV's court. 66 This appointment had been mooted in June, 67 and at the old king's death the idea was revived. Stair was told that his promotion would be effected once the formal French notification of the accession had been received. 68 As in fact nothing was done, it is likely that Orléans' proposal on the treaty motivated the appointment. In the event Stair had to wait three weeks before the documents accrediting him as ambassador reached him, because the courier Thomas Crawfurd, his secretary (who was likewise promoted to the rank of Secretary to the British Embassy in Paris) 69 was

66. A.A.E.: C.P., Ang. 270 f. 45, D'Iberville to Torcy, 12 September 1715; f. 82, George I to Louis XV, 5 October 1715.
68. This was done at Stair's recommendation (S.R.O.: G.D. 220; 5. S. Stair to Montrose, 21 September 1715; P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Crawfurd's Credentials, 17 September 1715 o.s.).
delayed by Treasury slowness in producing the gift of £1,000 to Stair. And by that time the need for Stair to assume that character formally was not so urgent.

Although he did not express it openly, Orléans' disappointment at the British rejection of his commercial proposals must have contributed, along with the apparent prospect of success for the Jacobite rebellion, to the demise of this first attempt to conclude an alliance. It could well have been the reason for his cold reception of Stair on 3 October. In any case it is known that in this month Orléans shared the sentiments of most of the French ministers and of a majority of the French public and became involved in the Jacobite cause - albeit secretly. Thus, when we know that the Regent was meeting with Ormonde and was agreeing to supply him with the needed munitions, Stanhope's brave words of 14 October, that the Regent would never repent the confidence that he placed in George I's friendship, have an ironic ring.

Two days later, on 16 October, instructions were issued for Stair giving him a free rein to conclude the treaty in the form of a mutual guarantee. The single condition with which Stanhope concerned himself was that each country should bind itself to aid the other with 8,000 men and the practical details of even this were left to the negotiators in accordance with the practice established in the forming of the Triple Alliance of 1688 and the Barrier Treaty of 1713.

70. P.R.O.: P.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 26 September 1715 c.s.; Stanhope to Stair, 3 October 1715 c.s.; S.P. 78/160, f. 122, Crawfurd to (Pringle), 23 October 1715.
74. P.R.O.: P.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 3 October 1715 c.s.
To quieten the fears which the Regent had expressed of a possible alliance between the Northern princes and the Emperor, Stair was provided with a paper written by Bernstorff, the chief minister of Hanover, proving such fears to be baseless. He was further ordered to assure the Regent that, after the conclusion of the treaty, George I would avoid any engagements that infringed upon French interests, as his purpose was to preserve the peace of Europe.

Commenting on the broad framework, Stanhope explained to Stair that the instructions were designed to allow him the maximum freedom to meet the Regent's requirements for securing his tenure of the Regency and his right to succeed should his frail charge die. He also explained the British government's decision to exclude a demand for the settlement of the Dunkirk issue, despite Orleans' willingness to have that settlement included in the commercial deal. Although he said George I knew that "there can never be a real confidence between the two courts till that matter be adjusted according to the plain sense of the Treaty of Utrecht", he was prepared to delete any reference to this contentious issue in order to limit the negotiation "purely and simply to securing the succession to both Kingdoms, lest any propositions foreign to that view might begat difficulties which would delay the conclusion of it." It was hoped that such a concession, by proving George I's sincerity, would provide Stair with an irresistible argument with which to block any irrelevancies the French might introduce. It did not avail; the Regent had already lost interest, though he was prepared to procrastinate to see what might come of protracted negotiations and by so doing prevent a break before he had been able to assess the possibility of Jacobite success.75

75. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 116, Stanhope to Stair, 5 October 1715 o.s.
Stanhope's argument formed the gist of the one-sided conversation with the Regent that Stair recorded in his diary on 24 October. Stair sought official French action to restrain the Pretender and Ormonde and spoke of the British anxiety that nothing should interfere with the conclusion of the treaty which would provide the basis of a future friendship. He warned that, if this negotiation was protracted, the opportunity would be lost, for George I would have first to deal with the rebellion.

Stair left the matter in the Regent's hands, and he, by demanding that the treaty should be expanded into a full defensive alliance including the Dutch which would lead to the spinning out of the negotiations to great length, did precisely that the British had hoped he would not do. Stanhope attempted to short-circuit this demand by proposing the insertion of a clause into the treaty inviting the Dutch to guarantee the French succession in the same manner that they guaranteed the British. Convinced that the Dutch would co-operate, Stanhope thought this amendment should satisfy the Regent — provided he were sincere. Stanhope could not see the necessity for a defensive treaty, since once Orleans was sure of Britain and the United Provinces, no other power (Spain was obviously here in mind) could contemplate action against France. Impatiently Stanhope warned that George I would not "suffer himself


77. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 276, f. 323, Louis XV to D'Iberville, 14 October 1715.

to be amused by a tedious negotiation which will give jealousy to all the world till he be really sure of the Regent's friendship ....". He hoped that Stair could steer the Regent away from such a course, for "we must otherwise conclude, as you rightly observe, that his drift is only to gain time and wait for the event of the troubles here."79

The correctness of Stair's assessment was to be borne out by the Regent's subsequent actions. The Dutch were by early November physically supporting the Protestant succession with troops, supplied under the standing guarantee. Thus the British were considerably embarrassed and had to make a hurried explanation to the Dutch of their motives in seeking an alliance with France,80 after the Regent had chosen to discuss the treaty with Buys, the Dutch ambassador, who was noted for his anti-British sentiments.81 His failure to co-operate, particularly in preventing the Pretender leaving for the British Isles via France, and his cold reception of Stair led Stanhope to order the latter to desist from asking favours of the Regent. Stanhope pinned his hopes on a defeat of the Jacobites, which he thought would provide a more conclusive argument for a rapprochement than any that could be advanced at the moment.82

By the beginning of December the Regent's true colours had been belatedly revealed, and again Stair found himself estranged from the French court. The Regent avoided him,83 the Pretender was openly

81. A.A.E.: C.F. Ang. 270, f. 156, Louis XV to D'Ibberville, 14 October 1715.
82. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 9 November 1715 O.S.
called the king of England, and no courtier would enter Stair's house. This behaviour can be explained partly by the disfavour Stair earned through his espionage activities and by an attempt for which he was held responsible to interfere with the Pretender's journey across France, but in the main it was a manifestation of the French court's pro-Jacobite sympathies. As Stair put it, "they took off the mask and discovered very plainly their leaning that way."  

Stair's presumption that the Jacobite cause was entirely lost, which was his interpretation of the results of the battles of Preston and Sheriffmuir, led him to entirely ignore the French court's hostility when he submitted a memorial to the Regent on 14 December. In this document, in the friendliest of terms, he pointed the way to the Regent to re-establish his friendship with George I through the settlement of the Dunkirk issue and the dispatch of the Pretender across the Alps. No reply from the Regent has survived and in any case Stair must have then received Stanhope's order of 7 December to appear as little as possible at the French court. This order was almost immediately revoked when it was felt that a display of confidence and cold indifference would best suit the needs of the hour. So Stair had to re-appear, to make it plain, "without affectation or ostentation", that the British were confident of the security of George I's throne.

86. B.M.: Eg. MSS., 2170, f. 316, Stair to Bubb, 11 December 1715.
88. P.R.O.: F.0. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 26 November 1715 o.s.
Yet the intention was not to regain friendship, and Stanhope discouraged Stair from taking any action that might be construed as an overture. In this spirit the argument with which Stanhope provided Stair to counter a renewed French attempt to bring about a rapprochement stressed the lesson that George I had been taught in the late foray about the quality of French promises and the guarded view that he would have of them in the future. If the French were not discouraged, then Stair had to make it clear that his government considered London the only place for negotiations and that his function in Paris was merely to provide a means through which the French government could make an approach.

Clearly it was George I's intention not to respond to any French initiative with the compliment of speaking through his representative in Paris; any proposals would have to be brought to him personally. As Stair had predicted, after burning its fingers, the British government would first settle its strife-torn land before contemplating any further diplomatic adventures. So died the Regent's first move towards reconciliation; killed by his own hand after the British had refused him a share of their commercial largesse, and he had decided to await the outcome of the Jacobite attempt. But the negotiations would be renewed and as a result of a French overture, for the Regent's personal position, with the threat of Philip V undiminished, still demanded an ally, and Britain was the logical choice.

CHAPTER SIX

THE JACOBITE REBELLION

While the treaty consequent to the negotiations to effect a rapprochement with the Regent would have embodied a guarantee of the Protestant Succession, the efforts to secure it were merely part of Stair's main task of staving off the Pretender's threat to George I's throne. He sought to deny the Jacobites such facilities as France could provide. Further, through seeking to provide his government with timely warnings of developments by means of his now extensive espionage system, he was able to exert a keenly felt indirect pressure upon the Jacobites, who were all too conscious of being watched, and the nervousness thus induced undoubtedly contributed to the hesitancy that was such a feature of their leaders' attempt to re-establish the Stuart dynasty. But, although Stair was to play a significant role in the ultimate defeat of this attempt, his efforts must be seen as part of a well-co-ordinated governmental campaign; even if he had failed, there can be little doubt that George I and his ministry would have proved too formidable for the Pretender, with his slight popular appeal, his slender resources and his inadequate and excessively cautious leadership.

Throughout his involvement with the task of frustrating the Pretender, Stair never seems to have doubted his king's ability to ride out the storm. Indeed at times his optimism was excessive. For example, in contrast with the cool-headed Stanhope, he had seen Orléans' compliance over the seizure of the Jacobite munition ships

at Le Havre as giving the quietus to the Jacobite hopes. His confidence is best illustrated by his comment on 2 October to Montrose:

"I would not indeed advise to run one's head against them (the Jacobites) when they have their bellies' full of beef and their heads' full of strong beer. By the time they have lain a week under a hedge in the end of October or the beginning of Nov(ember), it will be easy dealing with them."

He expressed such confidence even when he knew that the munitions confiscated at Le Havre had since been returned to the Pretender and that a new plan for a rebellion in England had been evolved. The Jacobites now hoped for a general rising, induced by their declaration in support of the Church and against the Whigs and a standing army. The Pretender's own declaration was to be reserved until the participants, led by Ormonde and Bolingbroke, had landed at Bristol or some other Severn port and had secured a considerable following and he was to appear in person only when success seemed likely.

With regard to the plan's details, Stair discovered that it was hoped that the seizure of the weapons of the garrison of Bristol and those of the militia in the most likely areas of support - the West of England, Wales, Cheshire and Lancashire - would suffice to supply the insurgents until the army joined their cause. To "please our parsons" and thus enhance the rebellion's popular appeal, Catholics were to be excluded from executive positions. Knowledge of these

3. S.R.O.: G.D. 220.5.S. Stair to Montrose, 2 October 1715; the extract of this letter in H.M.C. 3rd Rep. App. 1870, p. 384, records the word "full" as "fill" i.e. "their bellies' fill of beef."
details enabled Stair to accept the Regent's claim (made at a chilly audience on 3 October) that the Pretender had no thoughts at present of leaving for the British Isles while pointing out to the Frenchman that the Jacobite plan envisaged such a delay. 6

Any hopes that this plan could be implemented were dissipated by Stanhope's prompt reaction to Stair's warning; sufficient forces were dispatched to the West to secure Bristol and to subdue Bath and Oxford. 7 There followed a month of intrigue and veiled departures; with the Regent openly conniving at the Jacobite presence 8 at the same time as he procrastinated over the treaty and treated Stair with cold indifference. And yet, even when he knew that Ormonde was somewhere off England, Stair's assessment of the chances of success for the Pretender still turned upon the quality of the shelter offered by a hedge in early winter. Indeed so optimistic was he that he abandoned his earlier prediction of a week and informed Robethon that he doubted whether the English Jacobites' love for the Pretender would endure longer than three nights under a hedge in November. 9 He was right, as the bulk of the potential Jacobites would not even consider such a privation.

With the Regent, in late September, temporarily abandoning his idea of friendship with Britain, Stair was left with the lonely task, within a hostile France; of cutting off the supply of materials and men — including the Pretender — to the rebels within Britain. Unlike Louis XIV, who could choose whether or not to give the Pretender direct support, the Regent, being without allies and in a weak constitutional position, could not court an open clash with Britain. 10

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Thus, if Stair chose to invoke the 4th and 5th Articles of the treaty of Utrecht, Orléans would have to expel the Pretender from France, and even if Stair asked him to act again as he had over the ships at Le Havre, he would find it difficult to refuse. This was the reason for the Duke of Berwick's warning to the Pretender on 7 October, when he urged him to make haste lest Stair should discover the ownership of the vessels at St. Malo and request action by the Regent, who "would certainly do there as he has done already at (Le) Havre." 11

Yet, though Stair could force him to act to the contrary, Orléans set about aiding and abetting the Jacobites within the limits imposed by the need for secrecy. Whereas in September he had refused to meet the Jacobite leaders, 12 on 18 October he granted Ormonde a secret audience and promised him munitions and assistance for the Pretender's embarkation at Dunkirk. 13 The extent to which the Jacobites had returned to favour was revealed by Bolingbroke on the same day, when he wrote that he believed all was well

"from Stair's silence, and from the new air which the French assume with the Duke of Ormonde and myself ... I had not been an hour returned to Paris before I received compliments from people from whom I had not heard these six weeks. I was told that the Duke of Orléans grew tired of Stair's importunity, that he was under the last concern to find himself unavoidably obliged to keep measures with the Whigs ...". 14

A week later Stair himself came to a full understanding of France's attitude. His suspicions had been aroused by the procrastination

12. B.M. Stowe MSS., 228, f. 105, Stair to Robethon, 21 September 1715.
over the treaty negotiations. Now he discovered that Ormonde had sailed for England, and the Regent's denial of this coupled with the elaborate efforts made to throw Stair off the scent, allowed no other conclusion to be drawn than that France was now secretly assisting the Jacobite cause. Stair laid the blame for this behaviour at the door of what he called the "old leaven", the former ministers of Louis XIV.

The failure at this critical juncture of Stair's vaunted intelligence service represented not so much a danger for Britain, protected as she was by her naval screen, but an indication of just how effective Franco-Jacobite connivance could be. It also reveals how much Stair relied upon Orleans and his entourage for information on Jacobite movements. Thrown back upon his own resources, it took Stair approximately eight days to discover that Ormonde had left Paris for the coast, and later it took fourteen days for the information of Ormonde's sailing date, 2 November, to filter back to the British embassy.

Yet it was not for the want of trying; as Bolingbroke wrote to the Pretender on 24 October in anticipation of Stair sounding the alarm, "Stair has his spies in every quarter, and even at the first posts on several roads. We hide, as best we can, the route he (Ormonde) has taken ..." Bolingbroke went on to propose that they should "make use of his going as an argument to persuade the world that your Majesty is not going to remove this winter ...", for, with Ormonde successfully on his way, the next problem was how the Pretender would cross France to the ship that awaited him at St.

15. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 228, f. 149, Stair to Robethon, 26 October 1715.
17. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 228, f.149, Stair to Robethon, 26 October 1715.
18. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f.126, Crawfurd to (Pringle), 126 October 1715.
Ifelo without Stair acquiring the information he required to force the Regent to make an interception. Here again theJacobites succeeded, despite Stair's re-doubled efforts, the Pretender had traversed France before the ambassador even knew that he had left Lorraine. In fact on 8 November, when Stair heard that "the Pretender is just upon the wing for Britain", the Pretender ended his journey at St. Malo. Bolingbroke was correct in his summing up of the position on that day: "Stair" he claimed, "did not know in many days of your Majesty's departure, neither can I yet say that he knows certainly the route which you have taken ...". Even his warning that "the length of the journey, and the delay which you may be obliged to make on the coast, will probably give him time to find you out" proved unnecessary, for Stair, being denied his usual court sources, had to rely upon what information his agents could gather, and this was negligible because, on a variety of pretenses, the French had arrested the key spies.

On 28 October, after a day hunting with the Prince de Vaudemont at Commercy, close to the French border, the Pretender slipped quietly out of Lorraine in a coach prepared for him by Torcy. Vaudemont only released the news on 4 November, giving the Pretender a week's start. En route for St. Malo, the latter visited Paris, staying at the house of Lausun, the man who had brought him out of England in 1688, in order to see his mother, Mary of Modena, James II's queen.

25. Leclercq, op.cit.; vol. 1, p. 256.
From Paris, it seems, he went down the Seine valley towards the Normandy coast, for he was recognised by Stair's spies at Evereux and before then he had been seen at Monancourt, each time disguised as a bishop. Daniel Moore, the British agent at Calais, weeks after the event, reconstructed the Pretender's route for Stair; it seems that the Pretender was at Monancourt on Wednesday, 1 November, and having passed through Evereux, reached Rouen on Sunday, the 5th. This would tally with the Pretender's arrival at St. Malo on the following Wednesday, but it would have meant three days of hard riding to cover the intervening hundred miles.

While the Pretender travelled, a fearful Berwick wrote: "all France knows your Majesty's having left Bar. Lord Stairs will soon find where you are; for most of the top people in France knows it ...". But clearly Stair was not being given his normal facilities, as he remained in ignorance. Yet he was suspicious after Bolingbroke, his tongue loosened by wine, had stated on 26 October that the Jacobite attempt would be launched within fifteen days. In advance of his obtaining the concrete information with which to force the Regent to act in accordance with the terms of the treaty of Utrecht, Stair...

27. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 135, ? to ?, 12 November 1715. This letter was enclosed in Stair's letter of the same date (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 2, Stair to Stanhope, 12 November 1715 (copy)).
29. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 271, f. 60 Buxelles to D'Ibberville, 22 November 1715 (a French sighting of the Pretender at Rouen).
30. H.M.C. Stuart MSS., vol. 1, 1902, p. 456, Pretender to Inness, 11 November 1715. He does say that he arrived at St. Malo on Friday the 8th. I accept the 8th, but not the Friday, for the 8th fell on a Wednesday and it does not seem that the difference between Old Style and New Style accounts for the discrepancy.
32. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 228, f. 149, Stair to Robethom, 26 October 1715.
prepared a memorial demanding that the Pretender's journey should be arrested and the Pretender returned to Lorraine. 35

While Stair waited for news, Orleans and his minister Huxelles sought with the Jacobites for ways to render any British protests or demands ineffective. Berwick was told that, despite the orders that would be published closing the coasts of Normandy and Picardy to the Pretender, the rest of the coasts would escape mention in order to allow him to depart. However this did not reduce the threat from Stair, and Huxelles urged the Prince, through Berwick, to leave at once or at least go aboard his ship to escape detection, "for fear Lord Stairs should find out where you are, and make his complaint to the Regent, in which case you would be stopped." To ensure greater immunity, Berwick suggested that the Pretender, if he could not leave, should continually move his ship's anchorage, "by which means you could neither be stopped by the French nor hardly found out by Lord Stairs, but that does not preserve you from the British fleet." 34

When the lagging Stair caught up with the Pretender's movements, he warned Stanhope on 7 November to put the fleet on maximum alert 35 and on the morrow he submitted his memorial to the Regent. The French adhered to their earlier advice. Huxelles, while prepared to discuss further methods of "how to banter Stair", 36 warned Bolingbroke that time was short, for Stair had demanded that the coast should

36. H.M.C. Stuart MSS., vol. 1, 1902, p. 454, Bolingbroke to Pretender, 8 November 1715 - this is the second of such letters of the day, as Huxelles had summoned Bolingbroke to tell him of Stair's submission of the memorial after Bolingbroke's first letter had been dispatched (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 271, f. 40, Huxelles to D'Iberville, 8 November 1715; f. 56, Huxelles to D'Iberville, 8 November 1715; f. 58, Huxelles to D'Iberville, 22 November 1715).
be searched. And, while Bolingbroke was reassured that the Pretender's ship would be overlooked, he knew that "should he (Stair) be able to point out the vessel to them, or to say positively where you are, I doubt the Regent would think himself obliged to stop him." Indeed, doubtless to rid themselves of embarrassment, the French pressed the Pretender to leave; arguing that, even if Stair's search failed, any delay would allow the British navy time to perfect its coverage of the French coast. In the event when the Pretender sailed, he did so unobserved.

Although the Regent's involvement with the Jacobites remained obscure, Stair certainly felt the inhibiting effect upon his intelligence system of the country-wide arrests of his agents. He protested about the incarceration of Baron de Blaignac in the Bastille; about the arrest of his Maître d'hôtel at Cherbourg on 1 November; about the detention of two of his agents at Evereux on the 6th; and about the seizure of Douglas at Nonancourt, on a charge of attempted assassination. All this happened while the French government paid lip-service to Stair's demands; the coast was searched and when Stair received a report of a sighting of the Pretender at Chateau-Thierry, Contades, a marshal de camp, was dispatched on a futile errand to effect the arrest of the man, who,

38. A.A.E.: C.F. Ang. 288, f. 11, D'Iberville to Huxelles, 2 January 1716 (evidence that the British court concurred with Stair).
the French must have known, had left that town a week before. At the same time, while complying, the French were quick to point out that Stair was exceeding his powers, for only diplomats who had formally notified their appointment to the French court—a fact which Stair was to postpone to 1719—could make such demands.

The arrest of Douglas and two companions at Nonancourt was a consequence of their clumsiness when questioning the local post-mistress on whether she had seen the Pretender and thereby leading her to believe they intended to ambush him.

The result was that Stair was denied crucial information, for the Pretender passed through the town within hours of the arrest. But one can only speculate as to the truth of the allegation of murderous intent levelled at Douglas and, by inference, at Stair.

Certainly one of the party was in possession of a loaded blunderbuss.


41. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 271, f. 66, Huxelles to D’Iberville, 9 December 1715.


44. M. Le M. De Vogue, Mémoires du Maréchal Villars, Paris, 1891, vol. 4, p. 90. Interestingly, despite the weight of the evidence to the contrary, Lord Egmont was to claim that it was Anthony Hammond, another of Stair’s agents, and not Douglas, who awaited the Pretender at Nonanccort. Egmont did not doubt that the motive was assassination, as he claimed that Stair was to try again, by means of MacDun, a turn-coat Irishman, in 1716 when the Pretender was at Avignon (H.M.C. Egmont Diary vol. 3, 1923, p. 349, app. 2 (loose papers in Lord Egmont’s hand)).

but it was unusual for travellers of that day to go unarmed. Though Douglas had a dubious history (he had recently been in French military service), he was in Stair's employ, and it is likely that he was merely part of Stair's watch on the roads of France. Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, then sojourning in Paris, wrote that he found Stair

"at present a little freted (sic), and with reason; for the spies he sent to dog the pretender and to follow him into Eng(land); have bin (sic) some of them taken up: and a most ridiculous (sic) aspersion cast on my L(ord) as if he had given orders to kill him: but this is a most infamous calumny for I was present when they were ordered to go and am witness of the falsehood of it. For they were only ordered to see where and when he passed, and to hire a boat and follow him and as soon as they could give advertisement there."

Stair himself, when writing to Robethon, dismissed the accusation out of hand, calmly pointing out that "of all the Princes in Europe, I serve the one least capable of giving such an order." Berwick claimed in his Mémoires to have examined all the evidence and had found it to be frivolous and, knowing Stair to be a man of honour, exonerated him entirely. It does seem that Stair had a strong case for claiming that this insinuation had been merely the French government's excuse for its tactics of obstruction - the arrests, the stopping of his couriers and the opening of his mail. This interpretation is re-inforced by the Regent's silent compliance with Stair's strongly worded protest of 16 November demanding an immediate release of his servants. Political assassination is never un-

common, but in this instance, when the British government itself was calmly optimistic, it seems unlikely that Stair would have risked perpetrating such a deed on his own initiative.

Yet the odour of the accusation clung to Stair, and this incident, coinciding as it did with France's all but open championship of the Pretender and with Britain's final abandonment of the attempt to formulate a guarantee treaty, led to Stair's second estrangement from the Court within six months. In July he had claimed that Frenchmen did not dare to meet him in daylight. How in December he was not even sought out in the hours of darkness; as his diary relates, "Il n'y avait plus un seul Francois, quasi personne de la cour, qui mettoit le pied chez moi." The French were unaware as yet of the simultaneous battles on 24 November at Preston and Sheriffmuir and misinterpreted the preliminary manoeuvring as unimpeded Jacobite advances. This led them to regard the Pretender as the likely victor and, as Stair said, to take off their masks.

But this gamble was not as wild as it may now seem, for, though the defeat at Preston decisively ended the Jacobite campaign in Northern England, in Scotland the drawn battle at Sheriffmuir left the armies in possession of much the same territory as before. And the real effect was only to be seen three months later when the reinforced army of George I began the drive that so easily dispersed the rebels.

49. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 9 November 1715 o.s.
It is hardly surprising that the French found little to say to George I's ambassador, when the news, from their sources in Britain, as late as 11 December, was that Mar was the victor. 54

So Stair's diplomatic function was effectively suspended, and, though we know that he continued to make proud, lonely appearances at court, 55 his only real employment was to continue to keep a wary eye upon the Jacobites. 56 In other circumstances Stanhope might have considered withdrawing Stair, but again the proven value of his intelligence service dictated that it should not be impaired by the removal of its chief, who was merely ordered to increase his espionage activities.

Although Stair continued to enjoy success in the swift detection of the movement of Jacobite supplies and personnel, 57 he failed to trace the chief fugitive; neither was he aware of the Pretender's hiding-place nor did he have even a hint of his second journey on the roads of France, from St. Malo to Dunkirk whence he embarked for Scotland. 58 In November Stair warned his government that the Pretender had sailed, 59 but it is likely that he was misled by the latter's boarding his ship to escape detection, 60 as it is known that at this time he held a ship-board conference with the recently


55. See above p. 144.

56. A.A.A.E.: C.F. Ang. 274, f. 369, Bouvroy to Conseil de La Marine, 29 November 1715.

57. F.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 8 December 1715 o.s.

58. Jones, op.cit., p. 112.

59. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 228, f. 182, Stair to Robethon, 28 November 1715.

returned Ormonde to choose where to land in Britain. 61 Despite
Sir James Abercorombie’s suspicions aroused by the arrival of a
small party of Jacobites at Dunkirk on 21 December, 62 the Pre-
tender slipped through undetected and, evading the naval screen,
he landed at Peterhead on 2 January. 63 Stair was able to send
Stanhope a timely warning of the Pretender’s sailing, 64 but it was
mid-January before he was able to secure details of the Pretender’s
journey from St. Malo to Dunkirk. 65

One might have expected the approach of his rival to have filled
George I with fear, but the reverse was true, for the Hanoverian
knew he had the support of both his people and his Parliament.
Further his army had been reinforced by 6,000 Dutch soldiers in
November after Britain had invoked the guarantee of the Protestant
Succession given by the Dutch in the Barrier Treaty of 1713. 66 In
contrast, the Jacobite army, caught in the throes of a hard winter,
had been denied the massive injection of arms and men it needed if
it was to fight on equal terms. 67 George I’s confidence was shared
by Stanhope and Stair. Indeed the latter’s confidence was ex-
cessive, for he regarded the attempt as the luckiest thing that

61. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 195, Crawfurd to (Pringle), 22 January
1716. Ormonde’s retreat had been precipitated by no more for-
midable force than a brace of customs officers, after the
agreed gun-shop signals had failed to raise a reply from the
coastline near Teignmouth in the West of England (Williams,
1715.
63. Jones, op.cit., p. 112.
64. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 271, f. 210, D’Ibberville to Huxelles, 30
December 1715 (gives notice of the receipt at the British court
of a warning from Stair, dated 23 December, that the Pretender
had sailed from either Normandy or Brittany). P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, (early) January 1716.
66. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 270, f. 154, Louis XV to D’Ibberville, 14 Oc-
tober 1715; C.P. Ang. 271, f. 25, D’Ibberville to Louis XV, 10
November 1715.
68. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, (early) January 1716.
could have happened, because if the Pretender were to be captured and never released, the years of unsettlement would be at an end. 69

But for the moment the Jacobite army remained intact and there was a distinct possibility that the French might commit themselves to overt support of the man they now openly called the king of England. Stanhope therefore ordered Stair to make an accurate survey of the French army, 70 it has been claimed that his fear of French intervention was the reason why Britain armed on the scale that she did. 71

However, the Jacobites had had long experience of French hesitancy and logically sought additional assistance from George I's enemy in the Northern War, Charles XII of Sweden. Stair swiftly discovered this overture and on 6 January reported that a second front was projected in Ireland, where a Swedish force would combine with the troops that Ormonde had currently gathered at Morlaix in Brittany. 72 Despite the mission of Sir John Erskine of Alva, the idea was still-born. By the time Erskine reached Sweden the rebellion was virtually over and Charles XII was fully occupied with the task of defending embattled Stralsund and was later to rebuke Sparre, his ambassador in Paris, for conversing with the Pretender on the latter's return from Scotland. 73 Stanhope does not seem to have been unduly distracted by this danger, but Stair, watching the frequent meetings of the interested parties, continued to worry and warn of its possibilities.

70. P.R.O.: P.0. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 23 December 1715. o.s.
With war in the air, relations with France reached their maximum frigidity in early January. On the pretext that Stair was not yet a fully accredited ambassador, the French barred him from entering the precincts of the Louvre in his coach. Yet undeterred, Stair maintained pressure upon the French government, vociferously demanding action on such subjects as the listing, in the Royal Almanack, of the Pretender as Britain's king, while George I was merely named as Elector (in this case the author was incarcerated in the Bastille for his effrontery).

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74. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 279, f. 118, R(?) to (?), 27 January 1716.
75. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, (early) January 1716.
D'Ibberville seemed to think the barring was from the Tuilleries (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 279, D'Ibberville to Orleans, 9 January 1716; C.P. Ang. 288, f. 36, D'Ibberville to Huxelles, 18 January 1716). Orleans corrected D'Ibberville by stating that the barring was from the Louvre (C.P. Ang. 284, f. 34, Orleans to D'Ibberville, 31 January 1716).
76. D'Ibberville complained that Stair had depicted him as the Jacobites' most vigorous supporter and Torcy as George I's greatest enemy, and that both these portrayals had had a serious effect upon the British government (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 279, f. 84, D'Ibberville to Orleans, 18 January 1716). He claimed too that despite the denouncing of Stair's behaviour by moderate Whigs, Tories and even Bothmer, the Hanoverian envoy to the British court, the British government would not admit that there was anything extraordinary in this behaviour (C.P. Ang. 279, f. 79, D'Ibberville to Orleans, 18 January 1716; C.P. Ang. 288, f. 16, D'Ibberville to Huxelles, 6 January 1716; f. 36, D'Ibberville to Huxelles, 18 January 1716).
In the second half of the month, when the easterly winds and the sea-ice held the Jacobite ships fast to the French shore, Stair sought to exploit, by means of a memorial, the hesitancy he seemed to detect in the Regent’s demeanour. He wove a tenuous argument. The Regent, he wrote, had promised to comply strictly with the terms of the treaty of Utrecht and to permit neither arms nor men to leave France for Scotland. Yet the Pretender, Ormonde and an entire company of Nugent’s regiment had come and gone without being subjected to any restraint from the French port officials. The Regent had assured him that if Nugent’s men returned they would be treated as deserters. Yet Bestach and his company had rejoined the regiment without penalty. At Morlaix, he complained, despite a request from Campbell, a British frigate captain, the port commandant had refused to board a ship in the harbour, which contained arms and munitions collected by Ormonde. In the last five weeks there had been a steady departure of men and supplies from Dieppe and Le Havre. At the latter a British officer on 17 January had identified twenty men as Jacobites about to depart, but the port commandant, the Marquis de Rouvroi, while confirming the men’s identity, had claimed that he had no power to prevent their departure. Stair himself had submitted to Huxelles a list of officers of high rank who were living near Boulogne, Calais, Dunkirk and nearby towns while their ships were immobilised by ice and contrary winds, yet the port officials still pretended they were powerless to prevent them departing. If Britain was to be convinced that France stood by Utrecht, then, Stair warned, such orders should be promptly issued.

78. B.M.: Eg, MSS., 2171, f. 79, Stair to Bubb, 27 January 1716.
79. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 228, f. 92, Stair to Robethon, 7 January 1716.
He had information, he continued, that Ormonde had taken the road to Bordeaux or Bayonne, for he had amassed arms and ships upon the Gascony coast for the purpose of invading Ireland. Stair alleged that it was his ardent wish to re-establish the friendship between George I and Orléans and confessed himself mortified at the need to complain, for this matter was so delicate and so potentially dangerous that it might put the two nations asunder. 80

In a matter of days the Regent answered Stair in the course of a conversation. Stair wrote to Montrose: "truly this court seemed very well disposed some days ago to have helped the Pretender and I took them to be just ready to have pulled off(f) the matter ...". The slightest encouragement would have committed them, but now the Regent had changed his mind, "which is plain proof to me the Regent thinks the Pretender's game is desperate ...". The Regent had told him that he had ordered the 500 to 600 men waiting at Calais to report back to their regiments and that he had issued instructions to the port commandants to prevent the departure of all personnel and to seize all war material including the stocks at Morlaix. He had promised Stair that Ormonde's departure would be hindered and that the expedition to Ireland would be denied French assistance.

Long experience tempered Stair's optimism. He did not doubt that George I would emerge from the rebellion with enhanced prestige. But he told Montrose that the Regent's co-operative mood would not encourage him to relax his vigilance. 81 Opinion in London was

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much the same; in view of the continuing reports of French involvement in Jacobite affairs, the Regent's promise seemed to be little more than a facade to conceal his true intentions. Certainly the information supplied by Stair's agents seemed to support this conviction. Three days after the Regent's statement Moore was denied French assistance at Calais when he sought to prevent four ships sailing with 200 Jacobites aboard, though, in mitigation, as Moore later reported, the post from Paris had been delayed by the state of the roads. All the while that the Pretender was in Scotland, Stair was to be made constantly aware of the obstructive even bellicose attitudes of the French. He was to allege after the event that the French had been commissioning ships and were marching troops towards the coast at the moment when the news of the rebellion's end arrived.

To Stair the situation seemed ominous and fraught with danger. He knew of the conversations between the Regent and Sparre, the Swedish ambassador, and that the Regent, after one such discussion,

85. D'Iberville claimed that Stair also feared danger to his person, as he was reputed to have written home that he never dared to go out unaccompanied because of the threats of assassination from the Irish (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 279, f. 142, D'Iberville to Orléans, 3 February 1716). However Ruxelles had little sympathy with such fears in dismissing them out of hand (C.P. Ang. 279, f. 164, Ruxelles to D'Iberville, 16 February 1716).
"had said aloud in Italian, Faremo"; at which the Swede had scurried off to dispatch a courier. Stair asked the Regent for an explanation and at the same time claimed that it had been said at St. Germain that the Regent had now agreed to subsidize the dispatch of 8,000 Swedes to reinforce the Pretender. This the Regent denied with a laugh and explained that he had simply agreed to pay the two quarters' subsidy due to Sweden. Stair had the presumption to retort by warning of the consequences of a misuse of this money.

His suspicion that something was afoot was only heightened by his being quizzed "by several great men" on the possible reinforcement of Britain by Hanoverian troops. He replied that there were some 10,000 to 12,000 men standing by in Hanover should Sweden or some other power attempt to go to the aid of the Pretender.

It was against this background that Stair advanced his idea for the partial dismemberment of France at a meeting with the Imperial ambassador, Baron Pentenriedter, on 6 February. Stair was responding to an overture from Victor Amadeus II, Duke of Savoy and King of Sicily, who was seeking from Britain without reference to Austria an equivalent for his kingdom, and Stair's scheme was typical of his life-long predilection for bold stratagems. He sought to include the Emperor and his idea was that the latter should receive Sicily and portions of Northern and Eastern France, that further portions of Northern France should be given to the Dutch, while in the south the Savoyard's ambitions to secure the rich Levantine trade of Marseilles and Toulon should be satisfied by the acquisition of the provinces of Dauphine and Provence. Pentenriedter had to

admit that there had never been a more propitious moment for a war with France, but he was unenthusiastic and he declined to report the matter to Vienna. Even if he had concurred, it is doubtful whether the Imperial court would have been sympathetic, for the Emperor was embarking upon a war against the Turks, and the current weakness of France left him undistracted as he sought the rich prizes to the east.

Stair's aggressiveness contrasted sharply with his government's attempts to avoid provoking France. Coincidental with his approach to Fontenriedter, Stair must have received Stanhope's dispatch of 2 February containing copies of George I's recent speech to Parliament and the replies of the two Houses. Stanhope's purpose was to enable Stair to correct any mistaken impressions that D'Iberville might have given - which in the event were not as extravagant as Stanhope feared. Stair was ordered to stress that, despite some rude comments, the government interest had held the members of the Commons in check in order to avoid any insult to the Regent which would lead to war. The enclosed documents were intended to serve as illustrations of George I's success in securing the backing of his people. The British king had demonstrated his ability to control his kingdom, Stanhope ordered Stair to express the hope that Orleans would do likewise, since the latter himself had claimed that there was wide popular support for the Pretender within France.

89. P.H.O.: F.0. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 23 January 1716 o.s.
90. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 279, f. 171, D'Iberville to Louis XV, 6 February 1716; f. 213, D'Iberville to Louis XV, 15 February 1716.
When the news reached London of the Sicilian overture, Stanhope handled Stair gently; he told him that he was pleased that the ambassadorial conference on an equivalent had taken place, but he reminded Stair that he was seeking a rapprochement with the Emperor and this must not be obstructed by Victor Amadeus II's schemes if they continued to leave out Austria. Stanhope closed the matter and confined himself to praising Stair's discreet handling of the affair and denying the Regent a pretext "pour colorer sa mauvaise conduit." He finally urged Stair to do everything he could to prevent France from gaining anything that might serve to part Britain from her friends.91

The flight of the Pretender from Montrose on the night of 15 February effectively ended the rebellion.92 A landfall was made at Gravelines on 21 February,93 and he went from there directly to St. Germaine, where he remained until 10 March, being allowed to do so because "the French people say it would have been so cruel to refuse him the liberty of crying a few days with his mother."94 As his presence served to contradict the continuing French denial of ever having supported him, it is not surprising that, before Britain could score a diplomatic victory by compelling the Regent to do it, the latter ordered the Pretender to leave.95 He went first to Commercy in Lorraine and then, turning south, found refuge in the Papal territory of Avignon.

91. P.R.O.: S.R. 78/160, f. 204, (Stanhope) to (Stair), 11 February 1716 (copy).
95. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 279, f. 273, Ruxelles to D'Ibberville, 2 March 1716.
But before he left Paris, he took the surprising step of dismissing Bolingbroke from his employ. Among the charges levelled at the latter was one alleging that he had been secretly betraying his master's plans to Stair. This accusation was unproven and was cursorily dismissed both by Bolingbroke and Stair. The latter contended that "all poor Harry's fault was, that he could not play his part with a grave enough face; he could not help laughing now and then at such kings and queens." He claimed that the dilettante Jacobite Secretary of State had frittered away money meant for munitions upon his mistress, Madame de Tencin, for whose affections he competed with the Abbé Dubois. It is possible that Dubois passed to Stair information that he had gathered from this lady. But there is no evidence, apart from one drunken statement, that Stair gathered any intelligence directly from Bolingbroke. It seems that the reason underlying the dismissal was that Bolingbroke had through his actions earned the disapproval of the entire Jacobite movement, leaving the Pretender with no other course but to replace him with War.

One of the results of this dismissal was Bolingbroke's later revelation of just how far the French had been entangled in Jacobite

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affairs during the course of the rebellion - a revelation that was embarrassing to the French then they were resuscitating the idea of a rapprochement with Britain. Stair discovered through Bolingbroke the correctness of his long-standing suspicion that the Regent, by means of the Abbe Theut, had established a clandestine relationship with the Jacobite court at St. Germaine long before the death of Louis XIV. After the establishment of the Regency Theut had been retained in this employment and it was through him that all correspondence had passed. Bolingbroke revealed that, while Louis XIV lay dying, final arrangements with the French ministers were made and orders were dispatched to Britain for the rebels to commence the insurrection. These orders were placed in Torcy's hands to be conveyed by diplomatic courier. Two weeks later the orders were returned to the Jacobites undelivered, for which Bolingbroke offered Stair no explanation. Bolingbroke related, too, the extent of his liaison with the French court; he claimed to have seen the Regent several times during the winter and to have conversed with Huxelles almost every day. 102 This accords ill with the French rejection of the charges that Stair had made in his memorials to the Regent.

The collapse of the Jacobite rebellion was to necessitate a change of course for France and, in the face of the unrelenting menace to his office from Philip V, the Regent had no choice but to attempt to establish some sort of formal relationship with Britain. But, though the rebellion had taught both the Jacobites and the Regent a salutary lesson about the firmness of George I's tenure of his throne,

the acrimony that had arisen during Stair's winter at a hostile court was to prove an enduring obstacle to the effort to improve Anglo-French relations, at least as long as he was retained as a negotiator. Stanhope was eventually to assume personal charge of the negotiations but he was in no hurry to do so, as Britain, freed from the menace within, did not share France's sense of urgency. Further he could afford to retain Stair, perhaps just to benefit from his intelligence service while the remnants of the Jacobite opposition were swept away, for the Regent, in need of an ally, was in no position to object.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE RAPPROCHEMENT WITH FRANCE

To Stair the French gave every appearance of being stunned by the return of the Pretender to France and they had not sufficiently recovered themselves by 2 March to comply with the demands of etiquette and to congratulate the British ambassador on his master's successful defence of his crown. Nevertheless they had long been at work attempting to refute the charges laid by him in his last — and as yet unanswered — memorial, as they sought to become involved in the negotiations that Britain, Austria and the United Provinces were currently conducting in an effort to re-create the alliance system that had been disrupted at Utrecht. Although the outcome of this was eventually the Triple Alliance, for the moment Britain was determined that France should publicly acknowledge her sins before a place was made for her at the conference table. The decisive defeat of the Pretender removed the urgency from Britain's search for allies, and thus, in a spirit of leisurely revenge, George I set Stanhope the task of ensuring that the events of 1715 would not be repeated.

1. B.M.: Eg. MSS., 2171, f. 155, Stair to Bubb, 2 March 1716.
D'Ibberville called this French failure one of Stair's greatest griefs. (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 280, f. 95, D'Ibberville to Orléans, 23 March 1716). Even by April few Frenchmen had advanced their congratulations (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 288, f. 336, Huxelles to D'Ibberville, 5 April 1716).

2. See above p. 162. The Regent never committed his answer to Stair's memorial (of 25 January) to paper, which omission drew comment from both British and French courts (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 279, f. 288, D'Ibberville to Orléans, 24 February 1716; f. 213, Huxelles to D'Ibberville, 6 March 1716; f. 250, D'Ibberville to Huxelles, 5 March 1716).


5. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 268, f. 239, D'Ibberville to Louis XV, 7 March 1716.
In early March, in accordance with the king's latest address to Parliament and the consequent replies of the two Houses, Stanhope and Townshend ordered Britain's diplomatic agents in Europe's capitals to assert that, if any prince wished to live in peace with Britain, he should deny the Pretender a haven. Stair's task was to inform the French that they were considered by Britain to be guilty of infringing the 4th and 5th Articles of the Utrecht treaty through having permitted the Pretender to enter their territory, to use it as a staging post for his attempt on Britain and to re-enter it when he had failed. He was ordered to submit to the Regent a written statement of Britain's basic requirements for ending her estrangement from France and for affecting the conclusion of an alliance. The Regent was expected to expel the Pretender and all of his adherents who had been declared rebels by Britain; to press the Duke of Lorraine not to harbour the fugitive again (even though this Duke had already made such a promise to Britain); and to treat as deserters all those who had gone to Scotland from the French army's Irish and Scottish regiments. To secure a public demonstration of French sincerity, Stair added a demand for a written reply from the Regent.


Rumours were rife that a further invasion of Britain would be
effectuated by means of a Franco-Swedish fleet, though Stair thought
that such was unlikely as France had only twenty serviceable war-
ships. On the night of 9 March he attempted to gain access to
the Regent in order to present his memorial. He was rebuffed and
given to understand that he was to be excluded from the court for the
time being. As no excuse was offered, Stair concluded that the
French motive was to deny him an "opportunity to desire the removal
of the Pretender ... that they might have time to wait the event
of their project by the Swedish fleet." French contemporary
comment reveals that Stair was decidedly out of favour with the
French court, being regarded as an obstacle in the way of any moves
towards friendship with Britain. But on this occasion he was
mistaken and misled, for, when, undeterred, he presented himself on
the morrow at the Regent's leveé, he was granted his audience.

At the audience Stair read his memorial to the Regent. In
reply Orleans offered his congratulations to George I for successfully
weathering the rebellion, apologised for the Pretender's recrossing
of France and stated that the latter had now departed. He agreed,
provided George I reciprocated with regard to French refugees, to
expel all fugitives who were declared traitors to the king of Great
Britain. Though he exuded benevolence, he did not lose the oppor-

10. S.R.O.: C.O. 135/14, f. 48; Stair to Stanhope, 7 March 1716.
11. Hardwicke State Papers, vol. 2, p. 552, Stair's Diary, Monday,
9 March 1716.
9 March 1716.
13. H.M.C. 11 Report, app., part 4, Townshend MSS., 1887, p. 186,
Ruxelles to D'Iberville, 2 March 1716 (copy). A.A.E. C.P.
Ang. 279, f. 274, Ruxelles to D'Iberville, 2 March 1716; C.P.
Ang. 288, f. 161, Ruxelles to D'Iberville, 2 March 1716; f. 250,
D'Iberville to Ruxelles, 9 March 1716. D'Iberville even
went as far as to claim that Stair's wish was to set Europe
alight (C.P. Ang. 288, f. 302, D'Iberville to Louis XV, 23
March 1716).
tunity to berate Stair for the manner in which the latter had reported his actions to London over the past months. Stair replied that he had always tried to do the Regent justice in his dispatches and had laid the blame on the French ministers when it seemed appropriate to do so. But, Stair continued, because he prided himself on being an honest and faithful servant of his master, he had had to relate incidents when he had certain knowledge of them even when the Regent had denied their occurrence. 14

On 11 March, coincidental with the submission of the memorial to Huxelles, Lord Peterborough, who had taken it upon himself to intercede between the two nations, told Stair that Huxelles had assured him that France had taken the initiative in seeking to resume negotiations for an alliance with Britain and would as a result expel the Pretender and be polite to Stair. Though he could merely reply that he had instructions only to maintain a good correspondence with the French and that their answer to his memorial would reveal the sincerity of their intentions, 15 Stair scented herein an opportunity of winning personal glory by being the author of this treaty. His cautious remark that "if I happen to be rusty, it will go into other hands" 16 was however to prove to be prophetic.

The sincerity of Huxelles' statement to Peterborough was soon in doubt, for the personal attacks on Stair continued and in Holland, where the Dutch gloomily predicted war, Horatio Walpole described the French ambassador, Châteauneuf, as proceeding "like a mad dog..." 17

in seeking to deny the facts contained in Stair's January memorial.

Stair continued to be bombarded with rumours of Swedo-Jacobite connivance (the plan was now supposed to be to bottle the British fleet in the "river" while the Jacobites crossed the Channel). The Jacobites' confidence suggests that the threat from Sweden was real, and on 20 March Stair urged the Regent to reply promptly to his memorial. Orléans indicated that within days the reply would be drafted, thus revealing his own complicity in the French campaign to discredit Stair, for in fact the French reply had been drawn up on 13 March and sent directly to D'Ibberville who had submitted it to the British court. Decorum demanded that such a reply should be given directly to the diplomat for transmission to his government, and failure to do so implied an insult.

Diplomatic circles were of the opinion that Stair could not remain in Paris after such a slight. But he, conditioned by months of hostility, absorbed the blow. He did not fail to remonstrate

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20. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 280, f. 70, D'Ibberville to Louis XV, 14 March 1716; f. 37, Louis XIV to D'Ibberville, 13 March 1716.
23. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 280, f. 98, Copy of Stair's memorial with French reply appended; f. 83, D'Ibberville to Louis XV, 23 March 1716.
24. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 280, f. 112, D'Ibberville to Orleans, 26 March 1716. However D'Ibberville had advised his government, before he had received the French reply to Stair's memorial, that the likelihood of Stair being withdrawn was remote and that any attempts to have him removed were likely to prove futile (C.P. Ang. 280, f. 51, D'Ibberville to Orleans, 14 March 1716).
with the Regent, taking advantage of Peterborough's leave-taking of
the French court on 22 March, but he did so without heat, merely
suggesting that if he had displeased the Regent, then George I
should be asked to withdraw him. He answered Huxelles' pointed
reference to the insult by stating that he cared little about how
the reply was conveyed as long as it reached his government. The
extent of Stair's calmness — and he was as yet un instructed by
Stanhope on the attitude to be adopted — is revealed by his account
of this encounter with Orléans. Before making his complaint he
allowed the Regent to discuss the French reply and took the oppor-
tunity to press for the immediate expulsion of the Jacobites so as
to deny them time to resuscitate their designs. There followed a
re-examination of the recent past in which Stair alleged that the
Regent had been led astray by his advisers. He claimed that, had
it not been for these ill-intentioned men, George I would have been
by now allied to the Regent. Orléans concurred, saying that it
was most irritating that the piques of ministers could put nations
asunder, and he responded to Stair's calmness by encouraging the idea
that he was ever open to suggestion; if Stair ever had anything to
say, then, Orléans assured him, he would never be denied an audience.
In reply, the ambassador indulged himself in the most obvious flattery,
stating that the Regent's ability exceeded that of the capable
Huxelles tenfold. Upon this warm note the audience ended.24

Stanhope's belated advice justified Stair's decision to ignore
the French attempts to offend. Unaware that Stair had already done
so, he ordered him not to take umbrage, arguing that such insults
were but symptoms of the effective role that Stair played. He

(ocpy). Wiesener, op.cit., vol.1p. 188.
asserted that if France chose to blacken Stair's name in European diplomatic circles, she would only harm herself, for it would appear that she was annoyed when Stair merely did his duty.

Stanhope gave Stair the responsibility of responding to the French reply in the form of a further memorial expressing British satisfaction with the intention to expel the Pretender, the treatment meted out to returning deserters and the Duke of Lorraine's promise not to shelter the Pretender. Stair was also to inform the Regent of Britain's intention to expel any French rebels. But with factions within both countries spoiling for war, Stanhope thought it necessary to caution Stair to take particular care in framing this document as a break with France was not sought.

In drawing up the memorial on 7 April, Stair saw fit to add two further clauses. In the first he paid France the compliment (was this his method of adhering to Stanhope's demand?) of promising her the role of mediator in the event of George I quarrelling with any prince in Europe. In the second he introduced an immediate problem: that of preventing Geraldin, a merchant of St. Malo, from exporting arms to Scotland. This was of prime importance as Stair had information that Geraldin had just left Paris with this intention.

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25. P.R.O.: P.0. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 19 March 1716 o.s.
26. A letter from Robethon indicates that there was a war faction within Britain (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 7, (Robethon) to Stair, 2 April 1716, (o.s.)) and the almost continual attacks by Chateauneuf upon Stair and the British government were doubtless symptomatic of the sentiments of the reactionary elements within the French government - the so-called "old ministry" (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 6, H. Walpole to Stair, 24 March 1716).
Stanhope's purpose was to clear the air and create the necessary conditions upon which an alliance could be founded in accordance with the Utrecht formula. But French policy continued to reflect the pressure of a bewildering array of conflicting interests. On the one hand the Regent showed sufficient concern for his constitutional position to dispatch a military force under Berwick to prevent any intrusion by the Spanish king. On the other hand Louis XIV's former ministers continued to rail against Britain. They warned that Stanhope and Stair in particular sought war, as Stanhope was the most inveterate of Whigs, while Stair, being in any case a soldier, was the most bellicose. Contradictions abounded. It was clear that having resurrected the idea of a rapprochement, Orleans would pursue it, and yet the Duke of Aumont, who had been a fervent Jacobite supporter, was mooted as a replacement for D'Iberville. This proposal met with the stiffest British opposition, for it was felt that such an appointment would convince the public that efforts to conclude an alliance, which had been initiated through D'Iberville, had been abandoned.

Nevertheless the French were determined to prevent Britain and the United Provinces from creating an alliance system that excluded France. On 8 April Stanhope reported to Stair that D'Iberville, without a word to the British government, had approached the Dutch and Spanish ambassadors to persuade them to propose to the British that an alliance between their respective countries and Britain and France should be concluded. When faced with the subsequent


proposal from Monteleone, Stanhope's answer had been "very plain and short". He had argued, and Monteleone had concurred, that as France had openly supported the late rebellion, Britain was entitled to expect some public demonstration of the Regent's sincerity. He had been more careful in answering Duyvenvoorde, the Dutch ambassador, "lest an illusion should be made in Holland of the suggestions which the French emissaries will not fail to insinuate as if England upon no terms would live peaceably with France". He had made it plain that George I favoured treaties with both France and the United Provinces but he hoped that Duyvenvoorde could discover just why the French had suddenly chosen to support the Protestant Succession, as he feared that they, by specious arguments, hoped to lull Britain and the United Provinces into a sense of false security so that they might forget old friendships and alliances. George I wished to establish the fundamental principle that "no scheme of an alliance with France should divert England and Holland from concluding a defensive alliance and a mutual guarantee with the Emperor ..."; if afterwards France proved herself worthy, then a place could be made for her within the system. He had concluded by laying down the three basic concessions that Britain expected from France before negotiations could begin. These were that France should induce the Pretender to leave Avignon for the remoteness of Italy, that she should expel all Jacobites from her territory and that she should settle the Dunkirk issue in terms of the Utrecht treaty. And these demands were to become the points at issue in the coming months.

The key to Stair's negotiations with the Regent over the next two months lies in the fact that, though he saw himself in the van of Britain's diplomatic endeavours, he represented just one facet of the British effort to create an alliance structure in Europe.

His assigned task - to secure French compliance with Stanhope's three demands - must be related to the secret correspondence that had been established between the Regent's agent, Dubois, and Stanhope, the efforts of Townshend, working through Horatio Walpole, at The Hague and the attempts of the Dutch, Imperial and French governments to secure their own peculiar alliance formulae.

Stair applied himself with vigour and in early May it seemed that he would succeed. At an audience on 2 May Orléans conceded that the Pretender must be sent across the Alps. But he revealed an intention to exploit this issue; he declared that he would insist on its inclusion in the proposed treaty because he feared that if he met Britain's demand she might opt out of the treaty negotiations the moment the Pretender had gone. This revelation merely prompted Stair to ask him if he was sincere and to warn that such an attitude would be seen in London as evidence of a desire to procrastinate. However Stair's aggressiveness was tempered for he had to find an excuse when the Regent complained that he had just discovered that Britain was secretly negotiating a defensive alliance with the Emperor. This discovery was a set-back for Stanhope simply because it would encourage the Regent to cling to his trump card - the Pretender - despite the British demands. Stair excused his master's action by saying that the alliance sought

was merely defensive, would threaten nobody and would serve to secure the peace of Europe. He urged that the Duke of Berwick’s new appointment as commander of the force guarding the southern border, which placed him near to Avignon, was an additional reason to force the Pretender to leave, for it would only increase British nervousness. It must have seemed that all was lost, for the audience terminated with the Regent in a cold and reticent mood.34

But Orléans was not prepared to abandon the initiative in the making of a rapprochement and a week later he summoned Stair to tell him that "he was resolved to lose no time in making the treaty he proposed to make with the King ...". He proposed a treaty based on the Utrecht formula, which would guarantee the Protestant Succession and the French renunciations, provide for mutual succour in time of crisis, settle the Dutch Barrier in accordance with the terms of Utrecht, expel the Pretender and alter the canal at Hardyke so that it could only receive ships of an agreed tonnage. If George I would accept such a treaty, Orléans promised to force the Pretender from Avignon before it was signed.

Stair could only reply that, while he knew that George I sought such a treaty, the settlement of the three points remained a preliminary to any negotiation. However, he offered to transmit these proposals to London, and Orléans agreed to furnish copies of them. As proof of his sincerity, the Regent declared himself ready to inform the court at St. Germain and the Papacy that he wished the Pretender to leave Avignon.35 Crawford’s intimation to London that the Regent had at last declared that he would force the Pre-

tender out "by fair or foul means without delay ..." is indicative of how buoyant was the optimism within the British embassy at Paris.

The French persisted in their approaches to Stair, and on 16 May he was able to report that Huxelles had added his voice to the plea for an alliance. But the latter had to be content with the reply that the Pretender's departure remained a pre-condition and that, as the French had had so long to reflect upon this matter, it was a continuing source of amazement to the British that nothing had been done to effect it.

At a subsequent audience the repetition by Orléans to Stair of his intention to have the Pretender leave Avignon led the alarmed Jacobites to offer him, through the abbe Thesut, a means for thwarting the British design. They suggested that he should alert the Papacy of the British intention with regard to the expulsion so that the British demand could be answered with an already prepared Papal refusal. As, however, the Pretender was not to be disturbed until the year's end, the Jacobite plans were premature.

Impressed by the Regent's expressed determination to expel any rebel Scottish fugitives and to halt the thin trickle of arms leaving France for Scotland, Stair likewise thought the Pretender's expulsion would soon follow. This hope was not shared by Horatio Walpole at The Hague, for he knew that the French were currently

36. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 284, Crawford to (Pringle), 16 May 1716.
doing their best to frustrate the Anglo-Austrian negotiations. Nor was it shared by his king, who, having been constantly told that the Regent was working for the Pretender and alerted to France's latest offer of a separate treaty to the Dutch, swiftly called the conference that formulated on 5 June the Treaty of Westminster, a defensive alliance between Britain and Austria, providing for Dutch membership after its ratification but having nothing to offer the French.

While the conference at Westminster continued, Stanhope ordered Stair to stand fast on the three points. The tedium was relieved by the introduction of an irrelevancy in the shape of a memorial submitted by the Papal Nuncio in France, wherein the Pretender was named king of Great Britain. It gave Stair an opportunity to vent his spleen, and in reply to his demand for power to answer the insult Stanhope instructed him to protest at the Regent's acceptance of this document. Stair was ordered to say that George I would overlook the Regent's action if French influence was used at Rome to have the Nuncio re-called, "that the world may be convinced, that he who dares to affront His Majesty can never be acceptable to His Highness."

Despite the Emperor's abhorrence, the British government now determined to effect the rapprochement with France.\textsuperscript{46} But it was agreed to accept Châteauneuf's persistent suggestion\textsuperscript{47} and transfer the negotiations from Paris and London to The Hague. Stair was given no inkling of such a departure and when he was informed it was a fait accompli.\textsuperscript{48} Indeed he was given to understand the reverse, and Stanhope ordered him to continue to press the Regent to accept the British demands. He was instructed to correct the false impression that Peterborough\textsuperscript{49} had given the French by claiming that George I no longer insisted upon the Pretender's departure before beginning negotiations, and was to state that, far from abandoning the three points at issue, the king, in his concern for security at home and abroad, was convinced that he could not treat with the Regent before these demands had been met. Stanhope told Stair that D'Ibberville had been rebuffed when he had suggested that the three points should be incorporated in the treaty, for there could be no compromise as these points "are the only things essential to Great Britain stipulated in the last treaty."\textsuperscript{50} Such was to be the content of Stair's message to the Regent, together with a review of the recent past and an intimation that this was the Regent's best and probably only chance of securing the alliance. He

\textsuperscript{46} Hatton, Diplomatic Relations, p. 108.
\textsuperscript{47} S.R.O.: G.O. 135/141, vol. 5, Townshend to H. Walpole, 5 June 1716 o.s. (copy); vol. 6, H. Walpole to Stair, 5 June 1716. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 261, f. 250, Louis XV to D'Ibberville, 26 June 1716; C.P. Ang. 286, D'Ibberville to Orleans, 25 June 1716.
\textsuperscript{48} P.R.O.: P.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 7 June 1716 o.s.
\textsuperscript{49} A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 285, f. 25, Peterborough to Townshend, 20 May 1716 (copy).
\textsuperscript{50} P.R.O.: P.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 27 May 1716 o.s.
was told that D'Iberville's allegation\textsuperscript{51} that the recent alliance with Austria was the cause of Britain's cool attitude towards France was to be answered with the firm statement that George I sought to protect his subjects' interests and that friendship with France could not be contemplated until she had given satisfaction with regard to the three British demands.\textsuperscript{52} Thus all Stair knew was that pressure was being applied upon France to concede the three demands, and he must have been elated when he was told "the minute they are complied with His Majesty is ready to send your Lordship full powers to negotiate and conclude a defensive alliance ...".\textsuperscript{53} He must have been almost able to read his own signature upon the treaty.

A week later Townshend wrote to Walpole enclosing a draft treaty and explained that in early June D'Iberville had proposed\textsuperscript{54} the expedient of removing the Pretender after the signing of the treaty and before its ratification. D'Iberville had been told that the removal must remain a pre-condition. Yet, Townshend explained, George I had heard that Châteauneuf had handed the Dutch a treaty-project, which the well-intentioned in the United Provinces deemed "a safe foundation for treating," and so George I proposed to follow it up as far as it was consistent with his honour. Townshend continued that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{51} A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 281, f. 212, D'Iberville to Louis XV, 14 June 1716.
\item \textsuperscript{52} P.R.O.: F.0. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 27 May 1716 o.s. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 289, f. 97, Louis to D'Iberville, 1 June 1716.
\item \textsuperscript{53} P.R.O.: F.0. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 31 May 1716 o.s. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 281, f. 212, D'Iberville to Louis XV, 14 June 1716; f. 231, D'Iberville to Orléans, 15 June 1716.
\end{itemize}
though he cannot without derogating from that, allow any treaty to be signed on his part till France had made him reparation for what has lately passed there relating to the Pretender, by obliging him to retire beyond the Alps, yet to show how desirous he is to concur with the States (the United Provinces) in whatever they think for the public good, he has been pleased to command Mr. Stanhope and me in answer to Mr. de Châtauneuf's propositions to draw up an entire project of such a Defensive alliance as he is willing immediately to conclude with France in conjunction with the States ..."

Walpole was to give a copy to the Dutch and one to Châtauneuf for transmission to Paris, making it plain at the same time that he would be given powers to sign this project as a treaty once he had been informed of the Pretender's departure. To quieten the Regent's fears that Britain might fail to sign once the Pretender had been removed, Townshend proposed that Walpole should emphasise that, as George I made this proposal, any failure on his part was unlikely as it would only impugn his honour. This condition, the British government thought, would impose no hardship upon France, for it encompassed only what had already been agreed upon at Utrecht, and, because on that occasion the British delegates had refused to sign while the Pretender remained in France, George I was justified in taking at least as much precaution. To forestall arguments about interpretation, each power was merely to guarantee the territory that each other possessed at the time of signing, as had been done in the recent treaty with the Emperor. Britain proposed to forgo France's guarantee of her Protestant succession because the Regent feared it might be "particularly disgusting to the French nation", and sought only a defensive alliance, contenting herself with the mutual guarantee as provided by existing treaties. She would not however give ground over the canal at Hardyke, which she expected to be rendered incapable of receiving men-of-war.55

On 18 June Stanhope alerted Stair to this move by sending him a copy of the Townshend dispatch and ordered him to be silent with regard to this matter until further notice. He tried to sweeten this bitter pill; firstly by explaining that only considerations of expediency had dictated the transference and secondly, by assuring Stair that, however fond the French had been of wresting the negotiations from him, George I retained his confidence in him. Once the Pretender had been removed from Avignon, Stanhope averred, Stair would be unmuzzled to combine ministerial arguments with those of his own to clinch the matter.56

But by 22 June Stair was still unaware of this development, and his ignorance led him to propose to the Regent, whom he had found more reticent than ever, that to prove George I's sincerity he would obtain full powers to conclude the alliance, provided that the Pretender left before formal negotiations began.57 In the following lengthy discussion the Regent hinted darkly that he intended to propose a new expedient which, if rejected by the British, would reveal that their true intention was to make war. Stair informed Stanhope:

"the issue of this whole matter seems now to be brought to a very narrow point, which is whether the States will think it reasonable that the Regent should trust the King's declarations, made to him and the States, that His Majesty is willing and ready to make the treaty desired, and upon these assurances send away the Pretender when the full powers are actually given by the King and showed to His R(oyal) H(ighness), or whether Their High and Mightinesses will think it more reasonable that the King should in the first place make the treaty and trust the Regent sending away (sic) the Pretender ...".

56. F.R.O.: F.O. 90/14, Stanhope to Stair, 7 June 1716 o.s.
57. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 261, f. 261, (Huxelles) to D'Iberville, 26 June 1716.
Clearly Stair now understood that the Dutch had assumed greater prominence in this affair. And though he closed his letter to Stanhope by stating that he felt that the majority of the Dutch favoured the British before the French, he warned that there was a Francophile faction among them which had always maintained that Louis XIV had never intended to support the Pretender, and, until the Rebellion had actually broken out, that it was an invention of the British ministry used as a pretext to maintain a standing army. Stair did not doubt that the same people would claim that the Pretender had had no favours from the Regent. 59

Then Stanhope's dispatch arrived, but not before Stair had suffered acute embarrassment at the hands of the Regent. In his lengthy reply to Stanhope of 27 June he made clear his bitterness. 59

He claimed

"that I am really not at all sorry that the negotiation is taken out of my hands, I am not at all fond of meddling especially at this time and place, I only wish that I had known it a little sooner, that I might have saved myself the ridicule of meddling in things that were not entrusted in me ...".

At his last audience, he wrote, the Regent had stood by his resolution to dispatch the Pretender between the signing and the ratification, and had maintained that, if George I did not agree, it was because he wished to make war on France, and that in such circumstances the latter must look to her own defence. Stair had tried to prove to the Regent that the treaty was of great consequence to him and that the inconvenience of sending the Pretender away before the signing was entirely compensated by George I's desire to enter into the type

59. His disappointment did not escape St. Simon (op.cit., vol. 5, p. 304).
of alliance of which the Regent and Huxelles had formerly been so much in favour. But the Regent had

"received what I said with great neglect and cut me short with an air that he had never had to me before, he knew then things that I was ignorant of, the negotiations had gone into Holland and that I was not in the secret."

Stair devoted the rest of this letter to airing his views on the French motives in desiring the transference and on the role that the Dutch were likely to play. He felt that Huxelles "knew his strength lay to treat us in that country", for the Marshal thought that he could rely on the friends that France had made among the Dutch during the Gertruydenburg and Utrecht negotiations and, perhaps, that wider support might be forthcoming. Stair thought that the French were glad to get the negotiations out of George I's hands because they were jealous of his power and authority and because they could not control Stanhope. The Dutch would, he claimed, concur, for they "agreed with the French in this point, they were fond of having themselves in the possession (sic) of having all the considerable transactions of Europe made in their country." He warned that the French faction in the United Provinces would have to be controlled and that this would be expensive as the Dutch Deputies were living beyond their means while the French and Imperial ambassadors spent heavily:

"I leave you to judge whether our reasons will get the better of a million of French money. I know the Emperor gives money too at this time, but Mr. de Châteauneuf's purse is heavier than Mr. Heems'".

He launched into a diatribe against the Regent, sketching his swing from his professed pro-British sentiments to the traditional policy of Louis XIV, which had led Stair to have misgivings about the whole
affair; he was "afraid it is too plain that, whenever France can hurt us, she will hurt us ...".  

Stanhope's answer was gentle; he agreed that Stair's reflections on the value of the treaty negotiations in the United Provinces were just, but, he explained, rather than offend such good allies as the Dutch George I had thought fit to comply with their suggestions and hoped that careful management would avert the possible repercussions of such a departure. He reassured Stair that, had it not been for these reasons, George I would have been happy to entrust the negotiations to Stair in whose hands they would have been safer than in anyone else's.  

If Stair regarded Walpole as the usurper of his function, he was wrong. Walpole was allowed no latitude by Townshend and Stanhope on the three points, with the result that his negotiations with Châteauneuf were reduced to conversations, and the real effort was made by means of the secret correspondence between Stanhope and the Abbé Dubois, which was expanded into serious negotiations after their first meeting at The Hague on 21 July during George I's return to Hanover.  

Though it was reported that Stanhope had rebuffed Dubois ("he met Mr. Stanhope in Holland, and was sent back with a flea in his ear and frightened out of his wits ..."), their negotiations were not  

61. The Treaty for the Renewal of Alliances had been signed in London on 17 February 1716 (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 284, f. 87, (copy)).  
62. P.R.O.: F.O. 90/4, Stanhope to Stair, 3 July 1716 o.s.  
63. Hatton, Diplomatic Relations, p. 107 at seq.  
64. Ibid, p. 116. Interestingly D'Ibberville warned the Regent that George I's purpose in making this journey was to conclude alliances with several "potentates" (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang., f. 6, (D'Ibberville) to (Orléans), 4 May 1716).  
fruitless, for, with the Regent increasingly worried about his own position if his young charge, Louis XV, should die, Dubois was soon to follow Stanhope to Hanover to conclude the convention of 9 October, which became the Triple Alliance of 4 January 1717 once the tardy Dutch had been coaxed into it. This means that the Dutch never gained the initiative that they had sought. Stair and Walpole were left with just their routine duties, despite Stanhope's continual assertion that Stair would be called on at the end to provide the final clinching argument that would secure the treaty.

Stair's position is amply illustrated by his frequent cry that he was hampered in his conversations with the Regent by his informing being weeks out of date. In only one instance was Stair brought into the front-line of the negotiations but then only as an adviser. The issue was that of the Dunkirk demolitions, which Dubois and Stanhope had failed to settle after agreeing on all other matters during their secret conference in Hanover in August. They arranged, however, that Stair should not be made a primary agent in the matter, probably because of his earlier failure; it was entrusted to D'Iberville, the Prince of Wales and the residual ministry in London.

68. S.R.O.: G.D. 155/141, vol. 6, Stanhope to Stair, 3 August 1716; Stanhope to Stair, 9 September 1716.  
69. P.R.O.: S.F. 70/160, f. 372, Stair to Methuen, 7 November 1716; f. 376, Stair to Methuen, 11 November 1716 O.S.  
70. S.R.O.: G.D. 155/141, vol. 5, Methuen to Stair, 27 August 1716 O.S., A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 277, f. 278, Dubois to Orleans, 31 August 1716; C.P. Ang. 286, f. 7, Dubois to Orleans, 1 September 1716; C.P. Ang. 278, f. 54, Dubois to Marquis de Camillas, 9 September 1716.  
71. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 285, f. 263, D'Iberville's Instructions, 1 September 1716; f. 263, Memorial, 1 September 1716.  
Yet, given the Regent's anxiety to conclude, Stair's detailed knowledge of the Dunkirk issue and his intimate contact with Orleans were undoubtedly assets, and Townshend and Paul Methuen, the new Secretary of State for the Southern Department, were not slow to exploit them. Methuen supplied Stair with the complete range of documentary evidence, including the minutes of the meetings with D'Ibberville, and ordered him to maintain a careful watch upon developments within the French court. 73

In fact Stair was able to make a positive contribution to the negotiations. On 10 September Orleans told him of British resistance to D'Ibberville's demand that the canal should provide drainage and be large enough to receive 300 ton ships. 74 Stair expressed surprise that such large vessels were required by the French and was answered that the Regent sought only to provide for the inland commerce of the town of Bergues. If 300 tons were thought excessive, the Regent continued, he was willing to consider a lower limit, perhaps 200 tons. 75

Before the meeting closed, Stair took the opportunity to warn the Regent that the "old ministry" was working hard against the treaty and received the reply that the Regent was determined to effect the rapprochement despite any pressures. This answer emboldened him to advise Methuen to press D'Ibberville hard, for he knew that D'Ibberville had orders to agree to everything, though he would seek to avoid alterations at Dunkirk that might prove to be expensive. 76

73. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 5, Methuen to Stair, 12 November 1716 o.s.; vol. 7, Minutes of a conference between Methuen, Townshend and D'Ibberville, 19 August 1716 o.s. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 987, f. 24, D'Ibberville to (Orleans), 18 September 1716, D'Ibberville supplied Orleans with like accounts; f. 29, D'Ibberville to Orleans, 22 September 1716.

74. Dubois made this point to Stanhope, though without specifying the tonnage (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. Dubois to Stanhope, 4 August 1716).

75. F.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 359, Stair to (Stanhope), 11 September 1716.

Two days later, on 14 September, the Regent repeated his answer, saying:

"My Lord, you're in the right; you shall do in the matter of Hardyke, just as you please, and I have sent Mr. d'Iberville instructions this very day, to yield everything (that) is desired in England in that matter. The King (George II) agrees there should be an écoulement d'eau, he agrees that ships of (a) certain burden should enter for the commerce of the country, I desire no more, after that, make of the canal, of the sluices, of the channel, what you please. If you think that ships of 300 tons are too much, fix them at 200, if you don't like that, take 150 ...".

He went on to suggest that perhaps the most efficient way to settle such details was to leave them to the expert opinion of the French and British engineers. He offered to resume the demolition of the basin and the harbour at Dunkirk, but he made it plain that he considered that to do so would be an expensive and unnecessary gesture, for they had decayed so much during the years of disuse that they were of little value."\textsuperscript{78}

Townshend and Methuen followed Stair's advice closely and, by demanding only essentials and thereby saving French expense, they earned both the Regent's gratitude and an early agreement on the matter. Stair's particular contribution was to induce Methuen to concede the French request that sufficient depth should be maintained in the small sluice to allow for the draining of Lake Moer, an area which had been flooded for the past fifty years."\textsuperscript{79} Without doubt the

\textsuperscript{77} A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 287, f. 19, D'Iberville to Orléans, 11 September 1716; C.P. Ang. 282, f. 160, Orléans to D'Iberville, 15 September 1716; f. 235, D'Iberville to Orléans, 21 September 1716.


\textsuperscript{79} P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 349, Stair to Methuen, 26 September 1716; Stair to Methuen, 28 September 1716 ("a little attention to please Monsieur de Canillac in the matters would be very obliging to him, and may have a very good effect for the King's (George II's) service and would please the Regent.") S.R.O.: G.D. 135/144, f. 5, Stair to Sir David Dalrymple, 29 September 1716.
British delegation in London would have considered the French plea an irrelevancy had not Stair pointed out its significance and how the Regent's goodwill could be increased by such a small act of generosity. He intimated that this area had been given by the Regent to the Marquis de Canillac who had been a staunch opponent of the Pretender and was a current favourite of the Regent. Townshend and Methuen concurred.

Stair reserved his single criticism of the agreement for Stanhope. In a letter of 5 October, he questioned the size of the vessels that were to be allowed to use the canal at Mardyke. He proposed the expedient of having the Dutch question the French about the necessity of using barges in excess of 60 to 70 tons for inland commerce and argue that the harbouring of larger vessels would only rouse the suspicions of France's neighbours.

Aside from his involvement with the Dunkirk issue, Stair had little more than a watching brief, the subject of which was the Pretender and his followers. As he had maintained his espionage service at full strength at no small cost to his own pocket and as the Regent was in a co-operative mood, Stair enjoyed a considerable in-flow of information about them. His reports on the Swedo-Jacobite involvement later formed part of the basis of the action that Britain took in early 1717 against the Swedish envoy Gyllenborg. But he was mainly concerned with French promises to send the Pretender across the Alps.

80. A.A.E.; C.P. Ang. 278, f. 126, (Dubois) to D'Iberville, 19 September 1716; C.P. Ang. 282, f. 192, D'Iberville to Louis XV, 14 September 1716. St. Simon, op. cit., vol. 5, pp. 157, 228.
81. S.R.O.; G.D. 135/141, vol. 5, Methuen to Stair, 19 September 1716 o.s.
84. S.R.O.; G.D. 135/141, vol. 5, Methuen to Stair, 22 October 1716 o.s. (private).
In September, with the Regent in his most compliant mood to date, Stair was able to report that the troops in Languedoc near Avignon had been alerted to force the Pretender out if persuasion failed. Again, on 7 October, with full agreement between Stanhope and Dubois only two days away, the news that the Regent had told the court at St. Germaine that the Pretender would have to leave led Stair confidently to predict that the end was in sight. But he still had months to wait. He claimed that the "old ministry" in France were confounded and that "the Jacobites fling up the game", but in truth neither was the case.

Within weeks of this latter confident prediction the Pretender fell ill from a fistula in his stomach, an illness which Stair later described as "a filthy disease that he won't easily get rid of ... his health is in a very bad state, both by original sin and actual transgression ...", and which necessitated a painful operation and a long convalescence. It must have seemed that even Nature was conniving at the delaying tactics.

The "old ministry" and the Jacobites pinned their hopes upon Papal resistance to the Regent's pressure for the Pretender's removal.

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86. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 286, f. 119, Dubois to Orléans, 7 October 1716 (Dubois gave Stanhope a similar message).
90. H.M.C. Polwarth MSS., vol. 1, 1911, p. 133, Stair to Polwarth, 27 November 1716.
91. In early 1716 Dubois alleged that Stair had told him that the operation had been a failure and that a new and worse fistula had appeared (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 303, f. 12, Dubois to Orléans, 3 January 1716).
Stair told Methuen that they proposed to

"engage the Pope to thunder from the Vatican if the
Regent should use violence against his Holiness's
territories. The French assure them that those
Thunderbolts will fright the Regent from executing
that part of the Treaty."92

The Regent ignored such a stormy forecast and in mid-December,
by which time the Pretender was well enough to attend Mass,93
Huxolles informed Stair that the necessary representations would be
made at the Papal court.94 On 25 December Lieutenant-General Dillon
was dispatched to inform the Pretender that he must leave,95 and a
month later, on 4 February, the Pretender set out for the Savoyard
border.96

Britain delayed the ratification of the treaty until there was
positive news of the departure97 and thus ironically implemented the
expedient of permitting the departure to occur between the signing
and the ratification, which she had so brusquely refused in June.
And there can be no doubt that the Pretender would have gone months
before if the progress towards the Triple Alliance had not been
slowed, firstly by Dubois' scrupulousness in November over the precise
legality of the full powers issued to Cadogan,98 who had been dele-
gated to sign the draft treaty with Dubois, and secondly by the
introduction, by the Dutch, of an irrelevancy in the shape of a
clause relating to their tariff agreement with France.99

96. Jones, op.cit., p. 129.
97. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/29, Methuen to Stair, 4 February 1717. The
French had ratified on 20 January 1717 (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 297,
f. 15).
98. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 286, f. 171, Dubois' objections, 9 November
1716; C.P. Ang. 289, f. 178, Dubois to Orleans, 16 November
November 1716 o.s.; vol. 6, Cadogan to Stair, 24 November 1716.
Hatton, Diplomatic Relations, p. 140.
When the news of the signing - albeit secretly - of the draft treaty by Cadogan and Dubois at The Hague on 28 November fil-tered through the diplomatic channels to Stair's colleagues at posts elsewhere in Europe, Stair received some wordy compliments. Alexander Cunningham in Venice wrote:

"I find the happy effects of it here, in having the smiles of the French party, as much as we had never been in war or never were to be again, nay they are so gracious that I can scarce dine without them."

Stair, he reported, was called the "finest gentleman in Europe, they ask me (Cunningham), if you were not bred in France, they are amazed when I tell them to the best of my memory, you was (sic) bred in Holland, but they own (that) Holland has produced some polite gentlemen." Methuen added his compliments, contending that Stair was largely responsible for the parties' coming together.

But Stair himself must have known that Methuen exaggerated; it must have been clear to him that the real credit for making these traditionally divergent interests coalesce lay with Stanhope and Dubois. He had failed to effect the rapprochement on the two occasions when he had had the opportunity to do so at the beginning of the Regency and at the close of the Rebellion. Yet he had failed largely because of the actions of others rather than his own incom-

100. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 6, Cadogan to Stair, 3 December 1716.
103. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/29, f. 66, Methuen to Stair, 3 January 1717.
petance. In any case it would have been presumptions of him to imagine that Stanhope, with his taste for personal involvement in international affairs, would have abandoned such an important issue to a mere ambassador. Thus Stair had really gained no more glory than could be claimed by any of Stanhope's assistants.
CHAPTER EIGHT

STAIR ON LEAVE

If the signing of the Triple Alliance represented a triumph for British diplomacy and marked for Stanhope a further step on the road towards fully securing Europe's balance of power by treaties, it seemed to Stair to be merely the culmination of a period of personal frustration and insecurity. His uneasiness and dispiritedness found expression in a letter to Lord Polwarth: he wished, he wrote, to return to the peace of his estates, as "to tell you the truth I have had a belly full of being a public minister." Thus Stanhope's action, taken within days of this letter, in informing Stair that he would be retained in France and in granting his long standing request for leave, could hardly have been better timed.

Stair had been in France for less than a month in 1715 when he made his first request for leave to attend to his personal affairs in Britain. Not surprisingly that request was refused. But thenceforth he presented his government with a stream of pretexts on which to allow him time at home. He sought to attend personally to the reorganization of the regiment of dragoons, which had been presented to him in April 1715 by way of financial recompense. He pleaded the need to see to the management of his estate and other personal affairs and, on more than one occasion, he expressed a

2. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 4, Stair to Stanhope, 27 January 1717; S.P. 104/29, Methuen to Stair, 26 January 1717 o.s.
3. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 23, Stair to (Stanhope), 17 February 1715.
desire to convey personally information that he did not trust to the normal methods of communication. This latter pretext was used in the autumn of 1716, when he sought permission at least to wait on the king in Hanover, though undoubtedly he did so merely to improve his stock with the king. All these requests were refused, for the continuing and overlapping crises of the last two years had allowed no respite during which the government could afford to permit Stair to absent himself from his post.

The reasons for Stair's discontent in January 1717 were the continuing uncertainty about his future, the product of his government's failure to order him to complete the formalities of the assumption of his rank, and his fears that the expense of his post would affect his ruin.

Stair had been promoted to the rank of Ambassador-Extraordinary at the outset of the Regency, but, though the French court had been notified to that effect, and though Stair had received pay commensurate with the rank, the formalities of entry had not been completed and the matter had been suspended while the outcome of the Rebellion of 1715 had been awaited. Even at this stage Stair was expressing his distaste for the expense that the formalities of

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8. Stair had hoped that he could have taken the opportunity to return to England briefly in May 1715 during the long delays that occurred in the Majorcan negotiations when answers were required from Madrid (S.R.O.: G.D. 220. 5. S, Stair to Montrose, 28 May 1715).
10. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/160, f. 109, Instructions appointing Stair as Ambassador Extraordinary, 21 September 1715 o.s.
assuming his rank would incur and for the formalities themselves; on 27 October 1715 he wrote to Bubb,

"I have not yet taken the character of Ambassador though I have my credentials. I love neither the embarrassments of the ceremony nor the trouble of the expenses that one must make for other people." 13

Yet, after the matter had not been reviewed for a year, 14 it was Stair himself who prompted a reconsideration. And he did so even though his sentiments about the expense were unchanged, for he wrote to his uncle, Sir David Dalrymple, the current Lord Advocate of Scotland, expressing his desire to be withdrawn from France because the king's ambassador "must make a very great figure and it is fit that he should do so, to that belongs a very great expense and you know that it does not agree with my state of affairs." 15 In the same month of September he asked Stanhope for a statement on his future.

Stanhope's answer was entrusted to Robethon who said that, once the Triple Alliance had been concluded, Stair should be allowed to complete the formalities and assume his character. But no offer of financial compensation was forthcoming, and Stair's sense of insecurity can have been only stimulated by Robethon's personal advice to employ delaying tactics in the matter of assuming rank should he be both bored with his post and worried about his finances. 16

13. B.M. Eg. MSS., 2170, f. 244, Stair to Bubb, 27 October 1715.
14. Robethon had expected Stair's position to have been reviewed in the spring of 1716, but nothing had happened (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 7, Robethon to Stair, 6 March 1716 o.s.).
Stair wrote to Sir David Dalrymple:

"I am ignorant of my own destiny, whether I am to stay here or to be recalled. I have represented my circumstances to Mr. Secretary Stanhope to be laid before the King, that without His Majesty's assistance, it will hurt my private fortune very much to make the expense of an entry and furnishing a house, which cannot cost less than ten thousand pounds."

Yet he was not totally averse to continuing in France, for he stated to Sir David that, should the king wish him to continue, he was prepared to find £3,000 towards the cost of his entry, being confident that the king would be generous in such circumstances and would provide him with ample assistance. 17

Stair's mood of resignation had persisted, and on 26 October his old friend and current Secretary of State for the Southern Department, Paul Methuen, took it upon himself to persuade Stair to stay. He lauded Stair's success in diplomacy, particularly in regard to the frustration of the Pretender's aims. But he had to admit that his fortune had suffered to the extent of some £30,000 in the course of his own diplomatic career 18— an admission that might have only determined Stair to resign and save himself. But financial aid for Stair was now proposed; Robethon reported two days later that Stanhope was soliciting the Treasury for the necessary funds to cover the expense of an entry. 19 Such action encouraged Robethon to predict that Stair was destined to stay in France for a considerable period, at least until the termination of the Northern War.

18. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 5, Methuen to Stair, 15 October 1716 o.m.
On 2 November Methuen again took up his pen to augment the efforts being made in London and Hanover to persuade Stair that his presence at the French court was essential. Though Methuen had to placate the ambassador when the Prince of Wales' inexperience led him to question a claim for reimbursement for expenditure on secret services, he was able to reveal that Stair had won the prince's sympathy and that the latter was determined that Stair should incur no financial loss in making his entry. 20

To Methuen's was added the voice of James Cragge, the son of the Postmaster General. Cragge had enjoyed Stair's hospitality in Paris^ and now counted himself among Stair's friends, at least feeling free enough to berate him for his gambling excesses. 22 He was able to inform Stair that the formidable brothers-in-law, Lord Townshend and Robert Walpole, the dominant figures in the residual ministry in London, had declared that, as Stair was irreplaceable, full financial support would have to be furnished to enable him to make his entry. 23

However, the ministers in Hanover were less sympathetic. Concurrent with Stair's intimation to Methuen on 18 December that he had no orders regarding the length of his stay (though he averred that he would await them with patience), 24 Robethon was writing to tell him that the king was prepared to offer him £3,000 towards the cost of the entry. But George I at the same time pointed out the

23. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/147, f. 8, Cragge to Stair, 15 November 1716 o.s.
benefits that Stair had already received, to the £1,500 worth of equipage that was already his and to his retention on full pay as a Lieutenant-General and as a Gentleman of the Bedchamber. The king contended that, as Stair had also been given a regiment for nothing, he ought to be content. Further the ambassador was sternly warned against participating in the current political skirmishing — which was to result in the split in Whig ranks following Townshend's demotion in the next month and widened by his dismissal in April 1717.

Stair's reaction was to decry Townshend's and Walpole's motives for splitting the ministry. And by stating, in a letter to Craggs on 4 January, that a firm stand by half a dozen men would preserve the ministry, Stair placed himself firmly on the side of Stanhope and his new partner, Sunderland. He asserted

"that if a storm came I should be on deck and durst stand by my tackle as well as another man; that I had never forsaken my friends; and that times might come when great men would do their friends the honour to know them."

He claimed that if he was called upon to judge the courage of Stanhope and Sunderland,

"I should take them for men of great vigour. They cracked their whip about my ears in a most masterly manner. I have received a letter from Robethon, to let me know that it behoves me to be satisfied, with an enumeration of all the obligations I have to Mr. Stanhope, which are modestly speaking, more than I could pretend to."

27. Williams, op.cit., p. 250.
He told Czeggs that he had acknowledged these obligations, "to which I think that I had ever made a just return". Yet in spite of this declaration of loyalty he had proclaimed to Robethon "very plainly, that I thought I had very good reason to complain of the Secretary's neglect, in the matter of my ministry at this court, and of his trifling with me in the matter of my stay here. That, to cut the matter short, I was satisfied that what was necessary to support me in this station, was more than my service could be worth, and that therefore, I was resolved to beg the King to recall me." 28

When announcing the signing of the Triple Alliance, Cadogan, too, attempted to persuade Stair not to resign; he expressed his confidence that the king would, in continuing Stair in his employ, supplement his allowances in order that the heavy cost could be borne. Though Cadogan was effusive in his praise of Stair's ability and performance, 29 the latter remained unhappy and insecure. 30 He informed Robethon that if Stanhope lost his office, he would follow him into retirement. 31 Polwarth hoped that if Stair did in fact resign, he would only do so for a more suitable and more congenial employment. 32 However, Stair's anxieties were short-lived, for in mid-January his retention in France and the granting of his leave of absence were announced by Stanhope. 33 On 6 February Methman

30. H.N.C. Stuart MSS., vol. 3, 1907, p. 311, Charles Wogan to Mar, 12 December 1716, Wogan told of the burning down of Stair's Castle Kennedy in Wigtownshire. As this disaster involved a loss of an estimated £4,000 worth in property, it can have had only a dampening effect upon Stair's morale.
33. Stanhope's letter has not survived. All that remains is Stair's acknowledgement of it (P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 4, Stair to Stanhope, 27 January 1717. A.A.E.: C.F. Ang. 291, f. 134, Buxelles to D'Iberville, 9 February 1717).
confirmed that the king had granted the leave, and in the latter part of that month, leaving Crawford to act in his stead, Stair left France for Britain.

As Stair prepared to depart, Stanhope, freshly returned to London from Hanover, chose to order the arrest of Count Gyllenborg, the Swedish envoy. The justification given for the arrest was that intercepted letters from Gyllenborg to Sweden's minister-at-large, Baron Görts, had revealed a Jacobite scheme for bringing about the Pretender's accession by means of direct military intervention by Sweden. However as Professor Hatton has established, the motive for such extraordinary action was principally political. Stanhope had taken this step on 10 February at a time when his party was suffering from severe internal strain due to his quarrel with Townshend and the division of loyalties occasioned by the ever-present distrust between the king and his heir, the Prince of Wales. As Professor Hatton says, "The country, the Whig party, the government itself, needed a rallying cry, and the unholy spectre of another Jacobite invasion seemed most suitable."

Stanhope knew from the intercepted correspondence that the Jacobites had failed to secure Charles XII as their new champion after the

34. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/29, Methuen to Stair, 26 January 1717 c.s.
35. P.R.O.: S.P. 76/161, f. 6, Crawford to Methuen, 17 February 1717.
A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 287, f. 85, D'Iberville to Orleans, 12 February 1717; C.P. Ang. 297, f. 54, Stanhope to all foreign diplomats in London, 1 February 1717 c.s.
Triple Alliance had proved that they had no more hope of French
support. He knew, too, the degree of distaste with which the public
viewed Hanover's involvement in the Northern War, particularly as it
had occasioned heavy shipping losses in the previous year. Thus
he chose a manoeuvre which would both vindicate the king's northern
policy and exploit a Jacobite threat to unify the country. The
astuteness of this move was to be revealed at the month's end when
a united Parliament forbade all trade with Sweden.\textsuperscript{40}

Stanhope's action was so timed that it was Crawfurd who was
largely affected by it. But, as Stair's contemporaries credited
him with the discovery of the plot,\textsuperscript{41} and he provided some of the
evidence upon which Stanhope grounded his case, his role in the
affair warrants examination.

Northern affairs had never really intruded much upon Stair's
daily routine; in 1715 he had done little more than relay the
sparse general information on them that he had been able to gather at
the French court. His letters first mention the possibility of
Swedish involvement with the Jacobites in January 1716.\textsuperscript{42} Yet in
April 1715, during the final states of the negotiations leading to the
alliance between France and Sweden, the French diplomat Crosay and
his brother Torcy had urged Sweden to support the Pretender in his
bid to unseat Sweden's new enemy George I (Hanover, having concluded
a treaty with Prussia in November 1714, joined Sweden's enemies by
signing a treaty with Denmark in May 1715).\textsuperscript{43} The subsequent

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{40} Hatton, \textit{Diplomatic Relations}, pp. 147-48. Hatton, \textit{op.cit.},
                      \textit{Charles XII}, p. 439. This act went some way towards George I's
                      objective of starving Sweden into submission.
  \item \textsuperscript{41} Anon. \textit{Memoirs of the Life, Family & Character of John, late Earl
                      \textit{Memoirs of Stair}).
  \item \textsuperscript{42} S.R.O., C.D. 135/137, f. 43, Stair to Stanhope, 6 January 1716
                      (extract).
  \item \textsuperscript{43} Nordmann, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 28. Murray, \textit{George I}, pp. 204-8.
\end{itemize}
conversations in the summer of 1715 between Berwick, Bolingbroke and the Swedish and Spanish ambassadors to France, Baron Sparre and Count Cellamare, also escaped Stair's notice. Thus he never knew of the resultant scheme which envisaged the employment of the Swedish fleet that had been assembled to succour Stralsund to cover an attack on Newcastle by General Hugo Hamilton and a Swedish army of seven to eight thousand men. France was to provide a haven for the Swedish vessels in case of British retaliation. But such bold planning suited neither Louis XIV's non-belligerent mood nor Charles XII's plans for the defence of Stralsund. In any case the latter did not want to widen the scope of hostilities by precipitation Britain into the ranks of his enemies. 44

In January 1716, when the Jacobites made a second desperate bid to secure aid for their flagging cause, Stair was able to provide a limited insight into their negotiations in Paris. Throughout March he sent continual reports on a possible attempt involving a Franco-Swedish fleet, 45 but on the 10th of that month Charles XII was before Christiania and needed all his troops for the Norwegian campaign. The Pretender's meeting with Sparre in the Bois de Boulogne on 2 March was worthless. 46

45. E.M.; Stowe MSS., 228, f. 209, Stair to Robethon, 21 January 1716; Eg. M38, 2171, f. 79, Stair to Hamb, 27 January 1716. S.R.0.; G.O. 135/137, f. 45, Stair to Stanhope, 27 January 1716; f. 46, Stair to Stanhope, 31 January 1716 (extract); f. 41, Stair to Stanhope, 5 February 1716; f. 44, Stair to Stanhope, 9 February 1716; f. 47, Stair to Stanhope, 7 March 1716; f. 48, Stair to Stanhope, 7 March 1716; f. 49, Stair to Stanhope, 13 March 1716; f. 50, Stair to Stanhope, 20 March 1716; f. 51, Stair to Stanhope, 28 March 1716.
But disasters such as the collapse of the rebellion in Scotland and the destruction of the Swedish fleet by the Danish Admiral Tordenskjöld did not diminish the Jacobites' buoyant optimism. Their reliance on Sweden provided Stair with material for a continual series of reports. Nevertheless these reports were of little more than general interest. Stair's hopes that Bolingbroke might reveal more spectacular information were not realised. Yet he took the information he had seriously. His pressure prompted the Regent to upbraid Sparre for dealing with the Jacobites. He urged his government to prepare to resist invasion and he himself took care to maintain his espionage service at the previous winter's strength. Though his scrutiny had an unsettling effect on the Jacobites and those dealing with them, he failed to gain more than a peripheral knowledge of the negotiations that Görts set on foot in September.

In late June 1716 Görts, a Holstein statesman, diplomat and adviser to Charles XII, took it upon himself to secure desperately needed financial aid for Sweden. He based himself in the United Provinces and there sought to foster trade with Sweden. The purely financial purpose of his mission is illustrated by his abrupt refusal to countenance a plan in favour of the Jacobites presented to him by Sparre in late July. The same motive set him upon the road for Paris a month later when Sparre had failed to obtain the French subsidies that were owed to Sweden under the terms of the Alliance of April 1715.

47. Nordmann, op.cit., p. 55.
48. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 3b, Stair to Renard, 2 April 1716; G.D. 135/137, f. 42, Stair to Robethon, 17 April 1716 (extract); f. 55, Stair to Stanhope, 5 June 1716 (extract).
49. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/137, f. 54, Stair to Stanhope, 7 June 1716 (extract).
50. Murray, George I., p. 213.
52. Murray, George I., p. 297.
It was only after he had gained personal experience of the Regent's evasiveness that Görtts, in despair, turned to the Jacobites as a willing source of ready money. On 7 September, despite his lack of authorisation to act on Charles XII's behalf, he instructed Sparre to inform Lieutenant-General Dillon, acting for the Jacobites, that Charles XII was in favour of assisting the Pretender materially if the Jacobites would agree to the restoration of Bremen and Verden to Sweden, to the creation of commercial ties with Britain and to the immediate provision of a substantial sum of money. Thus the "Swedish Plot" was hatched, for Dillon, in concurring, proposed that the money should be raised in Britain where it could be collected by the pro-Jacobite Swedish envoy, Gyllenborg, and through him safely transmitted to Görtts.54

Görtts left Paris on 13 September and ten days later Sparre ordered Gyllenborg to collect the promised sum. The British Jacobites were prepared to find £60,000 but they were careful enough to demand Charles XII's signed authorisation of the scheme, and this was just what Görtts could not provide. Understanding Charles XII's sensitivity about the use of other people's money, Görtts tried to induce the Jacobites to advance the money in the more palatable form of a loan. However, they then attempted to get Görtts to sign a formal treaty covering all the ramifications of the affair. This met with a flat refusal, for Görtts lacked the power to sign.55

How much of this affair did Stair divine? He was aware that Sparre had gone to the United Provinces in July to confer with Görtts. But, although he knew that their discussions concerned the Jacobites,

he was unaware that Sparre had a plan for the Pretender's return to Britain. He knew that Dillon was now representing the Jacobites and warned that the Jacobites might tempt Sweden, in the lull occasioned by the northern allies' apparent abandonment of their projected attack on Scania, to hazard an invasion of Britain. He was also able to provide substantial information on the Swedish plans to recruit Jacobites for their army and to issue privateer commissions to the Jacobites to harry Charles XII's enemies on the high seas. These two schemes led to enthusiastic Jacobite activity in the ports of northern France and to complaints by Stair to the Regent who in his current co-operative mood promised remedial action. However, only one commission was issued by the Swedish embassy and by the close of 1716 the scheme languished despite the clamour of the Jacobites. Görts's arrival in Paris passed unnoticed by Stair and, though on 9 September he was aware that Dillon had just returned from a conference, a careful search failed to reveal where Dillon had been or with whom he had spoken. Indeed Stair was to learn of Görts's presence from Methuen and then only.

56. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 3b, Stair to Methuen, 8 August 1716 (copy); vol. 6, H. Walpole to Stair, 14 August 1716.
57. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/137, f. 57, Stair to Stanhope, 23 August 1716 (extract); f. 53, Stair to Stanhope, 5 June 1716 (extract).
58. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/137, f. 64, Stair to Stanhope, 7 September 1716 (extract).
59. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/137, f. 53, Stair to Stanhope, 5 June 1716 (extract); f. 55, Stair to Stanhope, 20 June 1716; f. 56 Stair to Pringle, 8 July 1716 (extract).
after Götz had left for The Hague. Yet, though lacking exact information, Stair, attuned to the rumours that abounded in Paris, was able to predict accurately that the Swedes when put to the test would find themselves preoccupied with events nearer home. So this first step in the "Swedish Plot" went unnoticed despite the plethora of reports on Jacobite activity emanating from the British embassy at Paris.

If Stair knew nothing of the plot, Townshend's residual ministry, possessing the intercepted correspondence, fully appreciated the potentialities of this affair and disposed the armed forces, including a squadron of 16 ships, to meet any invader. This was a wise precaution even if only in the light of Stair's warnings that the Pretender, when forced from Avignon, might go to Sweden and there secure assistance. It was further vindicated when Götz attempted to resuscitate the idea in November. This time, having received news from Sparre of a firm offer from St. Germain, he took the precaution of informing Charles XII, who predictably would only consider accepting the money in the form of a loan. As Sweden was suffering from a failure of the harvest, Götz set Gylenborg the additional task of procuring corn and other foodstuffs from his Jacobite contacts.

Alerted to this new activity, Methuen set Stair the task of gathering more information about the design. But the latter could

64. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/29, Methuen to Stair, 30 August 1716 o.s.
65. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/137, f. 64, Stair to Stanhope, 7 September 1716 (extract).
only supply details of the privateer scheme and report that the Regent, then questioned, had, in dismissing the possibility of Sweden supporting a Jacobite attempt, stated that the Swedes were in no doubt that France would have to fulfil her obligation to defend George I's throne and also suspend the payment of subsidies.

Though Stair was reassured that the Jacobites had truly lost France as a source of aid, he found them confident that a new invasion would soon be mounted and he surmised, warning Methuen, that their only other source of support (despite the Regent's denial) was Sweden.

In addition to this watching brief, Stair found himself fully employed in November and December with an outburst of Jacobite activity which was undoubtedly in part an attempt to distract the treaty-makers at The Hague. He found himself dealing with the adolescent misbehaviour of the Duke of Wharton who in the course of a "Grand Tour" had abandoned his tutor in Switzerland and had come to Paris to flirt with the Jacobite cause.

In mid-December the sudden arrival at Bordeaux of a West Indies bound British prison ship which had been diverted by its mutinous cargo of Jacobite prisoners led Stair to press the French government to return the ship and its inert cargo to the owners and treat the mutineers as pirates. He was partly successful, for the owners, in time, had their property

70. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/137, f. 65, Stair to Methuen, 7 November 1716 (extract).
restored to them though the prisoners' piratical act seems to have been forgotten. 72 He keenly watched the Pretender's progress back to health, the attempt to secure for him the hand of a niece of the Emperor, 73 and his abortive attempt to gain the latter's prosecution. And, in late December, he saw Dillon off to Avignon with the Regent's notice to quit. 74

In early January Stair was in possession of a report that Görts would replace Sparre at the Swedish embassy in Paris 75 but again he failed to detect the presence of Görts who, having left The Hague on 29 December, arrived at Paris on 3 January.

Görts had grown tired of Châteauneuf's reluctance to answer his letters; the French were all too conscious of the efficiency of the British intelligence service and dared not take risks at this critical hour for the Triple Alliance. He therefore set out for France in the hope of taking advantage of the absence of Dubois to secure support for his bid to effect a separate peace between the Tsar and Charles XII. This formed the core of his discussion with Huxelles on 8 January, with his plea for financial assistance as but a rider. He failed in both aims and logically fell back on the Jacobites. 76

Though meeting for the first time, Görts and Dillon had reached accord by 11 January. They chose 20 April as a provisional invasion date and agreed that Sweden should provide 8,000 infantry, 3,500 horse

76. Nordmann, op.cit., p. 75.
and a proportionate train of munitions, equipment and artillery. In return Dillon promised 75,000 livres from Mary of Modena and a further million florins payable in the United Provinces. Görtz requested Gyllenborg to raise further sums, and the Pretender himself set Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, the task of obtaining £75,000.

In the month that remained before his departure on 15 February, Görtz busied himself with the purchase, with French connivance, of warships and with pressing the French bankers to provide additional financial aid for Sweden. Unbeknown to Görtz, the British government on 10 February moved to close the affair by arresting Gyllenborg. Eleven days later, in accordance with the recent treaty but with some reluctance, the Dutch effected a pursuit of Görtz. Members of his party — including Gustav Gyllenborg, a brother of the envoy — were seized at The Hague and Görtz himself was run to ground at Arnhem on the next day, 22 February.

It was Methuen who informed Stair on 21 January of Görtz's purchase of four warships. At the same time the Secretary ordered him to discover the purpose of any conversations which Görtz might have with the Jacobites. This seems to have been the sum total of information about Görtz's intrigues which Stair gathered from all sources before the arrival of the diplomatic circular of 11 February announcing Gyllenborg's arrest.

77. Nordmann, op. cit., pp. 81-82, 92.
79. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/29, f. 69, Methuen to Stair, 10 January 1717, O.E., A.A.E.; C.P. Ang. 291, f. 88, Ruxelles to D'Ibberville, 31 January 1717.
80. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/29, Methuen to Stair, 31 January 1717.
Thus it appears that on the available evidence Stair must be relegated to a minor role in this affair. However, such a conclusion is at variance with that of Stair's contemporary biographer, who conceals his identity under the mysterious title of "An Impartial Hand". His colourful story may contain some truth, but he is the only source for it. He incorporates Peter the Great among the ranks of the conspirators and relates how

"...the Earl of Stair, by means of one of his ladies, whom he knew how to unlock, came at the secret, and acquainted the late King (George I) with it; upon which the Count's (Gyllenborg's) papers were seized." 61

As that author believes that espionage "is the chief business of an ambassador, they being nothing else than tolerated spies", he considers him in view of his undoubted success in that field the most able diplomat that had served in France. 82 He exploits to advantage Stair's propensity for gambling. As to the latter there is concrete evidence that he was gambling excessively and recklessly in late 1716. 83 As to the former there is nothing so positive, but there is some rather vague information involving Stair with four or five women, all unidentified except for Mesdames Ruplemonde and Raymond, 84 and a claim by Robert Halsband that Stair is the lover

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referred to in an eclogue written by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in 1715 or 1716 — a claim which in its turn is based upon Horatio Walpole’s naming of Stair as Lady Mary’s first gallant after her marriage.

Stair is supposed to have exploited the time that he spent at the gaming table to extract information from the French courtiers. His source was the informed female members of the court. He secured them as partners, deliberately involved them in considerable losses while advancing them money, and then later magnanimously waived their debts. In their relief at being released from such embarrassment they divulged the information Stair sought — or so the story goes. One evening Stair chanced upon information of a Swedish design,

"not sufficient to trace the design to its bottom, but he understanding there was a correspondence carrying on between Baron Görts by the means of Count Gyllenborg with the English Jacobites, and that Countess --- was in the secret."

he thereupon applied his infallible method. It worked, and in a


"Then when he trembles, when his blushes rise, When awful Love seems melting in his eyes! With eager beats his Mechlin cravat moves; He loves, I whisper to myself, He loves! Such unfeign’d passion in his look appears, I lose all mem’ry of my former fears; My panting heart confesses all his charms I yield at once, and sink into his arms."

Think of that moment, you who Prudence boast! For such a moment, Prudence well were lost!


scene, cast in the lady's boudoir, which the author chooses to interrupt with

"here I must check my reader's imagination, who I doubt not by this time, has cuckolded the Count (the lady's husband) in imagination and fancies the scene laid for such an interlude, and assure him that nothing passed (for ought I know) at this interview, but what might have been acted in a church".88

Stair waived her debt and secured the information "of which he immediately acquainted his late Majesty, and so put a stop to that dangerous conspiracy."89 The source of this extravagant and lurid description remains a mystery.

As Stair had left France by the time that the arrest of Görts was effected, its immediate repercussions became Crawfurd's primary task as chargé d'affaires. He had to face the anger of the Regent when the latter discovered uncomplimentary statements about himself in the Gyllenborg correspondence which Stanhope had printed and distributed abroad for the purpose of justifying the arrests. But by mid-April a statement from the British government, that it had never intended to embarrass the Regent "or to cast any reflection upon him in printing them", seemed to satisfy the French.90

Otherwise Crawfurd sought to curtail the French arms traffic to Sweden (in accordance with the new British policy towards that country) and the activities of the Swedish commissioned privateers

90. F.R.O.: S.P. 104/29; Methuen to Crawfurd, 21 February; 5 April 1717 o.s.; S.P. 78/161, f. 20, Crawfurd to Methuen, 17 March 1717; f. 48, Crawfurd to (Methuen), 17 April 1717. S.R.O.: O.D. 135/141, vol. 9, (Crawfurd) to (Methuen), 10 March 1717 (copy in F.R.O.): S.P. 78/161, f. 8); vol. 10, William Leathes to Stair, 9 April 1717.
who were using French ports as bases from which to attack shipping in British coastal waters. He reported diligently to London on the internal affairs of France, on the state of the finances and on the continuing controversy within the French church over Clement XI's Bull Unigenitus. He pressed France, without success, to expel the Jacobites (and Mar and Ormonde in particular) who were congregating in Paris.

Details of how Stair spent his vacation have not survived. All that is known is that he was treated to a display of rudeness by French officials at Montreuil and Calais during his journey to England (a stark contrast to a parting gift of champagne and burgundy from Dubois), that he paid a courtesy visit to D'Iberville.

91. Michael, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 307; S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 9, (Crawfurd) to (Methuen), 10 March; 3 April 1717. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 28, Crawford to Methuen, 24 March 1717; f. 48, Crawford to (Methuen), 17 April 1717; f. 60, Crawford to Buxelles, 15 April 1717; f. 64, Crawford to Methuen, 21 April 1717; f. 70, Crawford to Methuen, 29 April 1717; f. 72, Crawford to (Addison), 1 May 1717; f. 74, Crawford to Addison, 5 May 1717 (copy); S.P. 104/29, Methuen to Crawford, 25 March 1717 o.s.; A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 297, f. 227, Crawford to D'Estrées, 1 April 1717; f. 228, 1 to D'Estrées, 3 April 1717.

92. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/29, Methuen to Crawford, 25 March 1717 o.s.; S.P. 78/161, f. 74, Crawford to Addison, 5 May 1717 (copy).

93. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 9, Crawford to Methuen, 10 March 1717. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 48, Crawford to (Methuen), 17 April 1717; f. 82, Crawford to Addison, 8 May 1717; f. 84, Crawford to Addison, 12 May 1717; f. 89, Crawford to Addison, 15 May 1717; f. 91, Crawford to Addison, 19 May 1717.


95. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 9, Crawford to Stair, 27 February 1717; Crawford was put to considerable trouble in extracting an apology from the French government (vol. 9, Crawford to Stair, 4 March 1717; vol. 9, Crawford to Stair, 28 April 1717).

96. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 13, Dubois to (Stair), 26 February 1717.
in London and that he suffered from a heavy cold. Beyond being constantly informed by Crawfurd as to the general course of events and being supplied with news of Jacobite movements by Bolingbroke, Stair seems to have been left alone to enjoy his respite from duty.

But while Stair was in England, George I's policy towards the Northern War ran into criticism at home and abroad. In the United Provinces the arrest of Görtz had been effected behind a cloak of secrecy without the prior knowledge of the States General. Because the British request for the arrest had been made at a time when neither the States General nor the States of Holland were in session, the Grand Pensionary, Heinsius, after some hesitation had allowed it to be forwarded to the small standing executive body, the Gecommitteerde Raad, which had sanctioned it. And it is hardly surprising, in the light of their current mood of neutrality, that the Dutch were aghast to find themselves involved in what could have been a first step to war. Their anxiety to avoid being drawn into supporting George I in a confrontation with Sweden was only reinforced by the desire of their merchants to secure the trade which the British had recently foresworn. Nothing could persuade the Dutch to abandon their attitude and it was their obduracy, coupled with the schism within Whig ranks occasioned by the dismissal of Townshend from the vice-royalty of Ireland and the consequent resignation of his brother-in-law, Robert Walpole, that drove George I to avoid a collision with the young Swedish monarch.

100. Hatton, *Diplomatic Relations*, pp. 149-156.
As the Regent aspired to mediate between Britain and Sweden and had dispatched Count de La Marck to Stockholm to furnish a means of communication between the two would-be protagonists (Robert Jackson, the British envoy, having been arrested in retaliation for Gyllenborg's arrest), D'Iberville pressed for a conciliatory move from George I. The British reaction is reflected in the instructions issued to Stair on 10 May. In these the view was expressed that

"in speaking of our late proceedings with respect to the king of Sweden, you shall take care to set that whole matter in its true and proper light, by which it will plainly appear that His Swedish Majesty is the aggressor, and ourselves the party injured."

Thus Britain expected the first move to be made by Sweden, and it was made plain that Stair could not be fully instructed as to the course to be followed until such an overture had been made. If Charles XII was prepared to disavow the past activities of Gyllenborg and promise that the latter would be punished for his misdemeanours, then Britain would contemplate an accommodation. Approval for the dispatch of de La Marck was implied by the order to Stair to state that the formulation of precise policy would have to await the French diplomat's report on Swedish attitudes, an assessment of which the Dutch also awaited before taking further action.

After having expressed Britain's desire to see the standing alliances expanded to include Austria, and denouncing as futile the Tsar's current approach to Sweden for a separate peace, Stair's private

supplementary instructions merely reiterated the official explanation of the action taken against Gyllenborg. But a weakening in British implacability was revealed in the statement that if Charles XII did disavow Gyllenborg, a simple exchange with Jackson would be effected. But on Görts Britain was not prepared to be so amenable, for, as he was neither a Swedish subject nor an accredited Swedish minister — Görts having neglected to display his credentials to the Dutch — Britain was determined that he should be dealt with as a mere meddlesome adventurer. George I did not expect Sweden to reclaim Görts.

In June the Dutch, feeling that the danger of an invasion of Britain, if it had ever been real, was now remote and convinced that the continued detention of Görts inhibited their relations with Sweden by maintaining an artificial crisis, pressed to be allowed to release their prisoner. Charles Whitworth (who had replaced William Leathes because it had been felt that a more experienced diplomat was needed at The Hague) struggled in vain to keep the Dutch in line with his government's viewpoint and the ever-troublesome Châteauneuf did little to help by giving the impression that the French court disapproved of Görts's detention — an impression which Dubois hurriedly corrected. By 12 June both the Dutch and the French

103 Legg, British Diplomatic Instructions, vol. 2, p. 112. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 287, f. 116, D'Ibberville to de La Marck, 14 April 1717, (copy); C.P. Ang. 294, f. 12, D'Ibberville to Huxelles, 1 July 1717.
105 Hatton, Diplomatic Relations, p. 157.
were in possession of an account of a conversation between de la Marck and the Swedish monarch in which the British idea of an exchange of prisoners was considered. While he denied any knowledge of the machinations of Görtz and Gyllenborg, Charles XII agreed to the exchange and promised to punish Gyllenborg should he be guilty of the charges laid against him. Whitworth reacted with undisguised alarm; he feared the Dutch might take advantage of this oral statement to set free their prisoner and consequently he urged Stair to press the French to support a simultaneous release of Görtz and Gyllenborg.

The British ministerial reaction displayed the flexible attitude that they had now adopted. Addison (Methuen's replacement as Secretary of State for the Southern Department after the latter had resigned in sympathy with Townshend) told Stair that the question of the detainees could not be considered until Charles XII had disavowed their activities "in form" because statements made in the course of conversation would not suffice. But he revealed a radical softening in George I's attitude towards Sweden, for he indicated that this affair had to be speedily concluded and to this end a statement from the Regent, as mediator, would be acceptable. He hoped that such a concession would be interpreted as an expression of George I's genuine desire for peace in the north. The Dutch were apprized of this new British attitude by Sunderland who asked them to continue to detain Görtz until further notice. The news that Charles XII's

113. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/29, Addison to Crawford, 18 April 1717 o.s.
statement was considered insufficient guarantee was so badly received by the Dutch, particularly in the trading circles, that Whitworth found it necessary to soften his instructions. To relieve Dutch apprehension George I went further by announcing that Görtz could be released simultaneously with Gyllenborg, provided that he would not be allowed in Dutch territory again whether or not Charles XII re-employed him in a diplomatic capacity.

All the while that de La Marck had been in Sweden, Polwarth had experienced considerable difficulty in effecting an uninterrupted passage for the French diplomat's mail because the Danes felt "it no more reasonable to be let into the secret of the Comte de La Marck's negotiations before they allow an intercourse which possibly might be to their disadvantage." However, such an obstruction was of little significance, for on 7 July Stair was informed that the Regent's declaration would be ready within days. In return he was able to provide the French with details, for transmission to de La Marck, of the way in which the exchange could be executed. British haste to close the affair was revealed on 20 July when it was stated in London that a verbal declaration from the Regent would be acceptable. Two days later the awaited declaration had been received and, though

115. P.R.O: S.P. 104/29, Addison to Stair, 24 June 1717 o.s.
119. A.A.E: C.P. Ang. 294, f. 24, Regent's declaration, 11 July 1717; f. 50, Stair's supporting memorial, 14 July 1717; C.P. Ang. 298, f. 11, Stair to Huxelles, 12 July 1717 (acknowledging the receipt of the declaration); f. 37, Huxelles to D'Iberville, 14 July 1717.
its details required adjustment by D'Ibberville, orders were dispatched to bring Gyllenborg to Harwich, whence he sailed on 23 July for Sweden. Göts was released on 2 August but he dallied in the United Provinces for a month until, in possession of a passport from the Tsar, he too left for Sweden, going via Danzig. Whitworth's comment to Stair that "in this manner I am rid, thank God, of my troublesome and expensive guest" doubtless summed up British weariness at the close of this fruitless affair.

The other matter concerning the Jacobites which faced Stair on his return to France was their effort to obtain assistance from the Tsar during his visit to France in early summer. Crawfurd had discovered in May that the Jacobites were converging on Paris and was soon beset with rumours, despite denials from St. Omermain, that the Pretender himself was in transit from Italy. The reports of sightings of him in Switzerland, Lorraine and near Lyons prompted France to close her frontiers to him and led Crawfurd to believe that he was heading, if not for France, then for the Low Countries. Greeted by this furor on his arrival in Paris on 29 May, Stair was quickly able to dispel any fears that the Jacobites might secure the Tsar as...
an ally. He reported that Peter the Great, in the course of his visit to Paris, had had no dealings with them nor had he displayed any interest in them. He established that the Pretender was in Italy at that moment, though it is interesting to note that he believed, quite erroneously, that the latter had paid a visit to Germany in pursuit of an unnamed objective which he had failed to achieve.

He then applied pressure on the French government - in accordance with the 5th article of his instructions and with the 3rd article of the Triple Alliance - to expel all Jacobite personnel within eight days. The French did not meet the time limit but they did eventually expel the more prominent Jacobites.

One matter relating to France's harbouring of the Jacobites, perhaps not surprisingly, escaped comment by either Stair or Crawfurd. It is revealed by a perusal of Jacobite correspondence and suggests that Stair was guilty of reckless neglect of his nation's interest in the name of friendship. Mar wrote to Stair a week before he departed on leave announcing his intention of visiting Paris in a private capacity and hoping that he could meet Stair, among others, before going on to Flanders. He had made one earlier attempt to see Stair, having suggested Flanders as a possible venue for a meeting. No reply from Stair to either request survives. However, Mar on 21 May told the Pretender that the Regent had informed Dillon that Stair had, at an audience with the Regent, produced a letter from Mar in


130. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 11, (Stair) to (Stair), 10 February 1717.

which he had asked to be allowed to come to Paris and had requested that during his absence Mar should be permitted to do so incognito. Permission was, he said, granted, and neither Ormonde nor Mar was obstructed despite the clamour of Crawfurd.

When Stair was on his way back to France, the Regent on 25 May called for the visit to be terminated. Dillon fought for and won a short postponement but was threatened with the Bastille if Ormonde and Mar were found by Stair’s agents. Mar felt no need for such discretion. He wrote to Stair stating that he was seeking permission to go to drink the waters at Bourbon and that, while he fully understood he would have to leave France now that Stair had returned, he hoped to meet him.

Stair did not mention this letter when he wrote to Addison on 2 June; he confined himself to reporting that Ormonde had come and gone and that Mar was out of Paris but sought to go to Bourbon. Yet Mar alleged in another letter to the Pretender on 4 June that Stair’s reply had been friendly and that he had written again agreeing to a meeting. We have only Mar’s account of the interview on 7 June, but it rings true. Stair, Mar claimed, largely confined himself to civilities but did discuss Mar’s prospects of remaining in France and dashed any hopes of his doing so; he said that it was highly unlikely that Mar would be allowed to leave the country via Bourbon.

133. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 48, Crawfurd to (Methuen), 17 April 1717; f. 89, Crawfurd to Addison, 25 May 1717.
136. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 100, Stair to Addison, 2 June 1717.
138. H.M.C. Stuart MSS., vol. 4, 1907, p. 324, Mar to Pretender, 7 June 1717; p. 325, Mar to Ormonde, 7 June 1717.
Stair was right, for the Regent refused Mar permission to go to Bourbon without first producing a passport from George I.\textsuperscript{139} Stair then implemented his instructions and pressed the Regent to effect the expulsion; he claimed to be able to point out the house at Versailles which held Ormonde and that Mar had been seen at Chantilly.\textsuperscript{140} But Mar, reluctant to expose his indifferent health to the heat of a southern climate,\textsuperscript{141} lingered well-hidden in the country. In mid-July Dillon was called before the Regent to account for Mar's failure to leave. Dillon replied that Ormonde had gone some twenty days before and that the sighting of Mar at Chantilly had been in the course of his outward journey. The Regent warned Dillon to expect retribution if anyone, especially Stair's agents, uncovered Mar's hiding place. Mar, in recounting this to the Pretender, acknowledged that he had visited Chantilly but claimed that he had not known at the time that he had been recognised.\textsuperscript{142} He assumed that, to avoid his embarrassment, Stair had delayed asking the Regent for his expulsion until he was sure that Mar had gone.\textsuperscript{143} Mar was clearly unaware of Stair's efforts since early June.

Stair emerges from this affair with little credit and he was indeed fortunate that his government never learnt that he had

\textsuperscript{139} S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 9, Addison to Stair, 3 June 1717.
\textsuperscript{141} H.M.C. \textit{Stuart MSS.}, vol. 4, 1907, p. 324, Mar to Pretender, 7 June 1717.
\textsuperscript{142} H.M.C. \textit{Stuart MSS.}, vol. 4, 1907, p. 450, Mar to Pretender, 16 July 1717.
\textsuperscript{143} H.M.C. \textit{Stuart MSS.}, vol. 4, 1907, p. 451, Mar to Pretender, 16 July 1717.
afforded the two principal Jacobites a considerable time in which to
concert with the court at St. Germaine, a facility much prized by the
Protender. 144 Clearly it was in his line of duty to meet Mar, but
to permit Ormonde's and Mar's stay in Paris, without at least his
personal surveillance, was inexcusable even on the grounds of friend-
ship.

The dissipation of Jacobite hopes of a renewed assault upon
George I's throne in 1717 left Stair free to concentrate on the main
task set him on his return to France, that of assisting Stakehope in
the conclusion of the Quadruple Alliance.

144. H.M.C. Stuart MSS., vol. 4, 1907, p. 387, Pretender to Mar, 28
June 1717.
CHAPTER NINE

THE QUADRUPLE ALLIANCE

Although Stair was to play no greater part in the negotiations which led to the signing of the Quadruple Alliance than he had in those which led to the Triple Alliance, he had learnt to expect Stanhope to conduct such matters personally and thus, when the negotiations were transferred to London, did not feel the bitterness that he had felt before. And his government, undoubtedly aware of his sensitivity, was not slow to express its appreciation of his abilities as a diplomat and of the value of the reputation that he had established at the French court. As his relations with both the French and British governments were to deteriorate after the conclusion of the Quadruple Alliance, when he had to implement it, this period was the high point of Stair's diplomatic career.

As he was being instructed in April 1717 in preparation for his return to France, Stanhope was seeking to reconcile the Emperor and Philip V of Spain as part of his wider aim of achieving a balance of power in Europe by means of a system of alliances. The somewhat ludicrous argument over titles between these two monarchs tended to obscure their disagreement over the territorial rearrangement of Italy. The peace treaties at the close of the Spanish Succession War, which had granted the Emperor the Milanese, Sardinia and Naples, had made him the chief beneficiary in the area. Yet such gains had not dulled his appetite, for he sought now to reconstitute the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, which had been dismembered to provide the turncoat opportunist of the age, Victor Amadeus II, the Duke of
Savoy with a kingdom in the shape of the island of Sicily. Philip V, unlike his Spanish Hapsburg predecessors, had no Italian possessions and not unnaturally cast a covetous eye towards this peninsula, particularly the three Duchies of Tuscany, Parma and Piacenza, where the ruling houses, the Medici and Farnese, were without male issue. His interest really stemmed from the parental concern of Elisabeth Farnese, his second wife, for the future of her sons because they were preceded in the Spanish succession by the three sons of the first marriage. However, the duchies were sought for Elisabeth's sons in the face of a long-standing Imperial claim to feudal superiority over them. The fact that Victor Amadeus' Sicilian subjects were restless only served to aggravate the situation.

Alive to the danger to peace from this conflict of interests, Stanhope took the initiative of proposing to the French and Austrians a method of averting a conflict even before he had secured the Triple Alliance. Dubois' response was enthusiastic because he realized that the threat to his master's rights by Philip V was likely to be diminished when the Imperial recognition of his title made the latter feel more secure upon his throne. As he had given up any idea of returning to Spain and was embroiled in a major war with Turkey which made him dependent upon British aid for the defence of Italy, the Emperor was interested enough to dispatch Pentenriedter to Hanover to secure a detailed explanation of Stanhope's proposals. Stanhope's idea was that the Emperor should underwrite the French and British successions and should give up his claim to the Spanish throne, in return for which his possessions in Flanders and Italy should be guaranteed, Tuscany, Parma and Piacenza should become Imperial fiefs.

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(though in the latter two Elizabeth Farnese's elder son would be installed at the death of the current incumbent) and Sardinia should be exchanged for Sicily.

As both the Imperial\(^2\) and later the Spanish\(^3\) reactions were merely to seek to procure even greater territorial compensations, Stanhope came to realize that, if he was to succeed, his best hope lay in joining with France in a united effort.\(^4\) But at the moment Stanhope chose to turn to France, relations between the two nations were suffering from the strains engendered by the publication of the Gyllenborg correspondence, by the suspicion aroused by the presence of the Tsar in France and by the refusal of the British to agree to admit Prussia into the Triple Alliance.\(^5\) France sought to include Prussia as a curb on the Emperor in the future negotiations on Spain and Italy and because she hoped to mediate in the Northern War. Britain resisted this partly because Prussia, in dealing with the Tsar, had fallen foul of George I\(^6\) and partly because Stanhope understood it was likely that the Emperor would take exception to the admittance of Prussia, a minor state of the Empire, to an alliance which did not include himself, and that he would consequently refuse to cooperate in Stanhope's effort to avert a clash with Spain.\(^7\)

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2. Pentenriedter revealed that the Emperor did not intend to relinquish his claim to the Spanish throne, though he would recognise Philip V\(^\text{de facto}\) in return for the vast concession of Mexico and Peru. In Italy the Emperor revealed an ambition to secure Montferrat (Williams, op.cit., p. 276).

3. Stanhope approached Spain in early 1717 but though the initial response was favourable by mid-Spring the Spaniards were demanding that the Emperor should evacuate Mantua and that they should garrison Parma before any negotiations could begin (E. Bourgeois, Le Secret des Farnese, Paris, 1909, p. 249).


5. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 100, Stair to Addison, 2 June 1717.


Later Stair employed this argument to counter French pressure; claiming that, while Britain had little cause to be vexed with Prussia, it was felt that the Prussian alignment with the Tsar, who maintained troops within the Empire, could only encourage the Emperor to view with hostility any moves to include her within the Triple Alliance. As the British feared likewise that the Emperor would also prove unco-operative if France should enter into a formal relationship with the Tsar, Stair was ordered to discover the French motive for entertaining the Russian monarch. His enquiries revealed that the Regent contemplated nothing more than a commercial link. Indeed Orleans had some welcome news to impart, for he had been able to secure from the Tsar a declaration (albeit oral) of his intention to withdraw the troops that were currently menacing George I's Hanoverian possessions from Mecklenburg.

Though this declaration should have relieved George I's anxiety, he was doubtful of its value. Stair was more optimistic and in that mood approached his audience with the Tsar in mid-June. He was hopeful that a shared language, Dutch, might prove to be of assistance in persuading the Tsar to reiterate his declaration. Unfortunately his account of the audience has not survived, yet from his correspondents' responses we learn that the Tsar treated him civilly, disavowed the Pretender and confirmed his intention to withdraw from

8. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 100, Stair to Addison, 2 June 1717.
A.A.E.: C.P. Amg. 287, f. 147, D'Iberville to Orleans, 19 June 1717.
11. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 100, Stair to Addison, 2 June 1717.
Mecklenburg. Such news prompted the British king to order Admiral Ryng's Baltic squadron to assist in the withdrawal, and, in July, to dispatch Admiral Morris to meet the Tsar in Amsterdam in an attempt to exploit this contact now that Sweden evinced no desire to come to terms with him.

Important though the effects of French dalliance with the Prussians and the Russians might have been, Stair was not confined to such essentially peripheral tasks, for Stanhope ordered him to make the overtures to France. It took him two weeks to make his assessment of the situation. He related to Stanhope on 11 June how on the morning of his arrival in Paris, 28 May, he had secured an audience with the Regent. Though the latter had enthused as he and Stair had examined the plan article by article, he had at once made it plain that he would not contemplate any alteration of the basis (the Utrecht settlement) of his claim to the French succession, lest it appear that he was abusing his office to improve his chances of securing the throne. In regard to the plan's wider intentions, the Regent was satisfied that George I was the logical contender for the role of conciliator and thought that the Emperor would prove amenable but expected Spain to be extremely reluctant to accept the proposal as it stood. When questioned by Stair, he affirmed that he would continue to negotiate with the Emperor even if Spain rejected the plan. But he refused to be drawn on the further question of whether it might be desirable for Britain and France formally to conclude

the alliance with the Emperor and then to force Spain to join. He confined himself to stating that, though a treaty could be brought into being, nothing of permanence could be done without Spain and that the alliance would be immeasurably strengthened even by a token acceptance from Spain.

After the audience Stair sought the opinions of Huxelles and Dubois. He found that they concurred generally with their master but did not share his pessimism, for they believed that it was quite possible to convince the Spaniards of the need for the solid security as well as the advantages for their queen's offspring offered by the treaty. Indeed they were so confident that they advised that the Emperor should have an accredited minister standing by, ready to treat.  

Stair delayed his second assessment until 7 July, and by then, though Vienna had responded favourably, George Bubb, the British envoy in Madrid, had conveyed some unwelcome news. Earlier, on 28 June, Bubb had reported that Spain had answered an appeal from the Pope by dispatching a squadron of 16 ships to assist the Venetians against the Turks. But the extent of the military preparations in Spain led Bubb to suspect that there was a design to invade one of the Imperial possessions in Italy "and I should rather fix upon Sardinia than anywhere else ...". A week later Bubb was convinced that Sardinia was the squadron's chosen destination, and, if he was right, he left Stair to guess "what a pretty negotiation the Venetian minister, who is a perfect pantalone (sic), and the Nuncio have made ...".

15. P.R.O.; S.P. 104/219b, Stair to Stanhope, 11 June 1717 (copy).
16. P.R.O.; S.P. 104/219b, Stair to Stanhope, 7 July 1717 (copy in S.R.O.; G.D. 135/141, vol. 3b.).
Bubb thought that not only would their principals be enraged,

"but they will have drawn upon their masters
one of the most unsouth, ill-turned compliments
imaginable from the Emperor, who will not fail
to use them as accomplices in the design against
him and of having lent their names for a pretext
to cover these preparations.”

Against this background, the content of Stair's report can hardly have gladdened Stanhope, for Stair opened his lengthy dissertation with a warning of the general anti-British sentiments of the French, as "they consider us as their natural and their necessary enemies, that no friendship with us can be lasting or to be depended upon." This was the prevailing attitude of the ministers who, he found, held to the opinions they had formed in Louis XIV's time and thus tended to think of alliances only in terms of worsting the British and the Austrians. He had attempted to counter these suspicions by lecturing the French on the necessity for a balance of power in Europe. He had claimed that it was essential that the Emperor should be strong but not overstrong, "a match or near a match for France ..." but never "an overmatch". And had added that George I, as King and Elector, had an acute personal awareness of the value of the balance and would join with the other German princes and France to prevent the Emperor from acquiring excessive power or with a similar combination to hinder any attempt by France to do likewise. Stair had claimed that France must "find her safety and her tranquility in adhering firmly to the Triple Alliance and in your (Stanhope's) plan for settling the affairs of Europe" as any other path offered only dire consequences. Despite his confidence in the strength of his

19. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/219b, Stair to Stanhope, 7 July 1717.
argument, he felt that he had succeeded in convincing only the Regent and him perhaps merely because his claim to the French succession was dependent upon George I's friendship. Though Buxelles continued to support the plan in public, Stair knew him to be an opponent, for "in secret he opposes the plan strenuously and struggles hard for particular alliances."

Emboldened by the confidence which Stanhope now seemed to be placing in him, Stair chose to advise his government to do all it could to prevent an alliance between France, Russia and Prussia, "which I own would be a foolish one for them but an exceeding (sic) dangerous one for us." He had discovered that the design of France's "old ministry" was to use such an alliance to keep Britain weak by perpetuating the Northern War and thereby dislocating her trade. To defeat this aim, he claimed to have induced the Prussian diplomat, Knyphausen, to advocate friendship with Britain to his court, and he urged Stanhope to reciprocate and to convert George I's Hanoverian ministers to the idea of a rapprochement with Prussia.

After considering the possible ill-effects of a French intrusion into the affairs of the North, Stair stated that he felt that peace there would only come through the combined efforts of the northern princes (he specified "all or at least the principal Princes of the North"). The danger lay, he claimed, in the chance that the Tsar might seek to deal with Charles XII independently on behalf of himself and Prussia. And as the result would be disastrous for Britain, Stair advised that the giving of offence to the Tsar should be carefully avoided. Doubtless his advice spurred his government to dispatch Norris on his mission.

20. Robethon was to warn Stair to be wary of Knyphausen's wiles (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 11, Robethon to Stair, 30 July 1717).
The Regent's approval of Stanhope's plan did not mean that he was immune from conflicting pressures, and he appeared incapable of a firm decision. Stair described him as "balancing for this fortnight last past, without being able to take any fixed resolution as to the answer to be made to the Court of Vienna." Stair found this behaviour most unsettling; in the course of each audience he would hear the Regent confirm that, if Spain refused to enter into the negotiation, France would continue without her, and so that no time would be lost, that he would call for an Imperial minister to be instructed and empowered to treat. Then "regularly the next day or two days after every one of our conversations, I have been told by the Abbe (Dubois) that H.R. (the Regent) had changed his opinion."

The pattern was repeated at and after the audience on 6 July. At this the Regent called for concerted diplomatic pressure in Madrid and had suggested that the Imperial negotiator, Pentenrieder, should start for London, as during the time that he would take to reach there, the Spanish answer would be known. Though the Marquis D'Allegre was meant to replace D'Ibberville at the British court, the Regent thought him ill-suited to face Pentenrieder and proposed to dispatch Dubois instead. This led the optimistic Stair to advise Stanhope that "you can take it for granted that the Regent will treat separately with the Emperor if nothing amiss happens in Hungary or England and I think you may safely send for Pentenrieder."

22. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/219b, Stair to Stanhope, 7 July 1717.
Yet three days later Stair began another lengthy letter to Stanhope with the statement that "it happened as I foresaw it might ...". Dubois had delivered the awaited written reply from the Regent, and Stair had found that it lacked any reference to treating separately with the Emperor.

Stair had berated Dubois for this omission, for he claimed, the Emperor, thinking that the Regent was not in earnest, might look to Spain and Savoy, who could accommodate him with ease. Dubois had questioned this forecast and had evoked a wordy response from Stair in which he stressed both the advantages that such a treaty held out for the Emperor and the Regent's weakness within France.

Unable to get any further with Dubois, Stair had waylaid the Regent on 9 July at the Palais Royal in the early afternoon, at a time when he knew that the Regent would be drinking chocolate, as was his custom on the days that he did not dine. In the ensuing audience the conversation had soon turned to the matter of the written reply. Stair took the opportunity to say that he feared the hazards with which the Regent would be faced if the Emperor became disenchanted with the idea of an alliance through France's indecision.

The Regent replied,

"My Lord, I have not changed my mind, this plan is better if the king of Spain comes into it ... but if he will not, I am ready to treat separately with the Emperor, but what I have said in the paper you have received from the Abbé Dubois is all I durst put in writing."

Stair sought permission to pass on this statement to his government and was told that this was the Regent's intention in making it. But once again the vacillating Regent concluded,

"since this is our plan fixed and settled, let us lose no time in pressing the king of Spain that we may have his final answer and act accordingly."
Such behaviour caused Stair to comment wryly that Britain would only influence France as long as the latter had need of her. If ever Britain required assistance, he thought,

"'tis more than an even lay we shall have France against us. From all that has been said I conclude for my old and only doctrine, make the King's hands strong at home; when they are so Britain will govern Europe without trouble and expense."

Unfortunately Stair seems to have reserved such full accounts for Stanhope and no more have survived between this time and December 1717. We are easily able to trace Stair's other activities, involving such familiar issues as the Jacobite presence in France, the renewal of construction work at Dunkirk and other more trivial

23. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/219b, Stair to Stanhope, 10 July 1717.
24. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 2, ? to Stair, 15 July 1717; vol. 9, Count Bergoni to D'Avenant, 16 September 1717; D'Avenant to Stair, 21, 28 September, 19 October 1717; Addison to Gallop, 14 October 1717 c.s.; vol. II, Peterborough to ?, 9 October 1717. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 116, Stair to Addison, 1 August 1717; f. 123, Stair to Addison, 18 August 1717; f. 134, Stair to Addison, 21 August 1717; f. 157, Stair to Addison, 24 November 1717.
25. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 9, Addison to Stair, 3 June, 5 November 1717 c.s.; vol. 10, Lascelles to Stair, 14, 30 September 1717; vol. 11, Armstrong & Ackworth to Stair, 25 July 1717. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 106, Stair to Addison, 16 June 1717; f. 108, Stair to Addison, 7 July 1717; f. 116, Stair to Addison, 1 August 1717 (copy); f. 120, Stair to Addison, 13 August 1717 (the Regent, under considerable pressure from Stair, finally ordered demolition work to begin in September, though it was mid-November before it commenced); f. 123, Stair to Addison, 18 August 1717. B.M.: Stowe MSS., f. 186, Stair to Robethon, 18 August 1717. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 296; f. 22, Stair to Regent, memorial, 12 November 1717.
matters, but the course of his alliance negotiations has to be derived from fragmentary evidence.

Yet we do know that, as the Spanish expeditionary force's preparations neared completion, Stanhope's efforts seemed to be bringing him no nearer his goal; the Emperor seemed totally absorbed by the war in Hungary, and the Regent remained unwilling to commit himself. Yet, when the fleet sailed later in July, it did seem that this unilateral Spanish action might bring about a clarification of Imperial and French attitudes.

Before the armada put to sea, the Regent furnished Stair with a memorial in which he reiterated his belief in the continuing need

26. Stair transmitted what information that he could gather at the French court on Northern affairs (B.M.: Stowe MSS., 230, f. 188; Stair to Robethon, 21 August 1717; f. 201, Stair to Robethon, 27 August 1717; f. 242, Stair to Robethon, 3 October 1717; f. 249, Stair to Robethon, 12 October 1717). When the French island of Martinique rebelled, Stair was the medium through which was transmitted the British assurances that their islands in the vicinity would be restrained from aiding the rebels (P.R.O.: S.P. 104/219b, Stair to Stanhope, 10 July 1717; S.F. 78/161, f. 134, Stair to Addison, 21 September 1717. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 9, Addison to the Governor of Bermuda, 8 July 1717 o.s.; Addison to Stair, 11 July 1717 o.s.). Stair maintained the intimate relationship with Bolingbroke that Craggs had nurtured in the previous autumn and which resulted in George I placing this turn-coat under his protection (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 9, Craggs to Stair, 15 August 1717 o.s.; Addison to Stair, 2 September 1717 o.s.; vol. 11, Craggs to Stair, 5 July 1716 o.s.; G.D. 135/137, Carteret to Stair, 6 December 1717. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 230, f. 228, Stair to Robethon, 15 September 1717. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 135, Stair to Addison, 21 September 1717). And, in July, Stair had to request the arrest by the French of John Bowdridge, the Receiver of the Land Tax for Somerset, who had absconded with £12,000 of public money (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 297, f. 485, Stair to Regent, 7 1717. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/29, Addison to Stair, 24 June 1717 o.s.; S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 29, "faithful subject" to Stair, 18 August 1717).

28. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 116, Stair to Addison, 1 August 1717 (copy).
for a peace settlement between Philip V and the Emperor guaranteed by Britain, France and the United Provinces. Although he expressed his delight that the Emperor had acquiesced, the Regent warned that he could not contemplate any revision of the Utrecht settlement—on which Stanhope based his plan—without the consent of all the parties to it and thus called for Britain to work to bring Spain into the proposed negotiations. Stanhope continued to hope that Stair would succeed in persuading the Regent to accept the idea of negotiating without Spain by insisting that a refusal by Philip V to negotiate indicated that he intended to maintain his pretentions to the French throne, and by asserting that Britain would demand that the Emperor's sincerity should be demonstrated by the dispatch of an accredited negotiator to London. Robethon, who wrote to Stair on Stanhope's behalf, noted the Imperial success in the Turkish war which, he thought, made it desirable that the Regent should seize the chance to negotiate before the defeat of the Turks should leave the Emperor without need of allies to defend Italy.

Then on 20 July the Spanish fleet weighed anchor at Barcelona. Within ten days Stair had been furnished by his correspondents in the south with sufficient evidence to sound the alarm. A meeting with the Regent gave him the opportunity to claim that the fate of the negotiations now lay in France's hands; she could abandon them or deal with the Emperor on the agreed basis of allowing Spain the same advantages she would have gained if she had chosen to negotiate.

29. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/219b, Memorial from the Regent, (undated).
The Regent opted for the latter course and, to demonstrate his sincerity, authorized Stair to ask the Austrians to dispatch their negotiator to London. The Regent, too, wished the Emperor to understand that he was guiltless of any involvement in the Spanish design. In his subsequent letter to the Imperial chief minister, Sinzendorf, Stair tried to calm any Austrian fears with regard to the mooted treaty between Russia, Prussia and France by declaring that he had the Regent's assurance that nothing more than friendship was intended. He added a rider on the necessity of providing support for the Regent within France where the opposition to the planned alliance was formidable.32

Stair reserved his own opinion for his uncle Sir David Dalrymple; to whom he wrote that the imminent attack by the Spaniards upon the Emperor's Italian possessions made "a new scene of affairs which will deserve the attention of all Europe ...". Though the Regent's denial of any involvement in this Spanish venture could, he thought, be believed, he warned that "we must watch and be on our guard for the juncture is critical."33

Stanhope - communicating with Stair again through Robethon - felt it was necessary to provide Stair with a further argument with which to counter the French insistence that Prussia should be brought into the Triple Alliance. He ordered Stair to claim to the Regent that French opposition elements were continuing to press for Prussia's inclusion in order to frustrate the proposed negotiations. Stanhope was conscious of the need for a swift conclusion and he wanted Stair to state clearly to the French that if they wished to secure the

33. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/144, Stair to Sir David Dalrymple, 1 August 1717.
Emperor as a treaty partner, they would have to forgo their advocacy of Prussian aspirations. Britain was applying pressure in Vienna to ensure the departure of Pentenriedter, but the Regent had to face the crucial question: with whom did he feel safer, the Emperor or the king of Prussia?

The sop that George I held out to the Regent to entice him to abandon Prussia was an acceptance of French mediation in the Northern war. However the British monarch pointed to the difficulties; as he could not negotiate without his northern allies, he felt that the Regent should join with the other proposed candidate, the Emperor, in a joint mediation, using de La Marck's influence at the Swedish court to obtain Charles XII's acquiescence. The selection of Brunswick, the Imperial choice, as the most suitable place for the peace conference, was thought to be persuasion enough for the Emperor. The Regent accepted this role, when Stair approached him; with the comment that he had had a similar request from the Swedes.

But George I had a further favour to ask of the Regent. Stair was told to intimate to him that the king did not object to the treaty of friendship with Russia and Prussia as he knew that it did not infringe upon the Triple Alliance and that it would be followed by a commercial treaty and then by the implementation of the Regent's offer to mediate. But, in order that all Imperial suspicions might be allayed, the British monarch suggested that France should delay the signing of the treaty until the close of the campaigning season.

36. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 120, Stair to Addison, 13 August 1717 (copy).
in Hungary. Such a delay could also be beneficial in so far as this campaign might so alter circumstances that the Regent might well wish to abandon the friendship treaty. Stair was ordered to accompany this suggestion both with a further warning against the tactics of the French opposition and with expressions of British delight with the Regent's unwavering stance in favour of the proposed treaty as shown by his agreement to negotiate without Spain and his promise to dispatch Dubois to meet Pntenriedter in London.\textsuperscript{37} The last-named was mistakenly believed to be already on his way but, despite the Imperial agreement to negotiate,\textsuperscript{38} he was only to leave Vienna in early October.\textsuperscript{39}

Though the Emperor had acquiesced to Stanhope's demands for participation in negotiations in London in mid-August,\textsuperscript{40} one wonders whether he would have done so had Belgrade fallen to Eugene earlier than it did.\textsuperscript{41} But there can be no doubt that it was the Spanish attack upon the Imperial island of Sardinia\textsuperscript{42} which effected the polarization that Stanhope sought. By this action, as Professor Hatton had pointed out,\textsuperscript{43} Philip V underlined the Regent's dependence upon George I, for this rude assault upon the Emperor was a clear sign that the Spanish king refused to countenance the proffered settlement that would exclude him from the French succession in favour of the Regent.

\textsuperscript{37} S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 12, Robethon to Stair, 8 August 1717 o.s. (part code).
\textsuperscript{39} Michael, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 340.
\textsuperscript{40} S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 10, St. Saphorin to Stair, 11 August 1717.
\textsuperscript{41} Belgrade was taken on 5 August 1717, (Michael, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 362).
\textsuperscript{43} Hatton, Diplomatic Relations, p. 163.
Bubb from the outset had predicted that Sardinia would be the Spanish fleet's destination; it was an obvious choice, for the Emperor's lack of a navy made reinforcement of the island impossible. Whereas an attack on mainland Italy was risky, success in Sardinia was assured if the garrison could be overcome. Further the seizure of this island would rob the Emperor of an equivalent to offer Victor Amadeus II for Sicily and would force him either to abandon his ambition or to offer the Duchy of Milan and thereby weaken his hold on the peninsula. Sicily, itself, with its population reportedly restless under their new monarch, must have presented a tempting target, but, despite Victor Amadeus II's gloomy prediction that it would be invaded because he had earned Papal displeasure, the Spaniards were loath to lose a potential ally against the Emperor. Henri D'Avenant, the British agent in Genoa, had ruled out Sardinia, at least until November, as "the air of that country is pestilential to all strangers." Others suggested that the fleet was sailing to Majorca on a routine relief of the garrison; to Oran; to Port Mahon, Minorca; to Parma, to avert its seizure by the Emperor; to Tuscany and to Naples (the last being Stair's choice). But Bubb had been right; on 17 August a report reached Genoa that the Spanish fleet had been sighted off the southern tip of Sardinia, and two days later

a fleet of 10 warships and 30 transports dropped anchor in the bay of Cagliari.49 The Marquis de Rubi, now the Imperial governor of Sardinia, failed both to persuade the Spaniards to depart peacefully50 and to repel the subsequent attack.51 After a spirited defence of the town of Cagliari, de Rubi took to the hills with a small band of horse and the Catalan and Sardinian members of the garrison, leaving the remaining Germans to surrender on 26 September.52

By August it was felt in Britain that, if Spain was to be induced to negotiate, not only was a greater degree of co-operation required between the British and French missions in Madrid but Bubb would have to be replaced by someone of greater standing. Four names were advanced: Stanhope, Stair, Cadogan and Stanhope’s cousin, Colonel William Stanhope.53 The last-named was appointed. Though he considered for a moment undertaking the mission himself, Stanhope withdrew his own nomination probably for the reasons given by Sir David Dalrymple:

"our great minister ... does not like to go so far from this court as Spain, lest he feel the effect of an old saying, that he who turns his back to the Court is in danger to catch cold and therefore your Lordship (Stair) is to go."54

Stanhope, however, considered Stair too valuable in Paris to be removed from the French capital even for a brief period.55 Cadogan, whose opposition within the inner councils of government was proving to be an irritant,56 was briefly considered57 but was finally sent

52. S.R.O. G.D. 135/141, vol. 9, D’Avenant to Stair, 14, 21 September 1717; vol. 9, Bubb to Stair, 18 October 1717.
53. A.A.E. C.P. Ang. 294, f. 168, D’Iberville to Louis XV, 9 August 1717; C.P. Ang. 295, f. 114, Extract from W. Stanhope’s Instructions, 3 September 1717 o.s.
54. S.R.O. G.D. 135/141, vol. 9, (Sir David Dalrymple) to Stair, 15 August 1717 o.s.
57. A.A.E. C.P. Ang. 287, f. 174, D’Iberville to Orléans, 10 August 1717.
back to The Hague to reinforce Whitworth in pressing the Dutch to settle the Barrier issue which, while it remained outstanding, precluded the Dutch from entering into the proposed alliance.

This incident is worthy of mention only because it led Stair to fear for his employment and to propose retirement. There was no love lost between the former comrades in arms, Stair and Cadogan, and it was probably Stair's jealous fear that he might be eclipsed by Cadogan that underlay his feeling of insecurity. Perhaps Stair's mood can further be explained by Addison's handling of the affair. The latter wrote to Stair on 16 August informing him that the envoy-designate would pass through Paris on his way to Spain, to learn more about the French attitude. But since he mentioned no names nor suggested that another person aside from Stair and the envoy to Spain might deal with the French, Addison did nothing to put Stair's mind at rest with regard to the reports he had received from London that Cadogan was named as Bubb's replacement and that, while William Stanhope would go to Spain, Cadogan would be entrusted with the liaison with the French. The Jacobites at least were convinced of the likelihood of the latter report; their intelligence reported that "Stair's friends are very angry, for it is a plain slur upon him, since Cadogan must needs be trusted with something the other is not."

Stair's move to the country in early September met with
a like interpretation; it was believed that Cadogan was about to arrive and that Stair had no wish to meet him. It is interesting that the Jacobite Fanny Oglethorpe dissented from this belief; she alleged that Stair had left town because his gambling losses prohibited him from completing the furnishing of his house or from living at the standard required by his rank. She could have been right, but it should be pointed out that Stair's health was indifferent and would get worse as the year wore on.

On 28 August, by means of a frank letter giving a short history of the appointment, Stanhope attempted to reassure Stair. Robethon and Craggs followed him, and one would have thought that the arrival in Paris of William Stanhope on 11 September would have been proof enough. Yet Robethon on 21 September thought it necessary to reaffirm that Cadogan would go no further than The Hague, while Stanhope on 16 September had reiterated that Stair had been considered for the Spanish mission but that it had been decided that he could not be spared, especially since the Regent would be exposed to his enemies after Dubois had gone to London.

The attack upon Sardinia drew an immediate response. The Pope, who had been grossly misled, protested violently to Spain, while disclaiming to the Allies any prior knowledge of Spanish intentions.

68. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 12, Robethon to Stair, 19 August 1717 o.s.; vol. 9, Craggs to Stair, 1 September 1717 o.s.
70. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 12, Robethon to Stair, 10 September 1717 o.s.
Vienna was the scene of calm preparation; standing treaties with Britain and Venice were invoked and there was talk of the dispatch of 10,000 men to Italy. It was thought that peace would be made with Turkey in the winter so that this new problem could receive undivided attention, and the acceptance of Stanhope's plan can be seen, in part, as an expression of concern about the Empire's security. France, with the Regent faced by a formidable opposition which favoured Philip V, understandably confined herself to a denial of any fore-knowledge of the Spanish design. However the French suffered some embarrassment when it became known that their minister at Madrid, the Duke St. Aignan, together with the Papal Nuncio there, had been given notice of the Spanish intention on 11 August, whereas Bubb was only officially informed on 6 September, when the news of the attack reached the Spanish capital. Britain, through Bubb, demanded an explanation and received the orthodox Spanish argument that Imperial expansionism and aggressiveness, particularly the recent arrest and imprisonment of the Grand Inquisitor, Molinas, at Milan, where he had died, could no longer be tolerated. Unexpectedly the Spanish reply singled out Stair, reproaching him along with his government for public provocation. Bubb was frankly surprised and, though he depicted himself as a most unworthy advocate, defended

Stair and managed to trace the authorship of this attack past the Secretary of State who had issued the reply, to Cardinal Alberoni, Spain's chief minister; he found that the latter had acted upon information supplied by the Spanish ambassador to France, Cellamare.

The purpose of Colonel William Stanhope's ten day visit to Paris was swiftly fulfilled, for the Regent agreed to order St. Aignan to co-ordinate his efforts with those of the new British envoy in order that the two allies should speak in Madrid with one voice. Stair's share in this achievement received fulsome praise from London. It is unfortunate that there is only one letter from Stair dealing with this visit, for it omits any mention of a more oblique attempt to secure Spain's accession to the peace plan. It was believed that a substantial bribe, together with the news of Eugene's victory at Belgrade, would persuade Alberoni to abandon his present course. But Stanhope supported this idea also with the argument that it offered an opportunity to test the sincerity of its author, the Regent, for the whole alliance concept.

He believed that a contribution of £50,000 each from Britain and France would achieve the desired effect and

"the Regent would at least reap this certain and solid advantage that by showing his willingness to act thus in concert with the King (George I), he would secure and improve the highest degree such a reciprocal confidence as may prove his best support."

Stanhope had aired this proposal in his placatory letter to Stair of 28 August. He took Stair into his confidence before even dis-

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82. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 9, Bubb to Stair, 13 September, 16 October 1717; vol. 12, Bubb to Addison, 15 September 1717 (extract).
cussing it with the king and proposed to destroy all evidence of it if Stair should think it unfeasible. However such secrecy, though flattering to Stair, did not outlast the letter, for, before he closed it, Stanhope changed his mind and put the proposal before the king who suggested an upper limit fixed at 40,000 pistoles. 87

The final decision as to whether to proceed with this affair was entrusted to Stair with his intimate knowledge of the French court. Stanhope's letter to him on 16 September indicates that he must have favoured this project, because Stanhope chose to elaborate upon it. Reviewing Franco-British co-operation, Stanhope thought it imperative that St. Aignan's loyalties should be investigated because the Regent had shown himself prone to duping by the "old court" and it was likely that this diplomat, along with so many of his colleagues in French service, would be found among its ranks. Indeed Stanhope was so cautious that he left it to Stair to decide whether Dubois should be alerted to the plan. These considerations led Stanhope to suggest that it might be wiser if his cousin were to be instructed by the Regent about the French contribution so as to deprive St. Aignan of any chance of wrecking it. 88 But the affair went no further, for William Stanhope never received orders to offer the bribe; his cousin must have had second thoughts. 89

Having seen William Stanhope on his way to Madrid, Stair's next task was to oversee the departure of Dubois to London. 90 This

87 S.R.O: G.D. 135/147, Stanhope to Stair, 17 August 1717 o.s.
paradoxically meant attempting to delay him, because it was felt by the British government that he should linger in France until Pentenriedt was on his way for fear that the Regent might be unduly influenced by the "old court" in his absence. For all that Dubois was in Britain in late September and was not joined there by Pentenriedt until the end of that month. He was away until early December, and in that time the divisions within the French court caused Stair to dispatch contradictory reports on the Regent's attitude to the London negotiations.

But if these negotiations eclipsed for the time being Stair's role in the implementation of the plan, it is unlikely that he regretted this, as a break-down in his health resulted in his being in constant pain and fever for the whole time that Dubois was away. In August he suffered from a feverish disorder which occasioned some concern. In September he endured a bout of colic and from October to the year's end was plagued by a series of boils mostly in the region of the armpit. On 17 November it was decided to lance the current

96. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 12, ? to Stair, 14 August 1717. E. Malcolm-Smith (British Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century, London, 1957, p. 75) fastens on a single report from Crawfurd of 11 August (P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 118, Crawfurd to Addison, 11 August 1717), describing Stair as being "indisposed this morning", as convincing proof of excessive drinking. His version is: "as for his had health, Mr. Crawfurd observed slyly that he was frequently most indisposed in the mornings."
98. R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 148, Stair to Addison, 15 October 1717; f. 150, (Crawfurd) to Stanynan, 8 November 1717; f. 151, Crawfurd to Tickell, 10 November 1717.
boil, and there ensued an operation which Crawford described as "very rude and painful, the Chirurgeon having cut a good deal more flesh than was absolutely necessary because he was afraid that the matter had formed sinuses."

This seems to have had some remedial effect, albeit temporary, for Stair wrote a week later that he had at last been able to sleep. However, a second and more painful operation was adjudged necessary in early December. Then, despite rumours that he had died (strong enough to make his agent in London, Major Skene, suspend the payment of his debts) Stair began a slow recovery. On 19 December Bolingbroke wrote "God be praised that you begin to sleep. I wish it were without opium." At the end of the month Crawford reported that the wound was still open and that Stair had fainted, but henceforth the news was only of his recovery.

Dubois' return to France in early December brought Stair back into the mainstream of affairs. Stair met the Abbé on the morrow of his second operation, the 6th, then again on the 8th, 10th, 12th, 13th and 14th. These meetings he described chronologically to Stanhope in his letter of the 21st. His preface to this account largely covered its content, for in it he averred that he had used the arguments with which Stanhope had provided him to convince the Regent of the perilous situation he would find himself in if, by reason of delay, the Emperor should lose patience and look to Savoy

100. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 157, Stair to Addison, 24 November 1717.
101. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 162, Crawford to Addison, 8 December 1717.
104. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 165, Crawford to Tickell, 29 December 1717.
and Spain for a settlement. Stair’s single piece of concrete news was that, as St. Aignan had failed to co-operate with William Stanhope, he was to be replaced by Louis Charles de Dreux, the Marquis de Honfleur. This dismissal represented a partial victory for the British in their campaign to rid the French diplomatic service of its "old court" partisans, who included not only St. Aignan but also Britain’s long-standing enemy at The Hague, Châteauneuf, Rottembourg in Berlin, de la Marck in Sweden, and de Bonac at Constantinople.¹⁰⁶

Despite Dubois’ evasive answers Stair was able to gather that the French intended to await the Emperor’s agreement to their demands for his total renunciation of his Spanish titles and claim to the Spanish succession and for the transfer of Tuscany to a son of the Queen of Spain before resuming negotiations. Stair was sure that the rest of the issues under consideration presented few problems, because Dubois claimed twice that he would be empowered to sign the treaty within 24 hours of receipt of the news of Imperial submission. But the dialogue that Stair reported was not a happy one, being punctuated with bad temper on both sides with Stair’s ill-health underlying his own. Dubois avoided answering Stair’s questions on the French involvement with Victor Amadeus. On some occasions he would deny knowledge of a matter in which Stair had personally instructed him, while, on others, Stair would claim to have mislaid documents that Stanhope had sent for Dubois’ edification.

Stair closed his account with an alarming statement which revealed his Francophobic streak. He saw fit to warn that the Emperor faced the possibility of a French attack on the Low Countries which they

could occupy with 50,000 to 60,000 men, who would be difficult to
dislodge. The cure he prescribed was the instant dispatch of a
British military expedition there for a period of six months. If
its presence deterred French ambitions, he claimed, its moderate
cost would be justified. 107

The purpose of Dubois' brief return to France was to put a stop
to the Regent's apparent support of the ideas of the pro-Spanish
"old ministry". He succeeded, though the dismissal of the Duke of
Noailles at the end of January, which suggested the continuing
ascendancy of the "old ministry" then caused a brief flurry of
concern.

He reappeared at Christmas time in London with the credentials
of an Ambassador to Britain and powers to negotiate the proposed
alliance. 108 But the negotiations themselves were at a standstill
due to the Imperial court's refusal to concede the Regent's demands
for the Emperor's renunciation and agreement to the Tuscan settle-
ment. 109 Indeed it was Prince Eugene's vehement contention that
these demands, together with de Bonac's activities at the Porte (de
Bonac had conspired with the Turks against the Emperor), the French
dalliance with the Russians and Prussians and the open presence at
the French court, under the guise of the minister for Transylvania,
of the Abbe Brünner, the agent of the Hungarian rebel Rakoczi, were
clear indications that the Regent had fallen prey to the "old ministry"
and had lost all desire to conclude the alliance. Eugene contended

1718. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 296, ff. 113, 129, Observations on
the Treaty of Peace, 12, 15 December 1717.
that the Regent should propose a way out of the impasse. But, as Stair was to discover at an audience in early January, the Regent refused to comply, for he was well aware that it was in his interest to promote Philip V's ambitions, thereby lessening the tension between them, and was thus adamant that Imperial expansion in Italy had to be curbed by the installation of the Spanish prince in the disputed territories.

The Regent had given the impression that he was prepared to await the outcome of the Austro-Turkish peace negotiation before pursuing this affair. But the British government was well aware that on the one hand the Spaniards were preparing for a new campaign while on the other the impending peace in Hungary would release a vast body of men for the defence of Italy. With a general war in the offing, and with Pentenriedter already pressing for Britain to implement her guarantee of the neutrality of Italy by dispatching a fleet to the Mediterranean, the need to secure the peace was imperative. Pentenriedter had been without instructions for two months and thus it was decided that Britain and France should agree upon a draft treaty and present it to the Imperial court in the form of an ultimatum.

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111. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 231, f. 1, Stair to Robethon, 13 January 1718.
While Dubois collaborated in London in the drafting of this document, Stair was set the task of attempting to mollify the Regent's stand on Tuscany, which was now the only impediment since the Emperor was giving every sign that he would yield over the renunciation of his Spanish claim. Stair was instructed to propose St. Saphorin's idea that France should be aggrandised by the addition of the Duchy of Bar in exchange for the establishment of the Duke of Lorraine in the key coastal cities of Tuscany, Pisa and Leghorn. The purpose was to prevent the Spanish reinforcement of the area which the Emperor feared, while not interfering with the parental ambitions of the Queen of Spain. But the Regent would not hear of it. Stair then pressed the idea of turning the two cities into free republics. This too was resisted, and indeed the Regent deleted the article relating to it from the draft treaty which Luke Schaub, a Swiss in British employ, brought to Paris on 8 February. However, the rejection did not retard Schaub's progress, for after ten days in Paris, during which he and Stair met the Regent and Huxelles six times (the Regent's compliant attitude contrasting...
sharply with Haxelles' sour opposition), he set off to place the ultimatum before the Imperial court.123.

Though the focus of the negotiations had switched to Vienna,124 Stair was not left idle while he awaited Schaub's return. Stanhope, loud in his praise for Stair's success in obtaining the Regent's adherence to the plan, called upon the British ambassador again to demonstrate his skill at concealing the weakness of Stanhope's Parliamentary position.125 The Regent, too, required Stair's support, faced as he was by the dogged opposition of the "old ministry", which now blended with the growing restlessness of the populace over the handling of France's finances.126 The recent dismissal of the Chancellor Daguesseau and of the Duke of Noailles, their replacement by D'Argenson, the recent head of police,127 and the increasing influence over the management of French finances by John Law of Lauristoon represented the secondary phase of the meteoric career of the Scottish banker as France's financial genius, at the height of which he was to clash with Stair with the result that the latter was dismissed only months before Law's own downfall in December 1720. But Stair's efforts to support the Regent were marred by a brush with

126. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 246, f. 76, Stair to Craggs, 7 March 1718.
P.R.O.: S.P. 76/161, f. 182, Stair to Addison, 26 March 1718.
the French court (a foretaste of the more serious disagreement with the French princes in 1719). On 6 March Stair, the Papal Nuncio and the ambassadors of Austria, Spain, Portugal and Sicily, refused to sit at the Duchess of Berry's second table at a banquet in the Luxembourg Palace, on the grounds that it was not consistent with their masters' honour.

To assist Schaub, Stair, with the approbation of Stanhope, renewed his desultory correspondence with Prince Eugene. Yet, while this strategy was sound, Stair committed the serious tactical error of advertising this exchange to the Imperial ambassador, Königsegg. When Schaub and St. Saphorin wished in late March to suppress a letter from Stair because it over-simplified the issues at stake and did not reflect the current state of their negotiations, they were prevented by the Imperial court's as well as Eugene's knowledge of the letter's existence. The result was considerable embarrassment, for, even though Eugene was willing on his own part to comply with Schaub's wishes, he was forced to forward it to the court. Yet despite this mishap the correspondence was maintained.

And this incident coincided with a considerable success for Stair. Acting independently of London due to the need for speed, he persuaded the Regent to concede the twin Imperial demands for a general amnesty for those who had followed either party in the late war (this really referred to the Spaniards who had thrown in their lot with the Emperor) and for the donation of the reversion of the

128. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 171, Stair to Addison, 6 March 1718.
projected kingdom of Sardinia to the family of Eugene, the Soissons, represented by the prince himself and his nephew Emmenel. Though this agreement, together with Stair's on behalf of George I, was dispatched immediately, the Emperor did not wait for it. On 4 April he declared his intention in principle to pursue the proposed alliance, yet six weeks were to pass before he made his formal reply to the Anglo-French ultimatum.

The Imperial accession was acclaimed in Paris and London and it earned Stair the compliment of being depicted by Dubois as the father of the Quadruple Alliance, while Stanhope was cast as the grandfather. It also led to a review of the plan's progress in other fields. And, because it was feared that, in the event of a war with Spain, the Dutch might succeed to Britain's lucrative Iberian trade, Stair was ordered to demand the removal of Chateanneuf from The Hague in order that Anglo-French co-operation there might be improved.

It was expected that this unity of purpose between Austria, France and Britain would cow Spain. But, in the midst of her preparations for a new campaign, she had been in fact singularly unimpressed by any of the moves which had been made to coerce her. The news

132. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 190, Stair to Stanhope, 2 April 1718.
B.M.: Stowe MSS., 246, f. 78, Stair to Cragge, 2 April 1718.
A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 317, f. 50, Stair to Dubois, 6 April 1718.
135. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 219, Stair to Stanhope, 14 April 1718.
B.M.: Stowe MSS., 246, f. 84, Stair to Cragge, 14 April 1718.
that a British fleet would be dispatched to the Mediterranean merely provoked a threat from Madrid to sever diplomatic relations with Britain if the fleet entered that sea. ¹⁴⁰ Nanore’s attempts in late March, co-ordinated with William Stanhope’s (who had been given identical instructions by Stair), to convince the Spaniards of the need to accept the plan were met by a refusal to commit themselves until the outcome of Schaub’s negotiations was known. At the same time both men were told that the military preparations at Barcelona (allegedly only involving a three battalion reinforcement of Sardinia) could not be suspended in case the Emperor stole a march by dispatching troops to Italy. ¹⁴¹ And when on 22 April the Emperor’s accession was known, Alberoni angrily rejected the memorial containing the purport of the treaty, which Nanore and William Stanhope placed before him by way of an ultimatum.

Alberoni’s view was that Spain could not surrender Sardinia to a man, Victor Amadeus II, who, so he alleged, had gained his present kingdom by bribing the British negotiators at Utrecht. Nor could she allow the Emperor to acquire Sicily; this would secure his grip upon Italy and encourage him to build a navy which would make him invincible in Europe. On the next day, 23 April, Alberoni’s remarks were reinforced by Philip V’s declaration that he would never abandon Sardinia. Nevertheless Alberoni had not yet forsaken the idea of a negotiated settlement. Hinting that, should Spanish garrisons be allowed in Parma, Piacenza and Tuscany (the seed of further controversy), a settlement was possible, he ignored William Stanhope’s

assertion that negotiations could not proceed until Spain conceded the enumerated demands and bullied the latter into transmitting Philip V's views on Sardinia to London in the hope that alternative suggestions might be forthcoming.\textsuperscript{142}

William Stanhope added to this message from Alberoni the suggestion that perhaps the solution was to join Sardinia to the territory designated to the son of the Queen of Spain. Stair, in contrast, reflected the opinions of Lord Stanhope and Dubois.\textsuperscript{143} He saw the territorial rearrangement of Italy as a matter of indifference to Britain (a view which the Regent shared) and he claimed that the imperative need of the hour was not to disturb the Emperor.\textsuperscript{144} He advised the Regent not to contemplate any further negotiations until the Emperor had been formally secured. Then, he alleged, even if the Dutch continued to stall, the three powers could bargain from a position of strength.\textsuperscript{145} On 22 May the formal Imperial commitment to negotiate, in the form of the Emperor's amendments to the draft treaty, were handed to St. Saphorin and Schaub for transmission to London.\textsuperscript{146}

While Schaub was away, the Regent had appeared to be merely content to await the latter's return before attempting a reappraisal of his attitude to the plan.\textsuperscript{147} And his duplicity remained hidden.

until mid-May, for, though Sanore's instructions were openly displayed to Stair, he had been denied sight of the annexed article which proposed the provision of security for Spain through allowing her to garrison Parma, Piacenza and Tuscany. As the draft treaty made no mention of such a provision, British amazement is explained when Dubois on 16 May declared that he would be unable to sign until Spain was granted it. This action drew from the duped Stair the bitter comment that,

"this address ... in my poor opinion signifies little else than to show plainly that folks will ever be mistaken when they depend on fair dealing in certain places."

Likewise the fastening by the British upon Sanore as the culprit is explained.

The first hint for Stair of this matter came in the form of a query from London about the truth of a report that the Regent supported Spain's attitude on Sardinia. On 14 May the Regent answered Stair's questioning with the statement that, if the Emperor would agree to Spain's retaining Sardinia, the alliance might easily be concluded, but, if the Emperor disagreed, then France would not press the matter. Stair scolded the Regent, who demurred, and instructed William Stanhope not to encourage the Spaniards. But the Spaniards, true to form, were little concerned with the machinations of the

149. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 318, f. 132, Dubois to Regent, 16 May 1718.
Allies; Cellamare denied any knowledge of a Spanish demand to retain Sardinia, and later Alberoni himself discounted the value of the proposed garrisons; he claimed that they would be too exposed to the whim of the Emperor. Stair, who longed for the distraction that Schaub's arrival would offer the Regent, urged his government to dispatch the fleet to the Mediterranean lest Spain, by seizing Minorca, achieved a supremacy there. Further, because he found the French adamant on the garrison issue, he proposed the substitution of British for Spanish troops in order to make the idea more acceptable to the Emperor. However he did not suggest that this proposal should be incorporated in the treaty. His initiative was rewarded by his idea being adopted officially by his government; on 2 June Craggs proposed the stationing of a 7 battalion-strong force in Tuscany until an alternative solution had been found. Craggs hailed this suggestion as "a proper hole to creep out from that rash offer of Monsieur Nançaré's to let them have Spanish garrisons in Tuscany ...". But Craggs warned that Stair should not share this idea with the Imperial ambassador for the time being.

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157. F.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 275, Stair to Craggs, 25 May 1718; f. 276, Stair to Craggs, 25 May 1718. It was Cragg's opinion that the British fleet was not strong enough to prevent such an eventuality (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 13b, Craggs to Stair, 22 May 1718 o.s.).
On 8 June the Regent momentarily accepted the British suggestion, though he predicted difficulties (as had Stair) over the payment of the force. But such hopeful prospects were not sustained at ensuing audiences; at each the Regent was brought round from advocating neutral garrisons to admitting the suitability of the British troops, only to revert to his original stance when next he met Stair. The arrival on 11 June of Schaub with the amended draft of the treaty did little to change matters. The results of the conference with the Regent and Buxelles on the next day bore out Stanhope's verdict that the Imperial amendments were "mere Imperialisms; matters of punctilious form, and of no essential consequence in the world." The Regent made little difficulty over these, though Buxelles was later to attempt further to preclude the Imperialists by insisting that a successor should be named for the Spanish prince's claim and that the Emperor's renunciation of the Spanish throne should be broadened to include the possible claims of his collaterals, the Arch-Dukes and Arch-Duchesses. The way of getting round the Imperial refusal to admit the Spanish garrisons remained for the moment the point of disagreement.

162. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 296, Stair to Craggs, 8 June 1718.
A further conference on 15 June, after Stair had stood for some time in a queue of ambassadors at the Palais Royale, occasioned another original contribution from Stair. He suggested that the garrisons should be raised and paid in the name of the alliance, but the Regent apparently adopted the idea of employing British troops. 170

On 20 June Stair and Schaub were summoned to discuss a French memorandum that would be transmitted to London and were assured that it contained the British proposal. But Stair immediately discovered from a copy of it which Crawford obtained from Ruxelles that an unamended version had been sent. 171 He dispatched Schaub in its wake, and at the latter’s leave-taking angrily upbraided the Regent for his failure to control his ministers. His temper had undoubtedly not been improved by the Regent’s evasive behaviour in keeping him and Schaub waiting for two hours and then bidding Schaub farewell in public before relenting and agreeing to meet them in private. 172

Stair could contain his resentment no longer. He had been stung by Dubois’ suggestion that he had been spending too much time in the country 173 and by Stanhope’s inference that he was tardy in the performance of his duty. 174 In letters to Stanhope and Cragge he put forward a case for his withdrawal from France. He claimed that the “old ministry” had succeeded in capturing the Regent when the latter was friendless in France as a consequence of the

storm that had arisen over the Paris Parliament's resistance to Law's augmentation of the currency. He warned, and William Stanhope concurred, that "the French artfully fling the odium upon us"; for the policy of the "old ministry" was to force Britain into the frontline in order to give France room to make a late change of direction. He complained that his negotiations had been rendered useless through Dubois' coup in providing the Regent with the Imperial draft with the British comments recorded thereupon two days before a copy had reached him. Thus when he had advocated the idea of employing British troops in Tuscany, the Regent already knew that Britain had conceded to the use of neutral garrisons there. As he had been proved by this incident to be redundant and as the Regent was now lost, Stair asked to be relieved of his post.

Dubois shared Stair's view of the Regent and he sought to eliminate the influence of the "old ministry" and thereby revitalise the negotiations. With the support of Pentenriedter, he pressed Stanhope to go to Paris to deal personally with the Regent. Stanhope responded eagerly to the proposal, seeing in it a chance to secure the alliance by the simple expedient of negotiating directly with the Regent an agreement to sign the treaty as it now stood; the precedent being provided by the convention that had secured the

Triple Alliance. Once the convention was in being, Stanhope intended to go to Madrid to make a final attempt to persuade the Spaniards to depart from their present course. 160

His instructions named Stair as joint negotiator, 161 but inevitably this meant that Stanhope would dominate the partnership; nothing else could be expected. Yet fearing that Stair might be hurt by Stanhope's intrusion, the British ministry took care to cushion the blow; Cragge wrote of Stanhope's sensitivity lest "you may take his going amiss," 183 and Stanhope himself told Stair of the pleasure with which he looked forward to being "conducted by your skill in the finishing this most important negotiation." 184

But Stair seems to have now dismissed all ideas of resignation, and, if Stanhope's intentions ruffled his pride, he gave no sign. 185 Indeed his letters assumed a more optimistic tone, for now the Regent seemed to be resisting the pressure of the "old ministry" and, when Stair had offered to make way for someone more acceptable, the Regent had been effusive in his protestations of the value that he placed in Stair's friendship. 186 He offered Stair his closest co-operation but soon made it plain that he wished to deal only with Stanhope. 187 George I condoned this with the proviso that Stair was to be kept fully informed, and Stair had to find his consolation in the


182. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 320, f. 20, Dubois to (?), 26 June 1718.


elaborate praise of his principals — praise that afforded Sir David Dalrymple "pleasure ... as a kind of shadow of yours." The convention was quickly concluded, and it is interesting that Stair attributed this success entirely to the presence of Stanhope. The Regent, thus bolstered, spurred by the news that an Austro-Turkish settlement at Passarowitz was imminent and that the Spanish fleet had put to sea as the British fleet entered the Mediterranean, had allowed no counter pressures to blunt his purpose. He was careful enough to insist that France could not be expected to confront Spain before the Emperor had signed, and, as a late innovation, he allowed the latter only three months in which to comply. The residual British ministry in London awaited the outcome with impatience; it felt that, if the Regent was not secured now, he could only be classed as a dependant of Alberoni and further, as Craggs put it, that

"it would be an insupportable shame if all the great powers of Europe should suffer themselves to be bullied by the mad romononades of that upstart Cardinal."

Complete agreement was effected by 6 July, and Ruxelles was ordered to sign on behalf of France.

190. A.A.S.: C.P. Ang. 320, f. 61, De Noee to Dubois, 3 July 1718.
191. B.N.: Stowe MSs., 246, f. 118, Stair to Craggs, 6 July 1718.
Stanhope and Stair expected the conclusion of the convention now to be automatic, but they had miscalculated. Buxelles, who, curiously perhaps, had given the convention his warm approval, now made a late discovery of his scruples and hazarded a rearguard action. Buxelles, who, curiously perhaps, had given the convention his warm approval, now made a late discovery of his scruples and hazarded a rearguard action.

He refused to sign and induced the Count de Cheverny (the Regent's second choice) to follow suit. The Regent's reaction was to order Buxelles to sign or resign. The 12th was fixed for the signing, but, when the British ministers made their appearance at the appointed hour of 12.30 p.m., they found in lieu of Buxelles a document proclaiming his reasons for refusal. Stair wrote to Craggs, "when we thought ourselves in the port, we had like to be blown to sea again." Stair, however, could draw some personal satisfaction from Buxelles' manouevring, for, as he informed Craggs, he was "very glad Lord Stanhope had seen this court with his own eyes."

It seemed that only Dubois could be induced to sign, but the terms of the convention required it to be signed in Paris. Thus the British delegation "thought it best to bring our negotiations to an absolute crisis." The suggestion was made to the surprised Regent that the way to overcome resistance was to reveal the treaty terms, including the secret articles, to the full Regency council. The Regent, nervously counting his supporters therein, agreed and

198. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 359, Stanhope & Stair to Craggs, 6 July 1718.
chose the meeting on 17 July for the revelation. Boldness scored; Huxelles, who had capitulated to his master but who was so little trusted that he was only allowed to speak from a prepared draft which had Stanhope's prior approval, gave support to the Regent's moving speech. The dissent was stifled, and on the morrow the convention was signed by Stanhope, Stair, Huxelles and de Cheverney.

In London the negotiators were spurred to conclude; Tuesday, 2 August was named as the day for the formal signing. The days that remained were occupied by the exchange and display of the delegates' full powers and qualifications to sign. In the meantime Stanhope, having successfully completed the primary task of his mission, embarked on the secondary; he set out for Spain on 24 July.

Yet the smooth progress towards the conclusion of the treaty was to be ruffled by a last-minute bid by Alberoni to distract the Emperor. He offered him a compromise which embraced the Spanish retention of Sardinia. He was disappointed; the Emperor turned the proposal aside and merely referred him to the mediators, Britain and France. Though the British reacted calmly, speculation at the French court abounded, despite the Regent's unwavering stance, when Dubois transmitted a report that the Emperor was giving serious con-

sideration to the Spanish approach. Huxelles clutched at this straw with all the fervour of a dying man. And Stair had to deflate the latter's arguments by stating that a full month would be needed to gather the opinions of the interested parties, in which time Spain would complete the conquest of Sicily that she had begun at the beginning of July.

The French, too, were tardy in their dispatch to London of the ratifications of the convention. Dubois himself was anxious to have the convention ratified before 2 August and, in pressing for haste in this matter, echoed Stair's and Stanhope's earlier fear that the Emperor might be lost if there was any delay in the process of signing and sealing the convention. Crawfurd, who had brought the news of the convention's signing to London, saw in Dubois' anxiety a deeper fear; he wanted Huxelles' signature on the convention ratified in case Huxelles should disclaim his responsibilities on the grounds that the signing of the Quadruple Alliance removed the need to ratify the convention.

The ratifications were exchanged on 1 August, and the Quadruple Alliance was signed on the following day by Fentenriedter and Hoffman for Austria, Dubois for France and ten ministers for Great Britain.

211. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/161, f. 432, Stair to Robetson, 27 July 1718; f. 426, Stair to Cragge, 26 July 1718. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 246, f. 120, Stair to Cragge, 4 April 1718.
This was the high-point of Stair's career as a diplomat and received the plaudits of his peers; Sunderland wrote:

"for as it (the Quadruple Alliance) is the greatest thing, that has been done in any age, so it is chiefly owing to your abilities and indefatigable zeal in the King's service." But for the moment any feeling of triumph was blurred by the prospect of an imminent confrontation with Spain over Sicily.

CHAPTER TEN

THE DECLARATION OF WAR

Robert Arbuthnot, temporarily promoted to be Stair's secretary in the absence of Crawford, described Alberoni, in the early days of August, as affecting

"to give himself the old aire of Don Quixot, as if he had a mind to introduce the former Spanish bravoure (sic), when for some ages (it) has been laid aside; his manner of making war against the joint force of the greatest powers of Europe seems somewhat akin to attacking windmills."

Arbuthnot reflected in this the confidence which the attainment of the Quadruple Alliance imparted to the British government, as well as revealing the British conviction that war with Spain was inevitable at the very moment that Stanhope was making a personal bid at Madrid to secure Spain's acquiescence in the Allies' demands. He failed, and war indeed broke out. It was declared in late December by Britain and in early January by France. But, because in late 1718 the Regent appeared hesitant to take the final step to war, Stair was led into a confrontation with France's new Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Dubois, which, in prompting the latter to demand his dismissal, nearly anticipated the events of a year later.

1. Calendar of Treasury Books, vol. 32, part 2, p. 355, Stanhope to the Lord Chief Baron and Barons of the Exchequer in Scotland, 2 May 1718, "The Earl of Stair has occasion for Mr. Robert Arbuthnot, one of the Auditors of the Exchequer in Scotland, to attend him at the Court of France".
3. P.R.O., S.P. 78/162, f. 10, Arbuthnot to (Stanyan or Craggs), 6 August 1718.
Though the declarations of war were still months away, a physical clash between Britain and Spain occurred in August. On the 11th of that month Admiral Sir George Byng, in a running fight off Cape Passaro, inflicted a crippling defeat upon the fleet on which rested Alberoni's hopes for the recapture of Spain's lost glories. His knowledge of the imminency of this event explains the haste with which in late July Stanhope made his personal bid to persuade Spain to acquiesce in his plan. And it says much for Stanhope's courage that he knowingly placed himself in the position of a potential hostage, and by doing so he unnerved his colleagues. However, in the event he was to be well clear of Spain by the time the news of the battle reached Europe's capitals at the end of August.

Byng had been dispatched in early summer in response to pressure from both the Regent and the Emperor and in accord with Britain's obligations under the Treaty of Westminster to defend the Imperial possessions in Italy. It was the 4th article of Byng's instructions which led to the battle, for he was ordered to intercept any Spanish

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5. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 320, f. 249, Stanhope to Dubois, 21 July 1718; C.P. Ang. 313, f. 84, Stanhope to (Brussels?), 23 July 1718.
expeditionary force on its way to Italy, to offer it his services as a mediator between Philip V and the Emperor, and then, if spurned, to attack. 10 Alberoni was promptly apprized of the content of these instructions and of Byng's sailing date. 11 But undeterred, he put his fleet to sea in mid-June. 12 However, he did attempt to avoid the consequences of the British commitment by diverting the Spanish attack from Naples, an Imperial possession, to Victor Amadeus II's restless kingdom of Sicily. 13

This change of direction was known in Paris in mid-July. 14 Stanhope diverted Byng to the island's defence 15 on the pretext that Britain was not only a guarantor of the neutrality of Italy and of Victor Amadeus II's possession of Sicily under the terms of Utrecht but that the convention to sign the Quadruple Alliance was in being making the island about to become Imperial property which brought into play the Anglo-Austrian defensive alliance. 16

That the intention had been to destroy the Spanish expedition as soon as it was under way is amply illustrated by the British diplomatic
correspondence. Stanhope and Stair concluded a letter to Cragge on 21 July with the comment that, "'tis certain if our fleet does not act with vigour on this occasion, we shall suffer extremely in our reputation." 17 Byng too was to remark that if the Spaniards were not interested in his mediation "we must try what force will do". 18 And Stair's exhortation to Byng with "hearty wishes for your success, that your expedition may be honourable to yourself and glorious and advantageous to your country", 19 fitted the eve-of-battle atmosphere.

Later, in August, the British confidence paled as the only news from Sicily told of Spanish success; Stair pressed Byng at least to assist in the defence of Messina, 20 though Cragge urged him not to commit himself until he was confident of success. 21 In the event Byng met with little difficulty in destroying the Spanish fleet. Though he had not been in time to prevent the Spaniards from landing on Sicily and a year was to pass before they suffered any reverses there, Alberoni's plans were crippled by the loss of his fleet which he was never able to replace, and the war that followed was to effect his downfall because neither Britain, France nor Austria would contemplate peace with Spain while he retained his office.

While Stanhope was in Spain, Stair's primary duty was to keep him informed of events elsewhere. This inevitably involved the use of codes and even the withholding of information, particularly in relation to Byng, lest, through Spanish interception, Stanhope's.

exposed position should be further endangered. Eventually the entire instruction of Stanhope was placed in Stair's hands - a heady moment indeed - for, Cragge argued, Stair's closer proximity to events in Europe made him better qualified for the task than anyone in London.

More immediately, Stair was ordered by Stanhope to endeavour to procure from the Regent a more definite commitment, beyond endorsing Byng's instructions, to support Britain in the event of war arising out of the specific Sicilian problem, for the terms of the Quadruple Alliance were too vague. Stair promptly fell foul of Cragge through Arbuthnot's failure to mark "private" a letter that Stair and Stanhope had written to Sunderland on this matter and the contents of which had made it plain that it was to be kept from the rest of the ministry. To Cragge's angry query as to why he had been excluded, Stair hurriedly had to state that this had not been the intention; it had merely been noped to avoid general disappointment if the Regent should refuse.

Stair's turn for anger came when, confronted with his suggestion for a declaration on the Sicilian problem, the Regent, appearing wary and loath to commit himself, gave the impression that he was well versed in the content of Byng's instructions and would await the consequences of the interception of the Spanish fleet. Stair berated

24. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 246, f. 121, Stair to Cragge, 4 August 1718 (private).
25. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 246, f. 121, Stair to Cragge, 4 August 1718 (private).
Craggs for failing to tell him that Byng's instructions had been shown to Dubois. He chided him too for not matching the number of couriers that Dubois had been able to send; the current ratio being two to one. He claimed that the policy of informing foreign diplomats in advance made "your own ministers abroad entirely useless and take it out of their power to negotiate anything." 26

The arrival on 6 August of the news of the signing of the Quadruple Alliance emboldened the Regent to tell Stair that he could expect his declaration on Sicily. 27 But within three days the Regent had drawn back from anything so bold; he endorsed Stair's latest instructions for Byng 28 but confined the statement of his intention to support Britain in any subsequent war to his letter to George I. 29 However, the manner of his statement proved to be quite acceptable to both the British monarch and his ministry. 30

On 12 August Craggs answered Stair's complaints by stating that, in showing Dubois everything relevant, he had merely continued the practice adopted by Stanhope in the recent negotiations and the speed with which Dubois dispatched couriers was merely a measure of his energy, though he was assisted by the fact that "his outrise our John Trotts, who are the worst in the world." 31 Craggs had a positive purpose too; he proclaimed to Stair the British government's intention to support Dubois' aspirations to oust Ruelles from the control of French foreign policy.

26. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 246, f. 121, Stair to Craggs, 4 August 1718 (private).
27. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 12, Stair to Craggs, 6 August 1718.
28. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 28, Stair to Byng, 9 August 1718 (copy); f. 30, Stair to Byng, 10 August 1718 (copy).
Stair, who was experiencing difficulty in extracting orders from Buxelles for Fleurian, Comte de Morville, Châteauneuf's replacement at The Hague, received Craggs' statement eagerly. But he can not have been surprised as Stanhope had come to Paris intending to persuade the Regent to promote Dubois, while Sunderland had written on 6 August to order Stair to

"persuade the Regent not to leave himself and his affairs in the hands of his enemies, (for) if he does all this great work (the Quadruple Alliance) will, I fear, moulder away."

But Stair had to wait until the Regent had silenced the furore raised in May 1718 by the Parlement's opposition to devaluation and its implementation by Law's bank. The Lit de Justice of 26 August, together with the dismissal of the Duc de Maine as supervisor of Louis XV's education and the subsequent arrests of leading members of the Parlement, effectively crushed this opposition, leaving the Regent free to contemplate a change in the structure of the government.

On 28 August, while airing George I's dislike for the attempt being made by Victor Amadeus to marry his son to a daughter of the Regent, Stair broached the subject of ministerial changes. As Stair feared a new challenge from his hôte noire, Torcy, he must have been relieved when the Regent responded favourably and suggested the possibility of employing Dubois. The idea gathered momentum.

32. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 49, Stair to Craggs, 20 August 1718.
35. Hyde, op.cit., p. 94.
36. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 67, Dubois to (Craggs), 27 August 1718; f. 72, Stair to Craggs, 27 August 1718; f. 91, Dubois to (Craggs), 31 August 1718. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 321, f. 224, Dubois to Craggs, 31 August 1718. Vogue, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 115.
37. B.N.: Stowe MSS., 246, f. 132, Stair to Craggs, 27 August 1718.
38. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 84, Stair to Craggs, 29 August 1718. Leclercq (op.cit., vol. 2, p. 204) claims that Stair only raised this matter on 6 September and ignored this earlier audience.
The British government urged that advantage should be taken of the blow which must have been struck to the morale of pro-Spanish opposition to the Regent by the news of Ryng's victory. On 4 September Dubois confidently announced to Stair the opening of his personal campaign to dislodge Huxelles. Three days later the Austrians, who had shared the British dislike for Huxelles, showed their hand; Königsegg underwrote Stair's pronouncement to the Regent that he would never be safe nor would he ever enjoy the confidence of his allies until the change was made. The Regent reaffirmed that it would be made and thanked George I for his concern. Stanhope, on his return on 9 September, reinforced Stair's effort, and together they continued the campaign; they received on 13 September the Regent's promise to dismiss both Huxelles and Villeroy. Twelve days later, victory was achieved, for Dubois was able to announce that he had secured the new post of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In the end only the Conseil of the Marine, of Finance, and Commerce survived the Regent's dismantling of the system that he had created at the death of Louis XIV.

40. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 109, Stair to Craggs, 4 September 1718.
42. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 110, Stair to Craggs, 7 September 1718.
43. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 148, Stair & Stanhope to Craggs, 14 September 1718.
44. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 186, Dubois to Stair, 25 September 1718. Add.: C.P. Ang. 313, f. 228, Craggs to Dubois, 18 September 1718 (copy in C.P. Ang. 309, f. 267, Dubois to Chammorel, 30 September 1718, f. 269, Dubois to Robethon, 1 October 1718. Dangeau, op.cit., vol. 17, p. 395.
While Stanhope was in Spain personally conducting a policy aimed at gaining Philip V's accession to the Quadruple Alliance within the prescribed three months, Stair, who was suffering from an unremitting fever, was relegated to the role of spectator. Even Stanhope's return to Paris did little to enhance this role, for in the combined conferences with the Regent Stanhope inevitably took charge. However, Stair did score a minor triumph when Stanhope obtained the Regent's approval not only for the wintering of Byng's fleet in the Mediterranean and its assumption of the role of Imperial auxiliary, with Barcelona as the western boundary of the area in which it could engage in aggressive action, but also for Stair's idea of using the Imperial troops, which Victor Amadeus II was excluding from his Sicilian fortresses, to invade Sardinia.

Stair was returned to prominence both by Stanhope's departure home on 26 September and by the Spanish reaction to the loss of their fleet. The threat that Alberoni had made in May to deter the British from naval action was implemented. This action was described by Stair as a "ridiculous and malicious turn" and went further than the original threat, for, as well as their property, the British merchants themselves were seized. Standing treaties demanded that six months' notice should be given of any such action, and thus...

Britain was provided with a *casus belli*.\(^{52}\) Ironically this was done when Alberoni's thoughts had turned to peace and accession to the Quadruple Alliance; thoughts that were, however, abandoned in mid-October, when the Spanish queen's militancy carried the day.\(^{53}\)

The news of the seizures reached Paris at the end of September and spurred Stair into action; having dispatched orders to the fleet to abandon its restricted role and to attack Spanish shipping wherever it could be found,\(^{54}\) he sought to discover the Regent's reaction. The Regent proposed to warn Spain immediately that either the seized property be surrendered or France would have to fulfil her obligations under the Quadruple Alliance.\(^{55}\)

The contrast between the vigour of this response and the timidity of Dubois\(^{56}\) led to a confrontation between him and Stair. After the audience Stair had found Dubois sceptical when he had told him of the strong line which the Regent had been prepared to take with Spain. The next morning he was given Dubois' draft of the warning to Spain and found that it omitted what was expected of France if the British property was not released, but he forbore commenting on this, for he considered that it was adequately covered by the secret articles of the Quadruple Alliance. Instead he opened with the statement that maximum effect would be achieved if Britain and France declared war together. Dubois evaded a direct answer by stating

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52. Williams, op.cit., p. 319.
54. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 200, Stair to Vice-Admiral Cornwall, 1 October 1718 (copy).
56. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 246, f. 136, Stair to Craggs, 1 October 1718 (private).
that the Regent would honour his obligations while he pleaded for time to withdraw the considerable French assets in Spain. Stair asked what the Regent would do in the present circumstances and was told that if necessary the Regent would furnish his contingent of troops but that he could not take the risk of damaging his position within France by actually declaring war. Dissatisfied, Stair pressed for the declaration to be made in terms of the general obligation to force Spain to accede to the treaty and of the particular obligation incurred by the seizure of British property. To prove his point he produced the treaty and the secret articles. After that Dubois could only issue a warning about the extent of the resistance to be expected within the Regency Council and endure patiently an exposition by Stair of the danger of the current situation. 57

Dubois' caution, however, did not affect the Regent, and on the morrow he reaffirmed to Stair his willingness to act. Stair, in turn, explained away his dispute with Dubois as a misunderstanding. In the event Dubois wrote a letter to the Spanish court which delighted Stair with its lack of ambiguity; France gave Spain three months in which to accede to the Quadruple Alliance before she joined the Emperor in selecting a new recipient for the Parmesan and Tuscan inheritances and threatened that, if the British assets had not been released by the end of the current month (October), diplomatic relations would be severed. 58

58. F.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 212, Stair to Craggs, 5 October 1718; f. 214, Dubois to Stair, 5 October 1718.
Stanhope was later to propose to extend the period for accession by a further three months by means of the Dutch who, when they themselves had accepted the alliance, were to suggest such a move to the Emperor. But the Dutch did not commit themselves, and Spain ignored Dubois. The terminal date, 2 November, came without a Spanish change of heart, and Stair was left with little further to do beyond dispatching to William Stanhope his letters of revocation.

The task of tidying away the other unresolved aspects of the Quadruple Alliance — of securing the Dutch and Sicilian king and of exacting from the Emperor a renunciation of his pretensions to Spain — fell largely to others.

Victor Amadeus II characteristically made full use of the time allotted for his accession to attempt to better the proffered conditions; Count Provana was dispatched to negotiate with the implacable British, the Sicilian defensive positions were denied to the Imperial troops who came to take possession of their master's new acquisition, and, after receiving encouragement from the Regent, the hand of Victor Amadeus II's son, the Prince of Piedmont, was offered to the ruling houses of France and Austria. But all this was of no avail.

Stair himself had little more to do than upbraid the Regent for entertaining the Savoyard marriage proposal, pass on to London the

frequent rumours of Sicily’s accession and persuade the French to adopt the British idea of displaying the secret articles of the treaty to spur Victor Amadeus II to conclude. Stair was rewarded with the grudging agreement of the French though they were careful enough to edit the version to be displayed so that Victor Amadeus II would not discover that he was to be the recipient of the Tuscan inheritances if Spain spurned the alliance. In the end the Savoyard ministers signed in London on 8 November, and Stair, who believed that the most persuasive factor had been the prospect of the wintering of Imperial troops in Piedmont and Montferrat, was given the privilege of staging the signing ceremony with France at his house on 18 November.

Likewise the problem of the Dutch accession was, after Morville had replaced Chateauneuf, largely the business of the Franco-British diplomatic missions at The Hague. The Dutch had lost all desire to commit themselves to alliances and were merely interested in fostering their trade. Because their constitution embodied the principle of unanimity, it allowed a single province to defend its particular interest by a contrary vote in the States General. And the Estates of Holland in September, realising that entrance into the alliance would disrupt Hispanic-Dutch trade, dashed Allied hopes.

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64. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 13b, Craggs to Stair & Stanhope, 15 September 1718, o.s.
67. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 245, Stair to Craggs, 24 October 1718.
68. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 320, Stair to Craggs, 16 November 1718; f. 334, Stair to Craggs, 18 November 1718. Dangeau, op.cit., vol. 17, p. 418 (though Dangeau missed the point of the gathering, recording it only as a large dinner).
Holland insisted on four concessions covering the final solution of the question of the Barrier (the Dutch shield against France), a reduction in the size of the Dutch military contribution, the confinement to Europe of the Dutch guarantee, and, with particular reference to the vital Baltic trade, free trade and navigation in European waters for all the allies. This last demand proved to be unacceptable to the French, who wished to avoid even indirectly guaranteeing the Dutch trading rights in the Baltic; they merely contended that sufficient guarantee was given by article seven of the treaty which furnished general protection for allied persons and property abroad. Stair was ordered to promote the view that, though article seven did render this demand unnecessary, the Regent had little to lose in conceding it. He succeeded, but neither the Regent's acquiescence in November nor the Imperial signature on the Barrier treaty in the following month brought the Dutch any nearer to committing themselves.

Thirdly, in their haste to conclude the treaty, the British sought to secure the Imperial renunciation without the delay which arguments over its form would occasion. The renunciation made a tardy appearance in early October and was immediately dispatched to Stair, who was charged to present it without comment to the Regent, but, if the latter protested, to offer British support.

70 Hatton, Diplomatic Relations, p. 181.
73 P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 293, Stair to Craggs, 8 November 1718.
74 Hatton, Diplomatic Relations, p. 185.
75 S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 15b, Craggs to Stair, 21 September 1718 o.s.
76 S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 15b, Craggs to Stair, 22 September o.s.
Regent passed over the haughty language used by the Emperor but he could not ignore either the Emperor's presumption (while signing away his and his direct descendants' rights of succession to the Spanish Crown) in endeavouring to preserve the rights of his nephews and nieces, the Arch-Dukes and Arch-Duchesses, or his attempt to preclude the similar rights of the twin French houses of the blood, Conti and Conde.  

Britain was annoyed that the Pretender's betrothed, Princess Clementina Sobieski, could make her way unchecked across Imperial territory en route to her wedding in Italy and was fearful that France might be distracted by the matter of the renunciation from the task of severing diplomatic relations with Spain. Thus France gained unqualified support from Britain in the face of the pious contention by the Emperor that the treaty ratification was only delayed by French intransigence. The ratifications were exchanged on 24 October but not before the British, with commendable speed, had furnished the French with a written declaration promising to procure the necessary adjustments from the Emperor so that no prince would be able to possess simultaneously the Austrian and Spanish thrones and to have erased the clause relating to the rights


78. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 13a, Stair to St. Saphorin, 19 October 1718; vol. 13b, Craggs to Pentenrieder, 12 October 1718 o.s. (copy).


of the French princes of the blood (of so little consequence to the Emperor and of such dangerous potent to the Regent). These amend-
ments were accepted by the Emperor in late November, by which time he had redeemed himself in British eyes by arresting Princess Sobieski at Innsbruck.

As November wore on, despite Stair’s prediction of the detrimental effect that financial difficulties and the policy of consulting Torcy would have, the task of preparing France for war proceeded smoothly. Indeed the Regent seemed cheerfully committed as he marched troops to the Spanish frontier and had Berwick, their commander, consult Stair.

Yet France in no way matched the preparedness in Britain, where, since the Parliamentary endorsement of George I’s policy on 22 No-
vember, only a declaration of war was lacking. Thus it was not surprising that Craggs’ demand for a specified date for the French declaration of war was met with the evasive statement by Dubois that the need to overcome the expected resistance within the Regency Council meant inevitable delay. Further, the French government was faced with the need to act in the financial crisis.

81. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 310, f. 38, Dubois to Craggs, 14 October 1718; f. 126, Destouches to Orleans, 20 October 1718.
83. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 32, Stair to Stanhope, 3 November 1718.
85. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 293, Stair to Craggs, 8 November 1718.
The diplomatic link with Spain had yet to be finally severed, for though Nancreé had been withdrawn at the same time as William Stanhope, Cellamare, the Spanish ambassador, had remained in Paris as St. Aignan had been left to head a residual mission in Madrid. Some motive had to be found which would persuade the French public that the war was being fought in French interests and not merely for British commercial and Imperial territorial gain. This motive was not found until the discovery of the celebrated Cellamare plot involving the dissident members of the French court and constituting a direct threat to the Regent's person.

Craggs had been encouraged by the enthusiasm of the Parliamentary reply to the King's address — a virtual declaration of war in itself — despite the voluble opposition of the Tories and disaffected Whigs on whom Alberoni was rumoured to have pinned his hopes. Thus emboldened the British minister called for a display of vigour and resolution by the Allies which would persuade Alberoni to "put an end to his follies". Impatiently he repeated himself four days later to both Dubois and Stair, outlining for the latter the argument that, as George I had no ambitions beyond the peaceful stability of

93. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/50, Craggs to Stair, 3 November 1718 o.s.
Europe and as he had need of an ally within France, the Regent had no need to fear his motives and that if the latter was only to persevere he would "contribute with the King (George I) to give peace to all the world and bestow quiet upon his own country which wants nothing more to be the greatest in Christendom". But such an exhortation made little impact, for Stair found that Dubois did nothing but drag his feet, and as Stair, in his enthusiasm to goad France to war, failed completely to appreciate Dubois' position, a collision between the two men became inevitable.

The undercurrent of distrust first appears in an exchange of letters on 30 November, in which both Dubois and Stair were at pains to assure each other of their mutual support and friendship, while Stair went so far as to proclaim that he would never complain secretly about Dubois to London, belying his action of the previous day. The disagreement broke cover three days later when Stair, who had successfully secured from the Regent an agreement to declare war simultaneously with George I on 19 December, was faced with Dubois' wish that the British declaration be postponed to the 26th and the French until eight days after this.

97. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 356, Stair to Craggs, 29 November 1718.
On the morrow, 4 December, with Dubois adamantly insisting on delay, Stair delivered a memorial on the British reasons for declaring war, in which it was stated that George I intended to do so on the 19th. Since the Spaniards, following upon the seizure of property, were issuing letters of marque against British ships everywhere, even in the West Indies, George I was, it was stated, obligated to defend his subjects' persons and possessions. The Regent was asked when he would make his declaration, and Stair offered to inform London of the date selected.

Dubois, in his turn, still demanded a full month in which to make the necessary dispositions, saying that even if Britain could not postpone her declaration to the 26th and adhered to the 19th, France could not be ready to declare within fifteen days. Yet at 3 p.m. that day the Regent stated that France would declare a week after Britain. Stair acknowledged this statement in a letter which he began to Dubois at 7 p.m. Within an hour, however, he heard that Dubois had induced the Regent to change his mind. Stair launched a slashing attack on the Abbé; although he did not know Dubois' reasons, he could not, he said, be persuaded that they were valid and washed his hands of the affair, giving notice that henceforth he would merely transmit information to London and would make no further comment.

101. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 373, Stair to Stanhope, 4 December 1718.
103. P.R.O.: S.B. 78/162, f. 377, Dubois to (Stair), 4 December 1718 (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 18); f. 378, Dubois to (Stair), 4 December 1718.
As an explanation of his behaviour Stair fastened upon Dubois' ambition to become a Cardinal (first mentioned by Dubois in October when he had sought to persuade the Pope to promote him by means of pressure from Britain and Austria). He told Stanhope that this ambition had turned the Abbe's head and had caused him to be vague and elusive, to fail to silence critics and had even led him to oppose the Regent over the implementation of the treaty.

However, on the following day, 5 December, Dubois did give way somewhat in so much that, while he adhered to the fifteen day period after the 19th, he proposed that, if Britain insisted, France would do what she could to set an earlier date. In a further letter he requested that this matter should be kept a secret, and this Stair interpreted, in his summing up for Craggs in which he depicted Dubois as being triumphant over the Regent, as evidence of Dubois' intention to avoid committing France.

What Stair did not understand was that Dubois was only playing for time because he knew that a plot against the Regent and in favour of Philip V was about to be exposed and would provide him with the excuse he needed to commit France to war with Spain.

106. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 240, Dubois to (Stair), 20 October 1718.
107. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 373, Stair to Stanhope, 4 December 1718.
110. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 375, Stair to Craggs, 5 December 1718.
111. Leclercq, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 244-5.
It was to Stanhope\textsuperscript{112} that Dubois owed the original discovery of the conspiratorial activities of the Duchess of Maine (wife of one of Louis XIV's legitimised sons) which in the later stages came to involve the Spanish Ambassador. But Dubois could take personal credit for the penetration of the Duchess' schemes by means of his agent, the scribe Abbe Duvet.\textsuperscript{113}

Thus Dubois was well placed to secure the evidence which he needed to expose the plot when on 26 November he was told that Cellamare had dispensed with ciphers and diplomatic couriers and had entrusted a packet of letters to the Abbe Portocarrero (nephew of the Cardinal Portocarrero), to the son of the Marquis Monteleon and to a fugitive bankrupt named Mira.\textsuperscript{114} An anonymous early nineteenth century novelist and biographer of Stair claims that his hero, "Villiers", Stair's supposed secretary, supported by a force of musketeers, made the interception on the road near Chartres, thus transferring to Stair the honour of alerting the French government.\textsuperscript{115} But in fact Dubois' man Dumesnil, accompanied by archers, secured the packet at an inn in Poitiers on 5 December.\textsuperscript{116}

Within the packet was a letter to Alberoni and copies of plans to raise several French provinces in the path of the invading Spanish army. Though Dumesnil reached Paris on the 8th, he was beaten by hours by a courier from Portocarrero, and Dubois had to endure the embarrassment of having to deny his action to an enraged Cellamare.

\textsuperscript{112} Baudrillart, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 344.
\textsuperscript{113} Leclercq, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 262.
\textsuperscript{114} Leclercq, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 264.
\textsuperscript{116} Baudrillart, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 346.
On the morrow the Spanish embassy was invaded, the ambassador’s papers were seized and he himself was briefly held in custody before being expelled from France. A spate of arrests followed, culminating on 28 December in the arrest of the Duke and Duchess of Maine and throwing into confusion the already disarrayed ranks of the partisans of Philip V.

On 5 December, having dispatched Dumesnil to Poitiers, Dubois had predicted to Craggs that within a month Cellamare would have gone and the French public would have been won to the Regent’s support. The Spaniards’ forcible expulsion of St. Aignan from Madrid on 13 December, before they knew of the Cellamare affair, contributed to the success within France of Dubois’ action. But, even before events in Spain were known, Dubois was in a strong enough position to tell Stair on 15 December that France would declare war on 2 January, while simultaneously he ordered Destouches in London to excuse his earlier hesitancy.

Craggs had been ignorant of any contretemps between Stair and Dubois when he wrote to the latter on 6 December urging the need for a simultaneous Anglo-French declaration of war. On the 8th, when he had learnt of it, he gently chided Stair; arguing that,

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123. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 313, f. 402, Craggs to Dubois, 26 November 1718 o.s. (copy in P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 388).
while Stair's complaints might well have been valid, he himself had managed to accept Dubois' faults "which are terrible ones" as he had discovered overriding qualities of honesty and sincerity even though a fearful, suspicious and passionate nature often made Dubois seen "perfectly wild". He dismissed any idea of replacing Dubois on the grounds that there was "a wide difference between the effects of his doubts and irresolution, and the determined malice and ill-will of another." 124

In a second letter Craggs revealed to Stair the new flexible attitude of his government; he alleged that as the French "hurt themselves and us by their backwardness if they intend to declare it at all; but if they will not do the very best thing; we must be contented with the next best". 125 This new attitude was expressed more openly on 10 December when Craggs told Stair that not only had George I agreed to allow the French request for a fifteen day delay but that he had chosen the 26th for his own declaration and expected France's to come no later than 5 January simply because he was unwilling that "there should be a chasm between measures whose greatest weight will proceed from their union." Simultaneously Craggs ordered Stair to support Dubois in his moment of seeming weakness. 126

But this last order was too late, for on 7 December, exasperated by Stair's constant scolding, Dubois had written to Craggs to demand Stair's withdrawal. 127 As this ran counter to British intentions, Craggs was thrown into the contrary role of supporting Stair and had

127. A.A.B.: C.P. Ang. 311, f. 89, Dubois to Craggs, 7 December 1718.
Leclercq, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 244.
to confess, when writing to Dubois on 19 December, to considerable embarrassment over this latest disagreement and to doubt as to how to settle it. He told the Abbe of his long association and friendship with Stair; of Stair's honesty; of his great capabilities, both natural and acquired; of his valuable service as his country's ambassador; and how he rarely failed to arrive at the truth even if he often passed it by before making his discovery. But, he added, "il est naturellement tres ombrageux et il a une fierte qui ne convient pas toujours aux temps et aux lieux". Craggs conceded that Stair's major fault was that he was over confident in the correctness of his opinions and tried to force them on others. And, he alleged, much of Stair's behaviour could be explained by the manner in which his personal affairs aggravated him.

As to his own role, Craggs was quick to disclaim to Dubois any implication that he had failed to correct Stair. He denied waiting until Dubois complained before ordering Stair to make amends, for he had stressed in the course of twenty letters the value that Britain, even Europe, placed in retaining the confidence of France and that the least friction could ruin the work of years. And he had ordered Stair to restore his friendship with Dubois. Further, Craggs claimed, as he understood well Stair's jealous nature, he had never failed to provide Stair with a copy of what he wrote to Dubois just as he had always alerted Dubois to anything relevant that he had passed on to Stair.

128. An apology for Stair's behaviour was made earlier (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 311, f. 164, Destouches to Orléans, 15 December 1718).
Dubois' request for the recall of Stair was gently rejected on the grounds that the political consequences of such an action could not at that moment be hazarded by George I. And Craggs asked the Regent to put up for the time being with someone so disagreeable to him, while Stanhope offered formal apologies for Stair's behaviour.

Stair was kept in ignorance of this exchange and indeed was thanked by Stanhope for his services until Craggs, after announcing the British declaration of war of 26 December, revealed to him George I's misgivings "at the misintelligence between you and the little abbé". Otherwise the consequences threatened to be dangerous for the alliance, Craggs pleaded

"for God's sake continue to court him ... The single question is, if he were disgraced, what is to be done better and if there is any better thing to be done, you expect to see it upon another change? Don't you fear that Toroy will succeed him?"

Yet Craggs chose to conceal from Stair the matter of his recall, referring only generally to complaints from Dubois, and not surprisingly Stair's reply on 9 January, in giving news of the French declaration of war, was confident in tone. But as he wrote, Craggs and Stanhope were again apologising to Destouches for his behaviour, and later, in February, Stanhope again excused his

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129. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 311, f. 190, Craggs to Dubois, 6 December 1718 o.s. (copy in P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 452).
130. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 311, f. 203, Stanhope to Dubois, 9 December 1718 o.s.
136. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 322, f. 34, Destouches to Orleans, 9 January 1719.
retention of Stair on the grounds that to withdraw him might give the impression that there was a breach between George I and the Regent. 157

Stair answered Craggs by giving his word that he had done everything he could to please Dubois, showing him friendship, kindness and confidence and taking "as much pains to humour him or would do to humour a forward child". He acknowledged that of late they had had many disputes, but this was because Dubois had thrown in his lot with the opposition elements within the French court and thus had stood "peevishly and obstinately in our way in everything that was to be done for the public service." Stair claimed that he had patiently borne the Abbe's ill-humour and had never failed to make him understand that despite their disagreements he was ever his friend

"and as a plain proof I had no ill-will to him, in all this time I have never said one word to the Regent to lessen the Abbe in his esteem, for the very reasons, that we made the Abbe and that we had no one else to put in his place". And, answering Craggs' question, Stair revealed that he had no illusions as to the power still wielded by his only enemy, Torcy, who wanted "but the name of Secretary of State, for he is consulted in all foreign affairs and his opinion followed much preferable to the Abbe's". Still Stair remained optimistic, hoping that Dubois would mend his ways now that

"Prince Cellamare's conspiracy has set his dear friends, he had taken by the hand, in such allight, that he will be ashamed to be governed by them, and the affairs of the alliance go so well that there will be no temptation to go out of the road".

157. A.A.Es: C.P. Ang. 311, f. 164, Destouches to Orléans, 15 December 1719. Robethon told Destouches that he suspected that Stanhope and Craggs were contriving to have Stair removed in order that he might be replaced by Craggs' good friend Lord Carteret, who was dependant on Craggs (A.A.Es: C.P. Ang. 322, f. 70, Destouches to Orléans, 16 January 1719).
In conclusion Stair confirmed his intention to do all he could to support Dubois despite his poor performance and, though he disparaged the Regent's own weakness, made the prediction that the Regency should survive "till we stand full on our own legs".  

On 16 January Dubois acknowledged Stair's change of attitude; asserting that, while Stair still seized upon the slightest pretext to complain, he had been more restrained since the exposure of the Cellamare plot. The Abbe likewise made much of his own efforts to better his relations with Stair. And by this time Stair was writing

"the Abbe and I are now the dearest friends in the world and I am very willing we should be so, and we talk as if there had never happened any difference or dryness."

There was, however, a footnote to be added to the announcement of the declaration of war. The French had allowed 2 January to pass without even summoning the Regency Council, and, as the delay lengthened, Stair rejected Dubois' excuses; he divined the root cause of the inactivity to be

"a joke that was made in the council of Regency, when the Regent said that he had promised me that the war should be declared in France a week after it was declared in England, a considerable man said, must my lord Stairs govern the kingdom?"

139. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 322, f. 42, Dubois to Craggs, 16 January 1719.
140. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 322, f. 49, Dubois to Stanhope, 16 January 1719.
141. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 246, f. 164, Stair to Craggs, 14 January 1719 (private). Further on in this letter he stated "in a word the Abbe is about as round as a hoop and he and I are the dearest friends imaginable." Nevertheless Craggs thought it necessary to further reassure Dubois by repeating his earlier statement of regret about Stair's behaviour (Wiesener, op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 27-30).
142. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 469, Stair to Craggs, 9 January 1719 (private). Dubois confirmed that this statement had been made (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 322, f. 42, Dubois to Craggs, 19 January 1719).
Stair's reference to Torcy's alleged retention of control of France's foreign policy touched on his single involvement of late in the affairs of northern Europe, to wit the overseeing of France's choice of a diplomat to effect a reconciliation between Britain and Prussia. Britain and France were anxious to avoid being distracted from the struggle with Spain by the events in the North, particularly by the possible consequences of an alliance between Sweden, Russia and Prussia, the participants at the ultimately abortive peace conference on the island of Aland. But the question of Prussia divided George I's court. Stanhope wanted to see Prussia weaned from her alliance with Russia and secured within the Quadruple Alliance or, if the Emperor objected, within the Triple Alliance. George I himself shared common aims with Frederick William of Prussia, for neither wished to see the Tsar dominate the Baltic and both wished to secure a share in Sweden's Germanic provinces. But he was annoyed with the Prussian support for the Tsar's physical intrusion into the affairs of the neutral Duchy of Mecklenburg which had placed a considerable Russian army in a position to threaten northern Europe and Hanover in particular. Yet George I might have proved amenable towards a reconciliation with Prussia if he had not been subjected to pressure from his chief Hanoverian minister, Bernstorff, who as a Mecklenburger with property in the duchy was concerned about events.

146 Williams, op.cit., pp. 365-6.
and as the overlord of three villages in Brunswick-Lüneburg was at odds with Prussia over her failure to transfer to George I the feudal rights and sovereignty of that territory in terms of the Convention of 1715.148

On 3 October the Hanoverian ministry raised an alarm when they claimed to have discovered that France intended to employ an Irishman or Scotsman with a Jacobite background as their representative in Berlin.149 The Prussians shared this alarm,150 fearing that George I would be annoyed, but they need not have worried, for the British monarch supported151 Stair's view that the man in question, Nathaniel Hooko, was quite acceptable. Stair, who had already employed Hook as a spy, chose to ignore his once considerable Jacobite role and accepted his affidavit that he was nothing more than a Frenchman as he had been in France for 18 years.152 George I accepted Hook on the grounds that the Regent's appointments should not be questioned because, as he believed their interests to be common, he could not believe that someone averse to those interests could be selected, and he ordered Stair to make his apologies to both the Regent and Hooko.153

147. Cragge derided the Hanoverians as being concerned about "their two penny projects about Mecklenburg" (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 19b, Cragge to Stair, 17 January 1719 o.s. (private)).
But Hanoverian agitation continued, though the new policy rather than Hooke was the real cause for their concern. The annoyance which this caused the British ministry was made plain by Craggs in his letter to Stair on 10 November in which he stated that

"between you and I, there is so much pique and resentment and the adjustment of those four villages seems, with some other womanish quarrels, so important, that I don't know if the interest of so many kingdoms will outweigh them, however we are in the strait road and we pursue it".

But Craggs' confidence that despite the obstacles Prussia might be brought into was misplaced, for such events as the death of Charles XII on 30 November and the signing on 5 January of the Treaty of Vienna between George I as Elector, Saxony and the Emperor (designed to counter the possible alliance between Sweden, Russia and Prussia) intervened, and it would be Spring before Prussia was wooed again.

This loss of impetus was reflected in France, much to Stair's chagrin, for he saw it as a consequence of Torcy's influence and of his policy of playing one nation off against another in order to profit from division. Stair was likewise annoyed by the replacement of Hooke by Rottembourg who was then at home in Alsace but who had recently been withdrawn from the Berlin mission, partly due to British pressure as he was reputed to be, like so many other French

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155. Craggs later corrected the number of villages to three (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 19b, Craggs to Stair, 28 April 1719 o.s. (private)).
diplomats, under the influence of members of the "Old Ministry" such as Torcy. However, Dubois claimed,159 and Rottenbourg was to prove him right,160 that under a new master Rottenbourg would reveal a different character. But for the present it also irritated Stair that this new appointment should be made in such haste only to be followed by the granting to Rottenbourg of two weeks' leave. However, that irritation was soon dispersed by the glad tidings, for Sweden's enemies, of the death of Charles XII.161

The Swedish monarch's demise was to provide Stair with new employment, as France was quick to join the ranks of the powers hoping to exploit the change thus effected in the North. Likewise the coming campaign against Spain was to broaden the scope of Stair's tasks. Stair had seen the Quadruple Alliance implemented, but the process had brought him into conflict with Dubois. And though his government had supported, while scolding him, it was to lose patience in the coming year as he clashed with the French princes, with Dubois again and finally with Law.

159. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 469, Stair to Craggs, 9 January 1719 (private).
160. Whitworth was continually to testify to the quality of Rottenbourg's co-operation (S.R.O.: O.D. 155/141, vol. 20, Whitworth to Stair, 20 May 1719).
In January 1719 Stair faced what turned out to be the busiest year of his mission to France, for he would have to assist and criticise the French conduct of the war with Spain, and deal with a resurgence of Jacobite activity, and the consequences to France of the demise of the Swedish monarch. But, for the moment, while the resolution of the Swedish succession question was awaited, there was little to be done in Paris in regard to northern affairs. Likewise a mid-winter lethargy beset the question of the campaign against Spain which could not be mounted until the spring. Thus Stair had only to transmit Berwick's request for a British naval squadron to support his proposed attack on Spain's Biscayan frontier and secure a French promise of supplies for the expedition to recover Sardinia.

1. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 475, Stair to Craggs, 9 January 1719. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 13b, Craggs to Stair, 29 December 1718 o.s. The Regent's acceptance of the idea was followed by a change of heart by Berwick, who soon claimed that, as the Spanish ship building programme was unlikely to produce any ships in time, such aid was unnecessary (P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 8, Stair to Craggs, 13 January 1719).

2. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 8, Stair to Craggs, 13 January 1719. The prospect of war led Stair to propose the use of the half-pay officers in Britain in a force of 7 or 8 battalions to support the French army (B.M.: Stowe MSS., 246, f. 153, Stair to Craggs, 3 January 1719). Craggs gently turned his proposal down; he alleged that Charles XII's death had so eased the Regent's position as to make such a contribution unnecessary. Though he promised that if such assistance was required it would be provided (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 13b, Craggs to Stair, 29 December 1718 o.s.).
He did reveal a planned invasion of Britain by the Spaniards, the Jacobites and the Swedes, but that was an irrelevancy without Charles XII. He warned his government that Franco was flirting with the Teut, the heir-apparent to the Swedish domination of the Baltic. And he had to explain away George I's failure to consult the Regent prior to signing the treaty with Saxony and the Emperor; he claimed that the object of this was to secure Polish territory against the predatory designs of her neighbours, and that George I had acted only as Elector, so, as Britain was in no way involved, not even the British ministry had been consulted, and likewise no obligations under the alliance could be invoked.

But by the beginning of 1719 Stair's financial burdens were such that he contemplated resignation to escape from them. He had been exonerated in October 1718 after having been blamed for the leakage of the news of the fall of Messina which the British government had tried to conceal to avert a run on the stock-market. The culprit was Crawfurd who had hoped to recoup money lost in speculation by releasing the news, through Major Skene, to Stanhope's brother-in-law.


Colonel Pitt, who had promptly sold £100,000 worth of stock before the market fell.  

Crawford was forgiven, but Craggs was soon, on 10 November, castigating Stair for his excessive expenditure. Indeed the latter's oft-repeated pleas for financial assistance had long been a source of irritation to his friends within the British ministry. It was true that the sustained level of Jacobite activity had meant that Stair had to maintain his espionage service and other methods of obtaining information at no small cost. But even a hurried perusal of the accounts that he submitted to the Treasury reveals such inflated figures for items as mundane as stationery that it is not surprising that his demands were eyed suspiciously. Craggs himself fastened upon Stair's proclivity for gambling as the root cause of his inability to meet his debts. He warned him that further extraordinary financial assistance could not be forthcoming and regretted having to say

"a disagreeable thing, which is that you cannot imagine what prejudice your play does you with everybody and how much it enervates the attempts of your friends to serve you. It is wonderful you should not find out yet that you will never make a fortune that way".

He claimed that Stair's allowances were sufficient for his needs but confessed that he knew "that whether one wins or loses, all other expenses are neglected or despised by a deep gamester". Craggs

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10. The Calendar of Treasury Books furnishes many examples; "papers, pen and ink and other stationery wares" consistently stayed at the level of £94 or thereabouts in the three-monthly accounts for extraordinaries (Calendar of Treasury Books, vol. 30, part 2, pp. 275-6; 314, 508; vol. 31, part 2, p. 149; part 3, p. 663; vol. 32, part 2, p. 330).
knew, too, that he hazarded his friend's good opinion but

"God knows I desire nothing hardly more than to be serviceable to you, and your qualifications and services might carry you where you pleased were it not for that damnable witchcraft, which will always keep you low in circumstances and necessities which will sink you at last in spite of a thousand generous, useful and great qualities. Upon my soul you are not young enough to be excused any longer."  

Stair's tame acceptance of this criticism proved only that Craggs had not misjudged him.  

Yet the secretary was not deaf to Stair's pleas of late December for a £10,000 advance to cover his debts in Britain and France. He had numbered losses amounting to £20,000, £11,000 of which was accounted for by the destruction by fire of Castle Kennedy - his residence in Wigtonshire - in late 1716 and £7,000 by Skene's speculations in stock on his behalf (the latter being harder to bear because it had been Stair's allowance from the Treasury). All he claimed to be asking for was the means to complete his embassy - the hint that it was drawing to an end mystified his government - and to live quietly thereafter as a private man. Craggs was able to promise half the sum sought but as to the second £5,000 he warned that the Civil List might not extend to cover it. He alleged too that Stair's reputation as a spendthrift only hampered the efforts of his friends, for they were met with laughter when they advanced Stair's expenses as necessary, and this was embarrassing when they

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had extended their own credit to serve him. But, he thought, if Sunderland was more amenable than he had been in the past, there was some hope that the £5,000 would be secured. Querying Stair's hint that his mission would last but a few months longer, Craggs warned that George I would be seriously embarrassed by the need to find a suitable replacement for him.

Craggs, never bereft of invention, suggested an idea through which, if Stair insisted on resigning, he might still recoup his losses quickly and resign in glory. He proposed that Stair should make his ceremonial entry as Ambassador in February as planned, then take leave of absence and, armed with a full power from George I, travel to the North, there to resolve the question of peace in six months either by repairing old treaties or by creating new ones. Craggs predicted that, as Stair would have sold all his effects in France but would have continued to draw full allowances for that country while his staff would have been reduced to four (a secretary, a valet and two footmen), the saving would be considerable. As, with this promotion ranking him as a world figure, he would have enhanced his reputation with his success as a peace-maker, he would return, Craggs claimed, "with a great weight of merit and services in your pocket, which would, if well managed, bring money there also". And thus he could be home by the winter with the means to pay off his debts and acquire peace of mind, though Craggs warned that the allowances for France would cease once Stair was in Britain.14

Stair's reply on 14 January ignored this proposal; he merely thanked Craggs and Sunderland for their "warm seal to help me". Having apologised for any poor impressions he had made and having discounted the need to defend the conduct of his private affairs, Stair contradicted himself by attempting such a defence. He argued that though his daily allowance of 14 guineas barely covered his expenses, he had been able to procure furniture, plate and jewels in excess of £10,000, buy his equipage and would effect his entry as well as meet all debts without recourse to his private fortune - a marked change in tone from his former appeals. The survival of his fortune was, he contended, rebuttal enough to the allegations that he had lost money gambling. If Skene had not mishandled the sum which he had set aside for the expenses of his embassy, which he now inflated to £11,000, he claimed he would not have had to call for the extra £5,000 to meet the debts that he had incurred in France in the last year. He forewore gambling and proposed to reduce expenditure by living outside Paris for the summer at his country house. He regretted that he had always been kept in France even when events had not warranted it, forcing him to maintain a full and expensive staff. He did not, he claimed, comprehend Craggs' warning, for he presumed that his full allowance would be continued long enough once he had been withdrawn from France for the £5,000 to be recouped by the deduction of £500 a quarter.15

Though Stair's private letter of 22 January16 went no further than to stress the need for a British diplomat to be sent to Sweden, he must have rejected Craggs' ideas for himself because Craggs began

his letter of the 28th "since you seem to think such a voyage as I proposed to you to Sweden would be attended with a new expense, there is an end to it before it was begun".

But it was not the end, for Stair had stung Craggs with the suggestion that the proposal had not been entirely his; "it was and entirely meant for your credit and profit ..." was the latter's comment. The widening divergence between the Hanoverian and British ministries intruded. It was aggravated not only by Britain's exclusion from the negotiations with the Emperor and Saxony but by the Hanoverian presumption in these of committing the British fleet to the defence of Danzig and Elbing.17 And Craggs could claim that he had never been sure that George I would have approved the idea because the Hanoverians, in regard to the North, were

"extremely jealous of anything which would seem to take it out of their hands, which consequence they might have naturally apprehended from a man of your figure's (sic) being sent there who would of course have corresponded with the English Secretary of that province ...".

He ordered Stair to guard his correspondence with the Hanoverians, for they were jealous of the British rapport with France and if given grounds for suspicion they would employ such a "handle ... foolishly and stupidly to obstruct the greatest and most useful measures".18

Replying, Stair denied having doubted that Craggs' idea was his own, but clung to his contention that the mission would have been too expensive and that cost would have only added to the difficulties of the task of steering even between our English and German ministry".

As to his correspondence with the Hanoverians, he could claim that he had already reduced it to such an extent that he had not even informed Robethon of his late conflict with Dubois. 19

Stair took advantage of the mid-winter lull to effect, in accordance with protocol, his oft postponed ceremonial entry into Paris. 20 He made his twin journeys to the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs 21 on 5 February 22 and to the Tuileries, for the audience with Louis XV, on the 7th. 23 And he had need of Bolingbroke's wishes for improved weather 24 as he paraded his four carved and gilded coaches, and his calash, followed by the coaches of the various British lords and gentlemen in attendance; preceded by the coaches bearing Louis XV, the Princes of the Blood, the French courtiers and ministry; escorted by Gardiner, the Master of the Horse, 12 mounted British gentlemen dressed in silver lace covering ash grey, with cockaded hats and by 12 led riding horses; and flanked by 12 mounted pages in Stair's livery of orange trimmed with blue lace and 60 footmen similarly clad - all agleam with intricate gold and silver brocade, embossed leather and rich fabrics. 25

19. B.M. *Stowe MSS.*, 246, f. 224, Stair to Craggs, 11 February 1719 (private).
23. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 53, Crawford to Tickell, 8 February 1719. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 22, Stair to Louis XV, 7 February 1719 (Stair's speech). Stair made the speech in English because he thought that it would be more appropriate (P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 55, Stair to Craggs, 11 February 1719 (copy)).
Stair had spared no expense; he disbursed £7,510/17/0 more than the £10,000 provided by the Treasury as he thought it was fit that upon this occasion things should be done handsomely and I have succeeded so well here that everyone agrees my entry was the finest and the best understood (that) was ever made at Paris.  

He won the applause of such discerning critics as Saint-Simon and the Paris mob. But, while it might have been the most superb entry seen, any such venture was likely to run foul of the elaborate protocol evolved by Louis XIV. Stair found himself barred from the Tuileries on the pretext that the King's coach, which had preceded his, had been drawn by two horses, whereas he was attempting to enter the Palace in one drawn by eight matched dapple-grey Frieslands and he had to suffer the humiliation of the disruption of his procession while the offending six horses were removed. His stoicism was all the more commendable since he had taken the trouble to consult the Regent and his advisers on protocol on this precise matter and had received the reply that it mattered little if he used two or eight horses.

This incident was only a foretaste, for the round of visits to the Princes of the Blood, constituting the last phase of the ceremony, revealed pretensions that provoked from Stair an obdurate defence

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27. H.M.C. Polwarth MSS., vol. 1, 1911, p. 201, Robethon to Polwarth, 6 April 1717.  
of his master's honour which was to defy appeals for restraint from both the French and British governments.

The first of these further problems of protocol, that of the manner of visiting and receiving the Duke of Chartres, son of Orléans and premier Prince of the Blood, was resolved with an ease which belied the difficulties to be raised when meeting the rest of the princes. Perhaps the fundamental mistake in this seemingly trivial affair was the British government's relinquishing its responsibility to Stair.\textsuperscript{32} This was done in early February when Stair began his cautious moves to avoid a precedent by which the princes might claim honours not due to them.\textsuperscript{33} The established procedure was for a prince to greet a visiting ambassador outside the door of his residence. But this was inapplicable to Chartres because he lived with his father in the Palais Royal. Thus Stair agreed to meet him within his apartments there, though he took care to demand from the introducer of ambassadors for the Orléans family, De Marpré, a written statement which mentioned

"how far the Duke de Chartres was to come to meet me and reconduct me, and give reason for his not doing more, which I said in my opinion could only be that of his being lodged in one of the King's houses".

De Marpré complied but interposed a subtle change which Stair could not accept. Crawford was sent to De Marpré on the morning of the visit, 18 February, to state that Stair could not proceed unless De Marpré "would say in his letter un palais royal instead of Le Palais Royal" (presumably Stair was seeking to have all Louis XV's palaces

\textsuperscript{33} P.R.O.: S.P. 76/163, f. 46, Stair to Cragge, 1 February 1719.
included in order to preclude the lesser princes from claiming that here was a precedent that applied to their residences). De Marpré refused to make the adjustment without authorisation from Dubois or the Regent. This brought Dubois, at noon, to Stair, who had since secured a statement from Königsegg advising Stair not to comply "without these words un palais royal or une maison royale were put into the letter". Stair avowed that he sought only an excuse to proceed with the visit that would avoid setting a precedent, but Dubois and De Marpré refused him the amendment on the grounds that Chartres' living with his father, who was of higher rank than the other princes, was sufficient reason for not honouring Stair in the manner that the latter would in their houses. Unperturbed, Stair sought out the Regent, "who mended the letter with his own hand ..." and the visit was conducted at 4 p.m.34

Stair's care was of no avail, for not only did the Dukes of Bourbon and Conti greet him in the manner of Chartres (inside their residences) on his visits to them on 24 and 25 February35 but they noted his exceptional compliment to Chartres by greeting him at his carriage door on his return visit.36 On Sunday, 26 February, Conti's carriage drew up outside Stair's residence, L'Hôtel d'Estampes. Conti's introducer of ambassadors, De Saintot, emerged and, meeting Stair in the vestibule, demanded to know where Stair intended to greet Conti. Stair, being acutely aware of his duty to defend his master's dignity, replied that he would accord Conti equal treatment

34. P.R.O.: S.P. 76/163, f. 79, Stair to Craggs, 18 February 1719; f. 88, Stair to Craggs, 24 February 1719; f. 90, De Marpré to Crawford, 17 February 1719 (amended in the margin to "une palais royal (sic)").
35. P.R.O.: S.P. 76/163, f. 88, Stair to Craggs, 24 February 1719; f. 120, Stair to Craggs, 1 March 1719.
by meeting him there in the vestibule. De Saintot demanded that Stair should descend to the courtyard and, when Stair refused, hurried out to confer with Conti.

Returning, De Saintot quoted the Chartres precedent, but Stair waived that aside as an irrelevancy as it had been an exceptional case to which none of the rules applied. De Saintot referred to Königseggb's descent of part of his outside staircase to greet a Prince of the Blood, but Stair dismissed it as a mistake committed when the Imperial ambassador's guard was down. All that Stair would do in the face of a threat to cancel the visit was to apologise and say he could do no more without a direct order from George I.

The visit was cancelled, and revenge was exacted upon Stair that afternoon, when, on a scheduled visit to the Duchess of Conti, he was left sitting in his carriage for two hours without anyone bothering to tell him that the Duchess had no wish to see him.

To forestall the inevitable criticism, Stair dispatched Crawford to apologise to Conti and to blame De Saintot for the incident.

He provided his government with extracts from the diary of his predecessor, Lord Portland, relating to the entry in 1698, as justification for his own behaviour. He gave the Regent a memorial recounting the recent events and secured the support of the diplomatic community in Paris, including the Papal Nuncio.
And having proclaimed that he had had to defend his master's dignity or like Lord Galway, who had surrendered to the Portuguese the right to march on the right at the battle of Almanza, in 1707, find himself threatened with the Tower, he secured Dubois' agreement to investigate the matter in order to justify his behaviour.

But Dubois found that the princes had been within their rights, and warned that he could do nothing else but complain to Stair's superiors. Stair rejoined that clearly no solution was being sought, warned the Regent that he was strongly supported and asked for a statement on the rules of meeting so that he could prepare his defence. 43

To Craggs Stair wrote that he regretted "that this incident happened and ... if I could have foreseen it, I would have avoided it". But he was confident that his government would support him once it understood his position. He anticipated that Dubois would exaggerate the incident, for the princes made "a noise against me as if heaven and earth were coming together". Yet, sure that he had done no harm to the Regent's position within France, he predicted that the affair would be over in a fortnight. 44

He remained confident while he awaited his government's reaction, claiming to Craggs that the episode would, "like all other things in France, make (a) violent noise for 8 or 9 days, and then is entirely forgotten". 45 Indeed he asked for leave to return to Britain to delay his creditors. 46

43. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 128, Stair to Craggs, 4 March 1719.
44. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 247, f. 25, Stair to Craggs, 4 March 1719 (private).
45. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 197, Stair to Craggs, 12 March 1719.
But it was not to be forgotten, and on 8 March Dubois protested to Stanhope and Craggs about the way Stair, in choosing to follow the single exception (Lord Portland) in the last 57 years had endangered the Regent by "une bagatelle qu'on peut saisir pour faire un grand trouble". And in the following days Dubois maintained pressure to secure orders for Stair to settle the affair.

The British ministry, put out by this inconvenient and wholly artificial crisis, rounded on Stair, castigating him for this "unseasonable dispute" and for involving his diplomatic colleagues because this made "it much more difficult to give up the point in contention". Because George I was "extremely embarrassed by this unhappy affair", a solution was imperative, and Stair was ordered to proclaim that he had acted in defence of his master's dignity in expectation of orders from London. George I was confident that the Regent would not allow him to be slighted and proposed that the latter should arbitrate; the Portland precedent being ignored, the only British reservation was that all ambassadors should be treated equally. However it was indicated to Stair that he would have room to manoeuvre, for the object was, as so lucidly expressed by Craggs on 21 March, to "finish if you can your damned squabble about the ceremonial".

Though he protested that the Portland precedent was valid, Stair obeyed and succeeded in getting the Regent to arbitrate. But he was angry and he told Craggs that he wished to resign. He had,

47. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 322, f. 257, Dubois to Craggs, 8 March 1719; f. 265, Dubois to Stanhope, 8 March 1719. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 247, f. 96, Stair to Craggs, 20 March 1719.
48. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 323, Destouches to Orleans, 13 March 1719; f. 41, Dubois to Destouches, 15 March 1719.
he claimed, considered making way for someone more solvent when the Treasury had recently declared itself unable to advance him money and now he had been humiliated by his orders being completely revealed to Dubois ("the Abbé told me in express words what my instructions were") and he was determined to go. He presumed that he would have to greet the princes in his courtyard, even though Königsegg had not done so, and he asked for "a plain, clear and distinct order to do so, signed by the King's own hand". He expressed indifference towards the British surrender and the sacrifice of himself

"but I cannot imagine what needs there was to make me into this ridiculous figure, to leave me a discretionary power to negotiate, at the same time that you acquaint this court that you have given up the point in question. I have had several trials of this kind before ...".

He claimed that he had previously hesitated to ask to be recalled, for he had been sure that he was needed in France "but as that reason does no longer subsist and, on the contrary, I am become less useful here than anybody, I shall, as soon as this invasion (the Jacobite attempt of 1719) is over, formally desire to be recalled." Yet Stair was able to secure the Regent's acceptance of his plan of settlement whereby the Princes of the Blood's demands would be met on the understanding that this would only apply to the period of the Regency; a settlement which Stair claimed would have been possible earlier if it had not been for outside interference but which evoked in Dubois such a response that "he was ready to fly

52. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 247, f. 106, Stair to Craggs, 26 March 1719 (private); f. 100 (Craggs) to Dubois, 12 March 1719 o.s. (copy). A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 328, f. 80, Craggs to Dubois, 12 March 1719 o.s.
out of the window with rage, for you know that the Abbe had set his heart upon carrying this point absolutely". 54

But such success was not soon enough to forestall Craggs' vigorous public and private replies. Writing on 4 April, Craggs emphasized the degree to which this affair had embarrassed both the king and the government by its intrusion into more important issues. Craggs stated that he had studied the statement which Stair had persuaded Königsegg to make on his own conduct and ordered Stair to use it as a guide. 55

Privately Craggs wondered at Stair's attitude; he argued that if George I was prepared to concede to the French demands, why could not Stair?

"... and yet you take it as if you were given up and betrayed and as if this were a particular good reason to desire to be recalled and sell your regiment and I don't know what. And you will obey no order that comes to you under the King's hand. Pray my dear Lord, quelle mouche vous pique? Are these times to be quarrelling with the Regent, the Abbe, the English ministry? You put me in mind of what I have sometimes seen you do in play, throw the handle after the hatchet and never know when to give over to a loser".

He asserted that, despite their weaknesses, the Regent and Dubois were (for want of suitable alternatives) irreplaceable. Thus Stair had no choice but to learn to live and deal with them. And "as to the Abbé knowing of your instruction", Craggs alleged he had done no more than answer a letter from Dubois in general terms and that


he had taken care to delay it for three days after dispatching the letter to Stair. 56 Two days later Craggs knew of the possible settlement and, though he expressed approval, he warned that George I "would have no more accidents arise out of so useless a dispute. 57 Yet Stair was only more determined to resign. He drafted a letter in which he complained of his want of governmental support; said that he could not stoop to seek favours but looked for some monetary compensation before retiring; that he had no love of complaint, just as he knew that Craggs had no time to listen; and promised his abstention from politics but his continuing private support of the ministry. 58 Then, on 10 April, having thanked Craggs for burning his letter of 26 March, for "I was very much out of humour and very much piqued ...", but could say such things to a friend, he stated that "I'm still of opinion that I had very good reason to be angry ..."). He remained aggrieved that, when he had been ostensibly allowed scope to negotiate, the French had been told that the affair was at an end. Such treatment rendered him useless and contemptible while prejudicing British prestige. He claimed again that Craggs had issued him with his instructions and at the same time had informed Dubois of their content, and produced the exact dates (which "I had from the Abbé Dubois' own mouth") of Craggs' letter to Dubois which carried a faithful copy of his instructions. Therefore, he asserted, his complaint was justified;

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56. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/147, (Craggs) to Stair, 24 March 1719 o.s.
58. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/147, Stair to Craggs, (10 April) 1719, dated by comparison with the opening sentences of n. 59 below.
particularly as he would have been prepared, given prior warning, to
do what he had done before, namely, in the national interest,
accepting any blame himself. However, he admitted that the affair
"is nothing personally to me", and claimed that he had always thought
of it as a matter for George I's discretion.

He took the opportunity to defend his idea for a settlement,
which he saw as a compliment to the Regent while providing a pause
during which to decide future attitudes. He sounded his familiar
warning about the French; alleging that if their aid was required
"they'll help fling us down and make a merit of it". He warned,
too, of the dubious motives behind their northern policy and of Dubois'
suspicious behaviour. He called for the support of the Regent and
added a proposal for a British raid on Cadiz.

Because he had lost his government's confidence, Stair asked to
be replaced. He claimed

"'tis very true that I have hitherto struggled
with great difficulties at this court, greater
possibly than those which now remain to be
struggled with, and I did it with great zeal and
courage, because I knew I was serving the king
and my country and my friends, better than possibly
another could have done at that time, but at that
time I had credit here and credit at home".

Then he had had money at home to support him abroad, but that had
gone and, denied credit facilities,

"I am become a burden to the service, which makes
me troublesome and uneasy to the ministers. I
cannot propose to continue in this station any
longer either with use to the public or with
satisfaction to myself—you tell me this is
flinging the handle after the hatchet. I believe
you are in the right, possibly I might do better
to continue here a cypher, I might save a thousand
or two but that way of thinking does not agree with
my temper, I do not love to eat the King's bread in
vain, besides, though I am the easiest man in the
world to my friends, the most complying and the
readiest to give up my own private views and to sacrifice my interest not only to the public but to anybody useful to the public, yet I am good for nothing with the rod over my head. I know myself so very well that I won't pretend to put myself in the way of blind submission which is a character I cannot support. I know this temper is not agreeable to great men and therefore I chose to retire now than to do it 5 or 6 months hence."

Stair again made mention of his £20,000 debt in the hope of assistance and then, "to

"to conclude this tedious epistle ... I shall continue to serve faithfully as long as this storm lasts, without saying one word, but to tell you my edge is quite turned and I am tired out with the remembrance of what's past and the prospect of what's to come." 59

Yet he was able to add that, because the Regent had accepted his idea for a compromise, he was about to discuss it with Dubois and, on 15 April, he announced truthfully that the matter was at an end, 60 though only in May could he say that "I have waded through all the difficulties of the ceremonial." 61 He again received Chartres 62 and, having apologised at an arranged "chance" meeting at the Palais Royal, did the same for Conti. 63 The resolution of this trivial affair, which nearly terminated Stair's diplomatic career, wrought a remarkable change in his mood. Craggs remarked that the ill-humour which he had still showed on 11 April had three days later dispersed. 64

59. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 247, f. 128, Stair to Craggs, 10 April 1719.
60. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 247, f. 140, Stair to Craggs, 15 April 1719 (private).
This ill-tempered defence of dignity had been, as his government well appreciated, the least important of Stair's preoccupations in the first quarter of 1719. Amid the preparations for the campaign in the South, having met the sour challenge of the Regent over the secrecy surrounding the Treaty of Vienna, he was called upon to parallel and complement the correspondence established between Stanhope and Dubois which aimed at securing French support for the British idea of re-establishing the old trading pattern in the Baltic by reconstituting sufficient of the Swedish empire as to counter the Tsar's menace to that trade. Of prime importance - and something which was easily achieved - was to dissuade the Regent from regarding the Tsar as a new champion of French interests in the North. And as British attitudes had not yet crystallised (unlike the Hanoverians with their aims of securing Bremen and Verden and defeating the aims of the Tsar and the Duke of Mecklenburg), Stair was ordered to employ inference in conversation with the Regent rather than direct comment, though to win Dubois it was thought necessary that he should "stroke and flatter him, approve his measures and designs."

Stair's probes soon revealed that, despite the superficial French complacency in February, they were in fact delaying in expectation.

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66. P.R.O., S.P. 78/163, f. 53, Stair to Craggs, 4 February 1719.
70. P.R.O., S.P. 78/163, f. 53, Stair to Craggs, 4 February 1719; B.M.: Stowe MSS., 246, f. 224, Stair to Craggs, 11 February 1719.
of the peace plan that their envoy in Stockholm, Count de La Marck, would soon carry South, and this in the face of Stair's dark hints that inactivity so induced might cause Sweden to look elsewhere for a solution of her desperate situation.\textsuperscript{71} It was in view of this that he urged the British ministry to cease relying on the offices of de La Marck or even of the Hanoverian Colonel Bassewitz\textsuperscript{72} and to open a direct communication with Stockholm by sending "some man of confidence into Sweden to take that negotiation upon his own hand",\textsuperscript{73} the role which he had refused for himself.

Welcoming the consequent appointment of Carteret on 24 February, Stair pressed with equal urgency for Britain to provide France with positive leadership in northern affairs.\textsuperscript{74} But, as the British ministry concentrated on securing Prussia as a first step towards forming an alliance between Sweden and the Northern powers to compel the Tsar to relinquish the conquered territories, excluding Nerva, Cronstad and St. Petersburg, Stair was allowed only to hint at this aim.\textsuperscript{75}

Yet the French, characteristically, were not content just to await de La Marck's arrival, and their dalliance with the Russians, the Prussians and the Spaniards (revealed in the Marini correspondence)\textsuperscript{76} aroused such suspicions in Stair\textsuperscript{77} and Craggs that it

\textsuperscript{71} P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 55, Stair to Craggs, 11 February 1719 (copy).
\textsuperscript{73} P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 55, Stair to Craggs, 11 February 1719 (copy).
\textsuperscript{74} B.M.: Stowe MSS., 247, f. 11, Stair to Craggs, 24 February 1719.
\textsuperscript{75} S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 19b, Craggs to Stair, 17 February 1719 (private).
\textsuperscript{76} P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 82, Stair to Craggs, 23 February 1719 (copy).
\textsuperscript{77} P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 197, Stair to Craggs, 12 March 1719.
coloured the latter’s reaction to the proposal that the Regent should mediate in the North. Craggs ordered Stair to humour the French by appearing to support the idea. But in fact he dismissed it both on the grounds of his suspicions and because the Regent proposed to uphold the tradition of France’s ally, Sweden, having a foothold in Germany as a counter-weight to the Emperor, which George I rejected as merely a source of further friction and because, while France guaranteed Stettin to Prussia and would allow Hanover her gains, Danish interests would suffer and he would not abandon his only constant ally.  

In March France only added to the friction by refusing the Danish king the title of "Majesty". Yet at the month’s end Britain’s confidence and the vigour of her response to the threat of a further Jacobite invasion seemed to inspire France. On the 26th Stair reported that he found the French suddenly prepared to prosecute the war with Spain with determination, and had heard them claim that Prussia would co-operate with George I. He believed that the malevolence of Torcy had been responsible for her previous attitude but assured Craggs that "as long as you stand firm upon your legs you’ll lead France" - though instability would lead her to "help to tumble us down". Thus, contemptuous and unrelenting in his suspicions, Stair awaited de La Marck’s plan.

But he discovered from meeting de La Marck in late April that the latter had returned with nothing more than a personal formula for peace. The Swedes had not provided him with a proposition,

81. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 342, Stair to Craggs, 29 April 1719; f. 347, Stair to Craggs, 29 April 1719.
and what he offered was only a reiteration of the idea of re-establishing
a Swedish presence in Germany, though a reduced one, by depriving
Prussia, Denmark and Hanover of some of their gains. In the course
of this conversation, which he described as disagreeable, Stair treated
de La Harck to a like reiteration of the standard British arguments
on Germany, which he claimed to have had some effect upon the French
envoy. 82

Stair praised the Regent's unambiguous attitude in promising to
make de La Harck's proposition available to the British government.

But Dubois only aroused his ire. He complained to Craggs on 7 May:

"I must say to you in private, that in the whole
affair of the North, I am not at all satisfied
with our friend the Abbé; nor have I been satis-
fied, at any one time, or in any one thing, relative
to that affair, since his coming into the ministry".

Dubois had failed to send an envoy to St Petersburg or to send Hooke
to Berlin; he had made a mystery over Rottembourg's negotiations
there; and had, of late, been dallying with Baron Schleinitz, the
Russian envoy. This, with

"all the mumbo we had seen about the Count de La
Marck, whilst in Sweden; and the Abbe's behaviour
since his return, displeases me much in every point,
and shews an inclination to play foul".

Stair claimed that he had on a previous occasion extracted a con-
fession from Dubois

"that he was very ignorant of those matters of the
North, and of the interest of those Northern princes,
and how their dominions lie to one another; but he
promised me that he would study the map, and employ
some time pour se mettre au fait".

However he had not found the time, and Stair believed that his con-
sequent ignorance made him unwilling to talk and was the only

82. P.R.O., S.P. 78/163, f. 353, Stair to Craggs, 6 May 1719 (copy
in f. 368).
explanation of his devious behaviour after the arrival of de La Marck. He had denied the plan's existence, saying merely that Sweden desired to settle first with George I, and had reacted to Stair's reminder that de La Marck had revealed the plan in a letter from Copenhagen by falling "into a most violent passion, and raved, for half an hour, reproaches and God knows what". On the morrow Dubois both promised Stair a paper on what de La Marck had said and instructed the Regent not to divulge any details to Stair.

"But, unluckily, the day before that, the very day I had spoken (to the) Abbe, the Regent had told me, that the Count de La Harock had brought a plan, and had given me an account of the principal articles".

Stair's reminder at the weekly audience for diplomats on the Thursday that he had delayed his courier to London and had called every day since his meeting with de La Marck on Sunday for the promised paper evoked further violent fits as Dubois angrily contended that the conversation with de La Marck "valoit mieux qu'un chiffon de papier"; for in it Stair had learnt more than Dubois or the Regent knew. Stair coolly unmoved by such passion, for the paper had been Dubois' idea, had told the latter that he did not wish to trust his memory.

"Well, says he, I will tell you all the contents of it upon my finger. To put it in writing is the work of a quarter of an hour ..."

and he promised it that night. On the same day the Regent expressed surprise at the non-appearance of the paper. Stair deduced that France was seeking to take the lead in any negotiations by keeping Britain ill-informed and reinforced his continual pleas for

the dispatch of Carteret by stressing again the need for direct contact with Sweden.

The same depth of suspicion did not mar Stair's part in the bid to coerce Spain into the Quadruple Alliance. The reason for this was that Stair was confined to overseeing the laggardly preparations for war, while, with France compliant, Stanhope concentrated on strengthening the alliance by the enlistment of the Dutch and on securing the Emperor's endorsement of the plan to afford the Dutch three months in which to persuade Spain to take advantage of this further opportunity to decide her fate by other means than the force of arms.

Stair saw to the provision of the escort for Berwick's supplies, pressed for an early French raid upon the Spanish ship-building activities at the port of Passages, which was the primary objective (although without success as Berwick would not contemplate action before his preparations were complete), and, while warning about

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69. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 8, Stair to Craggs, 13 January 1719; f. 17, Stair to Craggs, 21/22 January 1719; f. 29, Stair to Craggs, 22 January 1719 (plus enclosures, f. 31, Berwick to Stair, 14 January 1719; f. 33, Berwick to Stair, 17 January 1719); f. 44, Stair to Craggs, 31 January 1719; f. 72, Berwick to Stair, 7 February 1719 (copy). S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 19b, Craggs to Stair, 17 January 1719 o.s.; vol. 22, Berwick to Stair, 14 January 1719.
calibre differences, ensured the supply of the French quota of artillery and munitions for the proposed expedition to Sardinia. However, French uneasiness about making war on a Bourbon, led to an incident in late February which weakened the trust which had been established between Stair and Dubois in regard to the South. It was not shattered, because Stair and Craggs retained their sense of perspective. Stair, alerted by the appearance of a Spanish courier and prompted by the Savoyard ambassador, directly asked Dubois what was being carried and thereby discovered a secret dialogue between Hanoré and Alberoni.

What he gathered from the letter Dubois showed him was that, despite the agreement made between himself and the Regent at the time of Hanoré's return from Spain that any contact with that country would only encourage its intransigence, Hanoré had thought otherwise. The letter itself was from Alberoni to Hanoré dated 28 January and did little more than rebut the Allied assertion that the war was directed against Alberoni's, rather than his master's, ambitions. The damning evidence was reserved for its two enclosures. The first was a proposal from the French consul at Barcelona to Alberoni for an alliance between France and Spain which would be cemented by marriage between the Infant of Spain and Mademoiselle de Montpensier, daughter of the Regent, by giving the Low Countries to the Duke of

Chartres and by the addition of Savoy to the inheritances of the sons of the Queen of Spain. Though Dubois dismissed this plan as the mere invention of the consul, Stair remained convinced that someone of greater importance had inspired it.90

The second enclosure was a letter addressed to Alberoni from Bayonne by a former prisoner in the Bastille named Marini. He claimed to have written at the request of the Regent, who wished to express his distaste at the necessity for war, to warn Alberoni that any blame would attach to him personally and to propose making him Archbishop of Seville, through French pressure on the Pope, if Philip V was persuaded to make peace. Marini, a Spanish agent, had been arrested at Lyons when on a mission to promote a league between Prussia, Russia, and Spain. He claimed to have been interrogated by Le Blanc and then to have been brought before the Regent who released him on condition that he wrote to Alberoni. Though Marini had claimed that the Regent had seen and approved of the letter, Dubois denied that Marini had had more than "but a simple permission to write to the Cardinal".91

Stair did not believe this disclaimer. He was disturbed by the authentic ring of the letter and by the news that Berwick had been in Bayonne at the same time as it had been sent and had halted the march of his regiments towards the frontier, while in Paris the Duke of Conti and other intending warriors had ceased to assemble their equipment. He found that, since Alberoni's reply, those

90. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 82, Stair to Craggs, 23 February 1719; f. 110, Alberoni to Nancre, 28 January 1719 (copy); f. 114, French consul at Barcelona to Alberoni, (undated) (copy).
91. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 247, f. 11, Stair to Craggs, 24 February 1719.
preparations had been resumed. The Regent and Dubois denied their involvement in this affair at an audience granted to Stair on 24 February. But, possibly because he was cosetting Dubois, for the pressures of the continuing conflict within the French church (between Jansenist and Jesuit) had worn Dubois' temper thin, he heard them without heat. Dubois reciprocated by allowing Stair free access to all the evidence. The moderation of the British response must be seen in context of their need of France's goodwill in March, as they faced the impending Hispano-Jacobite invasion. Thus Craggs ordered Stair to upbraid the Regent gently for allowing the Spaniards even the slightest suspicion of allied disunity, and Stair, embroiled with the Princes of the Blood and having just taken pains to heal a breach between D'Estrées and Dubois, was not loath to comply. Nevertheless Dubois was convinced that Stair saw evil in every incident and especially in this one.

The Jacobites, despite all their reverses, had retained their faith in their ability to effect the return of their master to his father's throne. But the ill-luck that had dogged their enterprises had not left them. Ormonde's search for support in the North, in the winter of 1717/8 was fruitless. Any hopes of Swedo-Russian

92. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 92, Stair to Craggs, 25 February 1719; f. 106, Dubois to Stair, 25 February 1719 (providing copies of the relevant correspondence ff. 108, 110, 112, 114); f. 197, Stair to Craggs, 12 March 1719.


95. Nanore was undeterred and continued the correspondence (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 22, Alberoni to Nanore, 6 March 1719 (copy)).

96. A.A.E.: C.P. ang. 325, f. 41, Dubois to Destouches, 15 March 1719.

co-operation in the Jacobite scheme of invasion of 1718 were dissipated by the failure of the peace conference on the Åland Islands. As the Tsar's lack of interest ruled out any unilateral action by Russia, there remained Charles XII of Sweden, but he had extended the Northern War into Norway, and his death there in December brought the new order to Stockholm, putting paid to all prospects of aid from there.

However the Jacobites had found a new champion in Alberoni who grasped at any chance to distract his enemies and, though he had hoped for Charles XII's support, ordered to sea the invasion force which he had assembled at Cadiz. The Pretender was brought from Rome to Spain, and Ormonde, who had been summoned from Paris in November, was dispatched to Corruna, where he was to join the fleet as its commander. Ormonde, however, waited there in vain, because his armada, which had been weather-bound in harbour until 7 March, was three weeks later dispersed by a storm off Cape Finisterre. Unwittingly the diversionary force of 300 Spanish soldiers under the command of Lord Marischal, which sailed from Passages on 8 March in two frigates, assumed Ormonde's mantle. But, though a thrust into Western Scotland was effected, the response from the clans was negligible, and General Nightman's army was hardly extended in the only battle in Glen Shiel on 10 June.98

Stair had never swerved from his task of watching and harrying the Jacobites,99 though he was not slow to recommend their pardons when they had recanted.100 But French indifference and inefficiency

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100. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 246, f. 164, Stair to Craggs, 14 January 1719.
enabled the Jacobites merely to go to ground, and Ormonde was able to
base himself in Paris and to cross into Spain without undue
hindrance. Yet Britain was well supplied with information on
Jacobite intentions. Prior to the death of Charles XII the threat
from the North was revealed in September 1716 by Stanhope, in
October by Dubois, in December by Bolingbroke, and in January
by Stair and Dubois. And any chance of the Cadiz armada finding
Britain unguarded was forestalled by the revelations of Houwens, the
Dutch resident in Lisbon, and of a Jacobite intercepted by the
French en route for Spain. Though D'Avenant contributed the news
of the deception at Voghera, where the decoy Pretender courted arrest
by the Imperial authorities to cover the real Pretender's departure

101. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 2, Stair to Craggs, 3 August 1718.
August 1718. Dubois' excuse was that Ormonde's friends could
easily hide him (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 322, f. 42, Dubois to
Craggs, 16 January 1719).

102. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 245, Stair to Craggs, 24 October 1718.
B.M.: Stowe MSS., 231, f. 253, Stair to Robethon, 9 November

103. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 140, Stanhope to (Craggs), 14 September
p. 283, Britain had been aware of the possibility of a com-
bined Russo-Swedish attack since the summer of 1718 (Nordmann,
op.cit., pp. 177-8).

104. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 246, f. 136, Stair to Craggs, 1 October 1718.
105. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 29 (Bolingbroke) to Stair, 28
December 1718.

106. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 17, Stair to Craggs, 21/22 January
1719. W.K. Dickson, "The Jacobite Attempt of 1719", Scottish
History Society, vol. 19, 1895, p. xxxviii.

1719 (copy) (translation).

108. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 247, f. 35, Dubois to Craggs, 8 March 1719.
P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 197, Stair to Craggs, 12 March 1719.
to Spain, it was again from French sources that Stair learnt that the West of England was the intended destination of the Spanish fleet.

Stair secured for his government, from "the best accounts I have from my spies", a large body of information on the movements of the leading Jacobites, including, subsequently, the escape of Princess Sobieski and her appearance in Italy. Later in March he was entrusted with the task of refusing the French offer of 15,000 seamen and 20 battalions of infantry; the acceptance of 600 seamen, who were never employed, being returned to France with


110. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 126, Stair to Craggs, 4 March 1719; f. 171, Stair to Craggs, 11 March 1719; f. 197, Stair to Craggs, 12 March 1719. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 231, f. 264, Stair to Robethon, 12 March 1719. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 322, f. 257, Dubois to Craggs, 5 March 1719; C.P. Ang. 323, f. 10, Dubois to Destouches, 11 March 1719; f. 38, Dubois to Stanhope, 15 March 1719; f. 81, Dubois to Destouches, 26 March 1719.


112. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 204, Stair to Craggs, 15 March 1719; f. 213, Stair to Craggs, 18 March 1719; f. 221, Stair to Craggs, 20 March 1719; f. 230, Stair to Craggs, 22 March 1719; f. 232, Stair to Craggs, 22 March 1719; f. 249, Stair to Craggs, 26 March 1719; f. 250, Crawford to Staney, 29 March 1719; f. 252, Stair to Craggs, 29 March 1719; f. 254, Stair to Craggs, 29 March 1719; f. 258, Stair to Craggs, 1 April 1719; f. 271, Stair to Craggs, 2 April 1719; f. 285, Stair to Craggs, 4 April 1719; f. 287, Stair to Craggs, 6 April 1719; f. 302, Stair to Stanhope, 11 March 1719.


a month's pay, was merely a gesture of gratitude. This offer matched those of the Dutch and Austrians, but Stair, who had just, on 26 March, witnessed the volte face on the French northern policy, viewed it guardedly. Recent French behaviour seemed to confirm his belief in their unreliability, as for

"these several days past this court has wore (sic) a very black and gloomy look towards us, and the troops sent to the coast and the great fervour in providing transports for them seemed rather to threaten us than to give us assistance".

Naval reinforcement had been refused, the Regent had avoided Stair, and Dubois had been "all cloud and mystery". Yet once the British had sufficient naval strength at sea, "everything clears up again" and France had four 60 gun ships on offer at Brest.

Since the Dutch met Britain's needs for reinforcement, the view expressed by the British government was that the units deployed in Northern France would better serve the common interest by drawing off Alberoni by an assault across the Southern frontier, particularly as the garrison at Passages had been stripped to meet the manpower needs of Marischal's expedition. The attack on Passages was initiated in mid-April and successfully completed by the month's

120. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 296, Stair to Craggs, 11 April 1719.
Yet the main French effort against Spain was not put in train until late May. But Stair was not alone in his frustrations, as Byng in Naples found the Sicilian campaign blocked in early April by "the wonderful processions, zeal and devotion there is in all people here, so busy talking to God and the Holy Angels, that all worldly thoughts must be laid aside for two days more".

However, the task of military liaison with the French government in which he was assisted by Colonel William Stanhope, appointed in May to act as his deputy in the field, presented Stair with his happiest and least controversial occupation in the remaining year of his embassy. Indeed this role not only stimulated his critical faculties (he was continually to present Berwick with criticisms and alternative plans) but it aroused his penchant for strategy.

Thus, while awaiting Berwick's opening moves, and searching for a

122. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 33, Crawford to Stanway, 24 May 1719; f. 54, Stair to Craggs, 24 May 1719.
125. This penchant had not been entirely dormant; in the summer of 1717 Stair had presented a plan for the Imperial seizure of Belgrade involving an attack from the river side, but it was politely refused (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 38, Eugene to Stair, 15 August 1717), and more recently he had professed advice to his government on the positioning of the fleet so as to thwart the Jacobites (P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 197, Stair to Craggs, 12 March 1719; f. 173, Stair to Craggs, 11/12 March 1719).
stroke which would so shake the Spaniards that they wouldoust
Alberoni and sue for peace, he proposed a raid on Cadiz. 126 He
envisioned for this the employment of an Anglo-French force of 20
battalions, conveyed in 30 transports and escorted by 10 warships,
in a seaward assault using the Scandinavian method of breaching the
defences by means of flat-bottomed boats which mounted up to 50 guns
on platforms so as to concentrate their fire-power and thereby to
circumvent the lengthy conventional assault on the sophisticated
landward defences. 127 But the Regent never supported him 128 and,
though Craggs acknowledged that this blow could end the war, the idea
was rejected on the grounds that both the British navy and the French
army were already over-committed. 129 Yet Stair was undismayed and
was soon to find another application for his theories on the assault
of fortresses from the sea 130 and would adapt his idea for Cadiz to
the Gallician coast with more success.

126. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 247, f. 128, Stair to Craggs, 10 April 1719
(private); f. 138, Stair to Craggs, 15 April 1719 (private).
127. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 247, f. 158, Stair's project for Cadiz, 24
April 1719.
130. In August 1719 Stair offered Byng a map of Messina with suggestions
of how his idea for the seaward bombardment of the citadel might
be applied to terminate swiftly a protracted siege
(P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165, f. 116, Stair to Craggs, 1 September 1719).
He repeated the idea on 1 September when he heard that the town
had fallen while the citadel held out (P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165,
f. 116, Stair to Craggs, 1 September 1719). Craggs felt that
it could well prove useful if tried (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141,
vol. 19b, Craggs to Stair, 27 August 1719 o.s.) but there is
no evidence that it was applied as on 18 October Byng merely
announced that, with the seizure of Messina, Palermo was the
next objective (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 21, Byng to Stair,
18 October 1719).
The British government concurred with the French plan of campaign, according to which the Spanish army would be drawn to the West by a feint (that would include the seizure of Fuenterrofaiba and San Sebastian) in order to facilitate an invasion of Catalonia where the disaffections of the Catalans might serve the Allied cause and where the Mediterranean rather than the stormy Bay of Biscay could be utilised for the transportation of supplies. Stair thought this plan to be "a feeble one" and proposed an extension of the feint to include at least a sea-borne raid on the magazines at Bilboa. But he was rebuffed by Berwick, who did not have the naval resources to effect the raid and did not want to hazard such a deep penetration of that difficult region.

It was in the political rather than the military objectives that dissent between the Allies was to be found because, though the Regent could see the advantages in raising a revolt against Philip V, he was reluctant to make the categorical promises to restore the ancient rights of the Catalans and their neighbours, which the British desired, on the grounds that such promises would hinder the ultimate
making of peace. The manifesto which was issued in May merely called upon the Spaniards to rise and rid themselves of Alberoni.

This dissension probably accounted for the cold and indeed rude reception accorded William Stanhope when he arrived in Paris to assume his duties as British liaison officer to Berwick. Though mystified, angered and ill, Stair managed the modulation that "I have been used, from time to time, to meet with such cold fits - probably this may go off, as the others have done." It did, for fears of internal insurrection brought the French government round, as Philip V advanced towards the frontier amid boasts from Alberoni that France would rise to greet him and as the remnants of the scattered armada regrouped at Corunna and seemed to threaten Brittany where disaffection was rife. And Stair could write a few days later that "it has happened just as I foresaw it would, the cold fit is gone off, and the Abbé is as sweet as honey and as soft as oil again".

137. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 14, Stair to Craggs, 15/16 May 1719.
138. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 51, Stair to Stanhope, 28 May 1719; f. 52, Stair to Stanhope, 28 May 1719 (private).
140. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 4, Stair to Craggs, 15 May 1719; f. 34, Stair to Craggs, 24 May 1719. The latest symptom of unrest was the treachery of the Duke of Richelieu who planned to assist Philip V in the seizure of Bayonne as a first step to a general uprising (P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 261, Stair to Craggs, 2 April 1719).
141. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 90, Stair to Craggs, 1 June 1719.
Though Stair, in his private letter to Craggs of 4 June, dismissed the fear of revolt, he thought

"it has this good effect, it makes them cling fast to us, and makes them wish that the affairs of the North were composed, that if there should be occasion for it, we may be able to help them."

He thought that advantage should be taken of this mood and proposed to say nothing until ordered to. However Whitworth had already returned to Berlin, Carteret had gone to Sweden and George I was in Hanover, from where emanated the policy which, in a flurry of treaties, attempted to prevent the Tsar from upsetting the balance of power in the Baltic. And France's willingness to follow Britain's lead in the North meant that, while Bottombourg extended himself to assist Whitworth in Berlin, there was little to be done in Paris.

144. Stanhope accompanied the King to Hanover, leaving Cragg to supervise a residual ministry, presided over by the Prince of Wales, which Craggs disparaged, it "jogs on hitherto very quietly, though you (Stair) cannot imagine what a hodgepodge of strange thoughts and opinions do arise from a medley of wise men who know nothing of the foreign affairs. It often makes me reflect on Marlborough's saying, that when he intended to do nothing he always called a council of war" (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 19b, Craggs to Stair, 16 May 1719 o.s.). Craggs was to entertain Stair with comments such as "the old fool at Hanover" (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 19b, Craggs to Stair, 27 May 1719 o.s.; "old woman" too 28 April 1719) and "this stupid old creature with the profoundest ignorance that ever I knew, enjoys also the greatest share of pride, resentment that you can imagine, he had puzzled and muddled in those Northern affairs with the adroitness of a cow" (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 19b, Craggato Stair, 1 October 1719 o.s.), referring to Bernstorff and the struggle between the British and Hanoverian ministries over the rapprochement with Prussia, from which Stanhope emerged triumphant in July.
145. 22 July, Preliminary Peace between Hanover and Sweden, and Renewal of Anglo-Swedish treaty of 1700; 15 August, Anglo-Prussian treaty and Prusso-Hanoverian treaty; 23 September, France guaranteed Prusso-Hanoverian treaty; 20 November, Peace between Sweden and Hanover; 18 January 1720, Swedish-Polish treaty; 1 February Peace between Sweden and Prussia, and Anglo-Swedish Alliance treaty signed; 14 June, Danish -Swedish Peace treaty.
A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 325, f. 103, Senesterre to Dubois, 31 July 1719.
Thus, aside from ensuring that de La Marok, after his interference with the Prussian negotiations had been uncovered,\textsuperscript{147} did not return to Sweden\textsuperscript{148} and that his replacement, Count Campredon, went there bearing the Regent's subsidy in gold to encourage the country's stand against the Tsar,\textsuperscript{149} Stair was able to devote his attention to problems further south.

But the Anglo-French solidarity of purpose in regard to Spain meant that The Hague rather than Paris was the scene of diplomatic activity while the Allies attempted to persuade the Dutch to cease trading with Spain,\textsuperscript{150} to forget their inclination towards neutrality and to embrace the alliance.\textsuperscript{151} The French suspected that the Emperor contemplated abandoning his allies in order to settle with Spain and to expand his power in Italy. They drew this conclusion from the Imperial unwillingness to allow the Tuscan inheritances to be reserved for the Spanish princes,\textsuperscript{152} from the failure to detain Penteniéter, the accredited diplomat, at The Hague to await the Dutch accession,\textsuperscript{153} from the rumour of a proposed marriage between a Spanish prince and an Imperial archduchess,\textsuperscript{154} and from a report of a desire to disengage in Sicily (the British reaction was to order...
Stair noted that the French jealousy of the Emperor had only become evident once the danger of a Spanish invasion had receded, particularly after Fuenterrabia had fallen on 16 June. He undertook the task of placating Dubois and allaying his suspicions and succeeded, in two difficult meetings with the latter on 24 June, in securing French agreement to support the effort to persuade the Dutch to join the alliance, even if space had to be left for the Austrian signature in the subsequent document.

Stair's personal formula for the solution of current French difficulties was decisive military action. Up to June he had been confined, in regard to the war, to arranging British naval coverage of Brittany and to solving the question of the protocol to be adopted, when French and British naval units met, by the negative solution of dispensing altogether with saluting. But the success at Fuenterrabia provided the opportunity to suggest how this victory should be exploited. He felt that an attack on the main Spanish force "would have been the surest and quickest way to bring the King of Spain to reason ...". And, as San Sebastian was the selected target, he almost automatically advanced his theory of assault from the sea:

"being masters at sea that place will give you little trouble, 'tis quite open to the side of the water. Half a dozen of good large barks, with platforms upon them for cannon, will lay it quite open in one day".

Musing on the wider aspects of the campaign, Stair informed his correspondent, William Stanhope, that the city of Pamplona, the current headquarters of the Spanish army, would be taken easily if Eugene's tactics at the siege of Lille in 1718 were copied, but only if a wide area of the surrounding countryside was secured. He thought that, if Bilboa were seized, the Spaniards, due to their concentration on the frontier, would be unable to prevent Berwick from marching towards the Ebro by way of Vitoria. He predicted that a raid on the shipping at Santona would provide further distraction. However, he believed that Berwick's commitment to Biscay made it impossible for the latter to disengage and open a campaign in Catalonia in this year. And he urged that the war should be prosecuted with vigour, for if Alberoni had not been deposed by the time that peace was made and was furnished with the army returned from Sicily and Sardinia, and if the barrier of semi-independent Spanish frontier provinces had not been created, the peace would be short-lived.158

With the aim of quickening the pace of the war, on 28 June Stair proposed to Craggs to employ either the French battalions that would be idle if the attack on Pamplona was cancelled or the British troops currently in West of England and Ireland:

"nine or ten of our weak battalions are more than sufficient to burn every ship or bark upon the coast of Galicia, to ransom every town upon that coast and to put the whole country under contribution".

He claimed that the cost to Britain would be three months' provisions for the troops and the price of the hire of a dozen transports, 158

while it would be "an infinite loss to Spain, and bring a great
discredit upon Alberoni's ministry". 159

In the raid on Santona in mid-August when three warships and a
pile of planks were burnt, the initiator, William Stanhope, was
able personally to lead the small force of French infantry and British
marines. 160 Clearly Stair could not do likewise when in mid-October
the British raiding force landed at Vigo, led by Stair's old comrade-
in-arms, Lord Cobham. 161 Indeed, as the Vigo expedition was to be
adopted by the Regency in London as its own, 162 Stair, the author,
fell under its criticism when in August his enthusiasm for the pro-
ject seemed to wane. 163 Cragges found the men and the ships, 164
while Stair sought French participation. 165 His success in procuring
on 12 July a promise of troops was short-lived, for the Regent on 20
July recanted on the grounds that while Britain had men to spare
after the success against the Jacobites, France had not. 166 How-
ever, Stair was able to arrange the liaison between the French

159. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 200, Stair to Cragges, 28 June 1719;
f. 236, Stair to Cragges, 8 July 1719. Stair in fact had
already proposed a raid on a Gallician port if Alberoni managed
to gather in it the remnants of the scattered armada (P.R.O.:
S.P. 78/164, f. 4, Stair to Cragges, 15 May 1719).

160. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165, f. 57, Stair to Cragges, 23 August 1719;
f. 61, Berwick to Stair, 17 August 1719 (copy); f. 69, Stair
104-6.


o.s.; 27 July 1719.

1719 o.s. (private). A criticism which Stair answered by
claiming that he had only responded to a hesitancy he detected
at Hanover, "so, for the very reason that I proposed it, I did
not think it necessary to press it" (Hardwicke, vol. 2, p. 587,
Stair to Cragges, 24 August 1719 (private)). Hanover only
agreed to the expedition when it was proposed to retain the
Dutch battalions in Britain against the expedition's return


166. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 327, Stair to Stanhope, 20/22 July 1719.
government and Cobham's representative, Colonel Ligonier, and to
secure maps, pilots, engineers and guides with knowledge of Galicia. These men were to endure in September two trips to sea and long weeks of waiting off Cape Finisterre for the expedition that only sailed at the month's end.

Cobham did little more than secure Vigo and devastate some of the surrounding areas until the lateness of the season and the shortage of provisions forced a retirement on 7 November. Because Corunna remained inviolate, it has been said that the expedition was not worth its cost. Certainly Berwick thought that the troops could have been more usefully employed in Sicily. Yet the diversion had been created and the alarm induced must have contributed to Alberoni's dismissal, the declared aim of the Allies, which followed shortly after. Cobham defended himself thus:

"I hope, considering we sailed from Portsmouth the 21 Sept(ember) o.s., that not much more could be expected from us and this little descent will in some measure express the resentment of the King, or master, for the indignity put upon him the last year in attempting to invade us."

Stair was again involved in this affair on 28 October, when "this morning a person came to me with his boots on" bringing news of a force being assembled under Ormonde at Santander. He was sceptical

until on the morrow the Regent provided confirmation with the
addendum that Brittany was the chosen destination.\(^{173}\) Despite
his confidence that Captain Johnson’s three ship squadron in Biscay
would put paid to any ambition of Ormonde, Stair alerted Craggs to
the danger. He saw this move as merely being designed “to take
off the fright people might be in by Lord Cobham’s landing at
Vigo”.\(^{174}\) However Alberoni intervened and cancelled the embarkation
after an argument between Ormonde and his Spanish subordinate, Don
Elias de Loya, had resulted in the postponing of the initial
sailing.\(^{175}\)

This last gesture from Ormonde paralleled an attempt by Stair
further to weaken the Jacobite cause by prising Mar loose from the
Pretender, in the hope that the waverers would then abandon Jacobitism.
Mar had been arrested at Voghera on 7 February while distracting
Imperial attention from the Pretender’s departure to Spain.\(^{176}\) Re-
leased on 5 March, he had returned to Rome whence he strayed in
April to the French Alpine border seeking to go to drink the waters
at Bourbon and perhaps attempting to make his way to Spain. Unable
to produce a passport to enter France, he had to retreat to Geneva.
There, on 6 May using the pseudonyms Captain Murray and Captain Brown
(Mar and Stair respectively) which dated from their former friendship
and a journey taken from Scotland to England in 1701, he wrote to

173. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165, f. 376, Stair to Cragge, 26 October 1719;
f. 391, Stair to Stanhope, 30 October 1719. A.A.E.: C.P. 327,
f. 33, Chammorel to Regent, 13 November 1719. Craggs was
amazed at Stair’s news, but, far from fearing another Jacobite
attempt, he welcomed the unifying effect it would have upon the
Stair, 22 October 1719 o.s.; vol. 19a, Craggs to Stair, 22
October 1719 o.s. (private)).
174. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165, f. 402, Stair to Cragge, 4 November 1719;
f. 407, Stair to Cragge, 5 November 1719.
Stair pleading with him to provide the passport before alerting his "Colonel" (George I) so that he could get some relief from the waters before pressure to expel him had mounted. Stair had been deaf to all Mar's attempts since 1716 to renew their friendship and was only tempted to respond by a second letter and the news from Geneva that Maresay, the Hanoverian envoy there, had discovered Mar and Stewart of Invernethy at L'Auberge des Trois Rois and had induced the local magistrates to arrest them as a gesture of friendship to George I.

Sensing the opportunity, Stair suggested to Stanhope that the chance to interrogate the Jacobite leader might be worth either a trip by himself to Geneva or the removal of Mar, under French escort, to Paris. Further he recalled his friendship for Mar and reassured the latter in a letter to him on 29 May that he would seek a pardon from George I, which Mar warmly welcomed. But the matter had been entrusted to Sunderland and Craggs, and they claimed

181. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 40, Stair to Stanhope, 27 May 1719. Stair told Craggs that he had referred the matter of the passport to Stanhope at Hanover (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 3b, Stair to Craggs, 27 May 1719 (private)). He saw fit to mention Mar in two further letters to Stanhope on the next day (P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 51, Stair to Stanhope, 28 May 1719 (private); f. 52, Stair to Stanhope, 28 May 1719).
182. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 61, Stair to Mar, 29 May 1719.
that, however desirable a pardon for Mar might be in view of its likely effect on Jacobite morale, the political climate within Britain forbade it.\footnote{185} In October 1718 a move to procure Bolingbroke’s pardon had been abandoned when Craggs had calculated that it would have cost the alienation of 40 to 50 members of Parliament.\footnote{186}

Likewise now, in June 1719, when the ministry seemed stronger, its support could not be hazarded, as, Craggs wrote, "our madmen, blown up by our knaves, would, I am afraid, bounce like bottled ale at a negotiation with Mar".\footnote{187}

Stair dissented; he felt that Parliament could be led, but that a refusal to Mar would "make every man that ever has been engaged in that interest irreconcilable to the King and his country". He contended that Mar could be safely allowed to Bourbon on parole and, if a modest pension could be granted until he had made his submission to George I and had done some service that would justify his pardon, he could be released and easily controlled.\footnote{188} There was no positive response from London, beyond Craggs' expressed determination that Mar would not be misled as Bolingbroke had been,\footnote{189} and Mar's imprisonment continued, though, since he was allowed the freedom of the town,\footnote{190} in agreeable conditions.\footnote{191}

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{\footnote{185}{S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 19b, Craggs to Stair, 27 May 1719 o.s. (private).}}
\item \textit{\footnote{186}{S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 15b, Craggs to Stair, 20 September 1718 o.s.}}
\item \textit{\footnote{187}{S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 19b, Craggs to Stair, 27 May 1719 o.s. (private).}}
\item \textit{\footnote{188}{Bardwicke, vol. 2, p. 572, Stair to Craggs, 14 June 1719 (private).}}
\item \textit{\footnote{189}{S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 19b, Craggs to Stair, 23 July 1719 o.s. (private).}}
\item \textit{\footnote{190}{S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 19b, (Craggs) to Stair, 10 August 1719 o.s.}}
\item \textit{\footnote{191}{S.R.O.: G.D. 135/145, (Mar) to Stair, 6 August 1719.}}
\end{itemize}}
In September the Genevan magistrates were informed privately, through Robethon and Marsay, that George I would not object to the quiet release of Mar. But, when Mar petitioned to be allowed to go to Bourbon, this was refused on the grounds that he had been held at the behest of the British king and thus the latter's public permission was required. Stair reacted angrily; he complained that "this vexes Lord Mar mightily" and, as he had gone so far as to lend Mar money in order that Lady Mar might join him from Rome, he had no wish that Mar might "think that I had played an unfair part to him". Craggs, in his turn, emphasised on 5 October that no Secretary of State, given current feelings, could contemplate publicly sanctioning the release of Mar. All that he would offer was vague intimation that perhaps a pension could be arranged to tide Mar over until his case could be reconsidered in more favourable circumstances.

A later review of Marsay's conduct of this affair led Craggs to conclude that "I smell a plot" and he saw the hand of Bernstorff at work. As Bernstorff was known to have used diplomats like Polworth, St. Saphorin and Jefferies, Craggs presumed that

"by means of his nephew, this Monsieur le Comte de Marsay, he has been insisting as a masterstroke that Lord Stanhope or I should signify formally the King's favour to Lord Mar ...".

But the advice of such dissidents as Cadogan, Lechmere, Walpole or the members of the Prince of Wales' faction was "that such an office letter being called for in Parliament would blow us all up".

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The immediate result was that Mar's detention was continued on firm orders from Hanover, and Craggs castigated the prisoner for his failure to submit and for his impertinence in constantly referring to George I as "King George, Your Master, Your King ...." But Stair clung to his contention; he stated that "the things that shock you (Craggs) shook me; but our business is to break the Pretender's party ..." and this could only be done by means of a pension luring Mar from that party.

In the event Mar was released in June 1720 and accepted the pension, after consulting and receiving the permission of the Pretender to do so. His office of Secretary of State was then shared between Colonel John Bay and James Murray, but, the Jacobite cause being in such disarray and Mar having been isolated for so long, his defection had little of the disruptive effect that Stair had hoped for from it in 1719.

There were two other problems which had arisen in June; they were in essence irrelevant to the effort against Spain but were symptomatic of the imperfections of the Franco-British partnership.

199. Hardwicke, vol. 2, p. 599, Stair to Craggs, 20 October 1719 (private). This idea of providing a pension for Mar was first advanced by Stair in June and thenceforth was reiterated by him through the months of Mar's imprisonment. (Hardwicke, vol. 2, p. 572, Stair to Craggs, 14 June 1719 (private). P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 179, Stair to Stanhope, 17 June 1719 (private). Hardwicke, vol. 2, p. 588, Stair to Craggs, 1 September 1719 (private)).
The first concerned the familiar divergence of opinion on the
demolition of Dunkirk's fortifications and port facilities. Des-
pite British pressure the demolition had never been completed and
now in June 1719 seemed about to be reversed as the Conseil de la
Marine gave permission to the magistrates of Dunkirk to dig a con-
nection to the Canal of Bergues in order to freshen the stagnating
waters of the old harbour, which threatened the health of the town,
and to admit to Dunkirk the small boats that could use Mardyke.201

The British view was that standing treaties forbade the use of
the harbour, that it should be filled in, and that, as the connection
to the Canal of Moer had been maintained, any smell must have an
origin other than the stagnation of the waters.202 There had been
suspicions in the previous November203 that this design was contem-
plated but nothing specific was known until Colonel Lascelles, one
of the British inspection team, read the notice of tender posted in
Dunkirk.204 Stair was ordered to secure the Regent's intervention
in the matter and to emphasise the damage that the uproar in British
trading circles would do to the alliance.205

When Stair raised the subject, verbally and through a memorandum,
at an audience on 27 July, he found the Regent and Dubois ignorant
of it.206 On 9 August the Regent proposed the reduction of the
width of the new canal to that of an irrigation ditch. But at Dunkirk work was already going ahead on something much more ambitious. Colonel Lascelles reported on 20 August:

"I cannot forbear smiling at their little rigole, but considering that that term proceeds from the same person that called the new canal un petit ecoulement, my amazement ceases. The truth is the rigole (if it must be so called) is the whole breadth of the canal in the place where the sluice was, and is near 40 feet wide, upon which they work continually, even on Sundays and Holidays."

Lascelles questioned the need for the two turning bridges under construction if this work was intended only for the movement of water. And his suspicions were only deepened by the arrest of two British sightseers.

Yet Dubois merely opined that, as the work was of no advantage to the people of Dunkirk, they would rapidly grow tired of it.

The British government, which received reports of the advanced state of work on the canal from Dunkirk while the French were claiming that orders had been issued for it to cease, came to suspect that the influence of certain interests within the French court and notably Le Blanc, the former Intendant of Dunkirk was at work. Stair sought a written statement of intent from the Regent so that the order might be effective then and in the future. He was given oral promises, but the nearest to a written commitment came on 23 September when, in the course of an audience, the Regent summoned his secretary and dictated orders to Dunkirk in Stair's presence.
As the British opposed a subsequent effort to retain the width of the canal and to substitute a bar across it, the width was reduced to 6 feet. Craggs hit the mark when he reflected that "it is a very melancholy consideration that at a time when we live with them in the strictest amity we cannot obtain the honest plain execution of a treaty which admits no evasion. This matter will come some time or other to do us hurt and be a plausible pretense to find fault".

It was to prove to be a running-sore in Anglo-French relations over the next four decades.

The second problem, that of the demarcation of British and French colonial possessions, particularly in America, was also an unresolved aspect of the Utrecht settlement. Stair was first cast in the role of consultant to the British representatives, Colonel Martin Bladen and Daniel Pulteney (both of the Board of Trade), on the Franco-British commission that Dubois set up in June to adjudicate upon this matter. He joined the ranks of the commission in October when it was felt that his presence was needed to match the eminence of the French appointees, Dubois and D'Estrees.

Neither nation distinguished itself by the speed with which it attempted to resolve this affair; the British only instructed their

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appointees in September, and the French reciprocated, after pressure
had been put on them by Stair and Bladen, in mid-October, and
before the preliminary meeting had been convened, Bladen asked to
be allowed home to take his seat in Parliament. The latter had
been charged to discuss the boundaries of the Mississippi settlement,
those of Hudson Bay and Nova Scotia, the fishing rights of Newfound-
land, the rights of the Five Nations of New York Indians, and claims
to Nevis, Montserrat, and Gambia. But the discussion got no
further than the first item, and the commission only met twice, on
31 October and 4 November. Stair’s full powers, qualifying him
to negotiate with the French, only reached him late in November, and
by then the French had lost interest. John Law’s younger
brother, William, was twice to confirm this in public in mid-December,
much to the British delegation’s chagrin.

Yet the Regent and Dubois were subtle enough to keep British ex-
pectations alive through the remaining months of Stair’s embassy.

221. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/166, f. 36, Bladen to Delafaye, 14 October 1719.
222. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/166, f. 40, Bladen to Delafaye, 17 October 1719.
224. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165, f. 397, Stair to Craggs, 1 November 1719;
f. 402, Stair to Craggs, 4 November 1719; S.P. 78/166, f. 56,
Bladen to Delafaye, 1 November 1719; f. 56, Bladen to Delafaye,
7 November 1719.
1719.
226. A.A.S.: C.P. Ang. 327, f. 10, Bladen to Dubois, 8 November 1719.
P.R.O.: S.P. 78/166, f. 83, Pulteney to (Craggs), 30 November
1719; f. 84, Pulteney to Craggs, 5 December 1719.
227. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/166, f. 90, Pulteney to Craggs, 20 December 1719;
f. 94, Pulteney to (Craggs), 24 December 1719.
228. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165, f. 572, Stair to Craggs, 3 January 1720;
S.P. 78/166, f. 98, Pulteney to (Delafaye), 6 January 1720;
f. 112, Pulteney to Craggs, 26 January 1720; S.P. 78/167, f. 41,
Stair to Craggs, 1 February 1720; f. 83, Stair to Craggs, 13
February 1720; f. 129, Stair to Craggs, 28 February 1720.
A.A.S.: C.P. Ang. 334, f. 47, Memorial on the limits of Hudson
Bay, 9 January 1720.
In the end it was hoped that Stair's impending departure would prompt the French into settling this issue of the Mississippi frontier which obstructed the rest of the Commission's business. But Dubois refused to be drawn and preferred to await Stair's replacement by Sir Robert Sutton. Pulteney proffered the most likely explanation of the commission's fate; he claimed that the French, encouraged by the speculative interest in John Law's project for Mississippi, had at first hoped to obtain a treaty sanctioning their settlement there but had abandoned that for the view that

"there is no need of settling limits, that the great distance between our colonies and their Mississippi settlements will for the present answer that purpose and that in the process of time the most industrious and the most powerful will have the longest and best possessions ...".

With Law openly proclaiming the need for an assault upon Britain's trading eminence, Pulteney feared for Nova Scotia and saw the recent seizure of the island of Santa Lucin, which was claimed by Britain, as a bid to disrupt the sugar trade. The French volte-face on the Santa Lucian issue represented Stair's and Pulteney's single achievement in colonial matters. Faced with Britain's ancient and valid claim to the island and with the physical presence of Stanhope during the latter's flying visit to France in January, the Regent

229. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/31, Craggs to Pulteney, 14 April 1720 o.s.; S.P. 76/166, f. 202, Pulteney to Craggs, 17 May 1720.
231. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/166, f. 94, Pulteney to (Craggs), 24 December 1719.
was forced to admit the historical falsity of the pretensions of
D'Estrees (the minister responsible) and order, tardily, the
withdrawal of the French settlement.

While the campaign in Spain stood still around San Sebastian,
while Whitworth struggled to effect the Anglo-Prussian rapprochement
and while the Dutch continued in their deviousness, Stair on 8 July
wrote for Craggs a private summary of affairs as seen from Paris.
He found that France was not averse to seeing Britain embarrassed
and was standing back to allow Britain to face the dangers of the
hour. As France only warmed towards allies when she was in need,
Sweden, he thought, would have to face the menace of the Russians
and Danes without aid from Paris, and any attempt to interrupt Dutch
trade with Spain would have to be carried out by Britain alone.
Likewise the war in Spain was being prosecuted without enthusiasm
and, because the Savoyard ambassador had been closeted with the Regent
and Dubois, Stair suspected that the French contemplated an exclusive
settlement with Spain.

f. 411, Stair to Craggs, 7 November 1719; f. 461, Stair to
Craggs, 25 November 1719; f. 512, Stair to Craggs, 12 December
1719; f. 537, Stair to Craggs, 20 December 1719; f. 543,
Stair to Craggs, 23 December 1719; f. 560, Stair to Craggs,
27 December 1719; S.P. 78/166, f. 103, Pulteney to Lords
Commissioners of Trade, 15 January 1720; f. 107, Pulteney
19b, Craggs to Stair, 2 November 1719 o.e.; vol. 19a, Craggs
to Stair, 26 November 1719 o.e.

233. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/31, Craggs to Stair, 28 December 1719 o.e.;
S.P. 78/167, f. 23, Stair to Craggs, 25 January 1720; f. 33,
Stair to Craggs, 27 January 1720; f. 41, Stair to Craggs, 1
February 1720; f. 80, Stair to Craggs, 10 February 1720; S.P.
78/166, f. 124, Pulteney to (Craggs). 5 February 1720.
Stair found:

"our poor friend the Abbé is, by turns, all fire and ice ... one day open and frank, and the next day dark and mysterious. Sometimes he thinks I have too much power with the Regent, and endeavours to break off my seeing him in private; and, at other times, he desires I should have credit, and desires the Regent should hear me, and listen to me. I do the best I can to soothe him, and to bear all his inequalities".

Before going on to describe the Regent's continuing inability to collect around him a sufficient number of supporters to give him the courage to act decisively Stair said further of Dubois:

"I wish, from my heart, he had the Cardinal's hat upon his head; but I am afraid, his master's temper is such, that he will never be brought to agree to it. He thinks the Abbé would be too independent, and makes too great a figure if he had that hat upon his head".234

Here Stair referred to the ambition to which he had long ascribed Dubois' inconsistencies. In December he had thought that Dubois' preoccupation with his ambition to enter the College of Cardinals underlay the French hesitancy to declare war and in April when France again appeared to be stalling, he wrote,

"the poor Abbé has so little steadiness and so little courage that he's a very little use to us now that he's obliged to appear upon the scene, he was much more useful behind the curtain, and to boot that cursed Red Hat turns his head ...".235

Yet the Abbé had acted consistently when, realizing that his master would never assist him in the pursuit of his ambition, he had turned in October 1718 to his recent promoters, the British, in the hope that they might effect it. His idea was that secret Anglo-Austrian pressure upon the Pope might produce the Cardinal's hat which would

235. B.M.: Stowe MSS., 247, f. 128, Stair to Craggs, 10 April 1719.
appear to be granted in recognition of his value to the Church.\textsuperscript{236} A positive response was eventually forthcoming, and in the spring St. Saphorin secured in Vienna the necessary Imperial approval of the plan.\textsuperscript{237} But Stanhope distrusted the Austrians, for Princess Sobieski had escaped and an Austro-Spanish settlement was rumoured, and, mindful that Dubois' ambition was disliked by the Regent, he was not prepared to proceed without the latter. He ordered Stair to encourage the Regent to assist Dubois, echoing an Imperial desire that in promoting a new Cardinal the Pope might demote an existing one, Alberoni.\textsuperscript{238} Such was the Regent's resistance to Stair's pleadings\textsuperscript{239} that Dubois himself cried halt on 20 July.\textsuperscript{240}

Stair's suspicions that the French were engaged in a secret correspondence with Spain on the subject of an exclusive peace were somewhat allayed by their exemplary behaviour over the Parmesan peace initiative in the summer of 1719. In early July the envoy of the Duke of Parma, Abbé Landi, on receipt of instructions from Parma, urgently sought out Dubois. Landi's news was that the Parmesan diplomat, Marquis Scotti, had been accepted by Spain as an intermediary, that Spain favoured the Parmesan idea of a peace congress under the

\textsuperscript{236} P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 240, Dubois to (Stair), 20 October 1718.

\textsuperscript{237} Leclercq, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{238} P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 177, Stanhope to Stair, 16 June 1719 (copy in S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141).

\textsuperscript{239} P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 229, Stair to Stanhope, 1 July 1719.
Hardwicke, vol. 2, p. 576, Stair to Cragge, 8 July 1719.

mediation of the Pope and that Parma would serve as a channel of communication between France and Spain. Landi received little sympathy, Dubois adhered firmly to the Quadruple Alliance formula, referred Landi to the British and Imperial representatives, and stated that the likely outcome of such a congress would be merely a Papal reconciliation with Spain. 241

Despite this reverse, Scotti did not find himself without employment, for Alberoni, ever the opportunist, recruited him. Sensing the blow to allied morale that had been occasioned by the Imperial reverse at Francavilla in Sicily, Alberoni hoped to exploit the moment to gain a favourable peace for Spain. He sought Dutch mediation and dispatched Scotti to The Hague with sealed orders. 242 But the secrecy of the mission was broken by the indiscretion of the Marquis Beretti Landi, the Spanish Ambassador at The Hague, who revealed on 14 July, before Scotti had even left Spain, that Dutch mediation was sought and that Philip V was prepared to expel the Pretender from Spain if Britain conceded Minorca in return. 243

Scotti arrived in Paris on 10 August. There the mood had changed for the town of San Sebastian had yielded (the citadel held out for only another week), 244 the Basque province of Guipuscoa had thrown in

241. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 291, Stair to Stanhope, 10 July 1719. The Parmesan diplomat, Claudio Ré, was given a similar rebuff in London (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 19b, Craggs to Stair, 9 July 1719 o.s.). Stair's opinion, when Dubois briefed him immediately after Landi's revelation, was that if Spain were to make an overture through Parma, the Allies could perhaps listen (P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 291, Stair to Stanhope, 10 July 1719).
244. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165, f. 57, Stair to Craggs, 23 August 1719.
its lot with the invaders, Imperial fortunes in Sicily had mended and Campredon had started for Sweden bearing 300,000 rix dollars in gold. Scotti was refused a passport to proceed to the United Provinces; an action for which Dubois immediately sought the endorsement of France's allies. The grounds of the refusal were that the involvement of the Dutch would have been valueless as the only path to peace lay in the removal of Alberoni and the submission of Spain to the Quadruple Alliance. This attitude encouraged Stair to hope that France would now commit herself to raising the Catalans and their neighbours.

While he lingered in Paris, Scotti stolidly resisted all the Allied attempts, including a visit from the self-styled diplomat Lord Peterborough, to wheedle out of him the terms on which Spain would treat. But such resistance was rendered vain by Beretti Landi, who expanded his earlier revelation by stating that Philip V was prepared to concede Sicily to the Emperor, Sardinia to Victor Amadeus II, and to restore the Asiento to Britain if the latter conceded Minorca and Gibraltar. Later he amended his statement


246. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 325, f. 142, Dubois to Seneterre, 14 August 1719. Dubois claimed that Stanhope had suggested the refusal (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 325, f. 171, Dubois to Seneterre, 22 August 1719. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165, f. 5, Stair to Stanhope, 15 August 1719; f. 17, Dubois to Stair, 14 August 1719 (copy).

247. Subsequent visits by Peterborough to Scotti were to have a purpose that was hidden from Stair (see below p. )


so as to deny Sardinia to Victor Amadeus II. Scotti got no further but waited expectantly for two months until recalled on 4 October by the Duke of Parma. But at this high point of the Allied effort against Spain, when peace feelers from Alberoni could be confidently brushed aside, Stair, whose career had survived the argument with Dubois and the princes now became embroiled in a further personal quarrel with the French court and John Law in particular, and the subsequent severance of relations between the two men was to force the British ministry to replace him.

251. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165, f. 229, Stair to Stanhope, 2 October 1719; f. 231, Stair to Craggs, 4 October 1719; f. 247, Stair to Stanhope, 6 October 1719.
CHAPTER TWELVE

THE DISMISSAL OF STAIR

Scotti's presence in Paris, the fall of San Sebastian, even Berwick's preparatory manoeuvres on the Catalonian frontier passed for little in a Paris caught up in the maelstrom of speculation in John Law's commercial and financial ventures. Indeed Law's success combined with the apparent invincibility of the Spanish defenders of Messina led Dubois to fear for his personal position (thus confirming Bolingbroke's assertion that Sicily was the truly critical theatre of the war). Stair shared Dubois' alarm, seeing a possibility of a return to power of Torcy; he alleged to Craggs on 30 August "that Torcy gains ground; and that there may be a close connection between Law and Torcy, with views to turn the Abbe out". A day later he revealed that he himself had collided with Law when he had refused to join the Parisians in investing in the shares of Law's companies.

This collision marked a change in a relationship that had differed from Stair's acid relations with leading personalities at the French court in its amicable if critical distance - the aftermath of drift from friendship between the two men once Stair had failed in

1. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 325, f. 136, Dubois to Senneterre, 11 August 1719 (the fall of the town); C.P. Ang. 326, f. 8, Senneterre to Dubois, 1 September 1719 (the fall of the citadel).
1715 to secure for Law both a pardon for the slaying of his opponent in a duel which had led to his flight from England in 1694 and a financial post within the British government.

The only mention of Law in Stair's dispatches before the summer of 1718 was a criticism of his ideas on devaluation in 1716 and an attempt by Stair in May 1718 to prevent him from luring watch-makers from Britain and thereby spoiling a lucrative trade with France.

The Regent's protection of Law, after he had shared the odium associated with D'Argenson's unpopular devaluation of May 1718 and the consequent crushing of the opposition of the Paris Parlement by means of the *Lit de Justice*, was not commented upon by Stair; he merely provided a factual relation of events.

Even the entrusting of France's financial affairs to Law when revealed in late October prompted Stair only to criticise it on the grounds that Law's unpopularity made such a move dangerous even though France's finances were in dire need of able management. He made no mention of the rivalry between D'Argenson's tax-farming company.
and the Compagnie d'Occident (the Mississippi Company) in which Law had held a controlling interest since 6 September 1717.\textsuperscript{11} The donation of the monopoly of the manufacture and sale of tobacco to the Compagnie d'Occident, in order to strengthen it in the face of its rival, received only terse comment.\textsuperscript{12} The grafting of the French Senegal, East India and China companies on to Law's company, like the conversion of Law's bank into a Banque Royale on 1 January 1719, was similarly treated.\textsuperscript{13}

It was only in June 1719 that the embassy at Paris saw fit to provide the British government with a synopsis of Law's history, methods and aims "since the consequences of them in a little time may very possibly be not indifferent to Great Britain".\textsuperscript{14} The spur had been Law's success in the promotion of the Mississippi shares so that for the first time these shares fetched more than par.\textsuperscript{15} Henceforth, until late August, when prices declined for the first time, Law earned praise from Stair and Crawford for his deft manipulation of the French public in its feverish pursuit of quick fortunes that summer.\textsuperscript{16} Though Stair saw the assumption of the tax-farm by the

\textsuperscript{12} P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 88, Stair to Craggs, 30 August 1718.
\textsuperscript{13} P.R.O.: S.P. 78/162, f. 456, Stair to Craggs, 31 December 1718.
\textsuperscript{14} P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 104, Crawford to Craggs, 3 June 1719.
\textsuperscript{15} Hyde, op.cit., p. 101.
\textsuperscript{16} P.R.O.: S.P. 78/164, f. 235, Crawford to Craggs, 8 July 1719; f. 373, Crawford to Craggs, 22 July 1719; f. 367, Stair to Stanhope, 22 July 1719. Hardwicke, vol. 2, p. 586, Stair to Craggs, 20 August 1719. (Wiessner (op.cit., vol. 3, p. 239) exaggerates when he attributes malice and jealousy to Stair's closing statement where he states that he might have failed in his long exposition on the recent course of events to make Cragge understand and that "It is certainly, something more extravagant, and more ridiculous, than any thing that ever happened in any other country. I wish for your diversion, I could but talk one hour to you upon that subject." After all he was speaking of the French public, and its behaviour in its scramble for shares was nothing but extraordinary.)
Mississippi Company as a clever way to extinguish the monarch's debts in a day, the apprehension that Law's aims might conflict with Britain's interests persisted and tempered Stair's admiration.

This fear was reflected in Stair's curiously prophetic statement on 1 September when he revealed Law's displeasure with him over his failure to make an investment, for he wrote that whatever his personal qualities were as a diplomat,

"you will be obliged to change your Minister. You may depend upon it, this Court, with their fortune, will change their measures; and they will desire to have a man here that they may be either able to gain or impose upon. You must henceforth look upon Law as the First Minister, whose daily discourse is, that he will raise France to a greater height than every she was, upon the ruin of England and Holland. You may easily imagine I shall not be a Minister for this purpose."

That Dubois had convinced Stair of the reality of a bid by Torcy for power is borne out by Stair's assertion that the arrival, that very day, 1 September, of the news of the Imperial success in taking the town of Messina had staved off the challenge from Torcy which Dubois so feared. Stair found proof of this in the sudden availability of the French subsidy, guns and munitions for the Imperial expedition to Sardinia and in the new vigour of the French approach to the war, a sharp contrast to the lack of interest on the previous day. He found, too, Dubois' view of Law compatible with his own analysis, "for he will be for removing everything that does not absolutely depend upon him, and that can, in any manner, stand in his way to hinder him to be first Minister".

17. P.R.O.: S.P. 76/165, f. 84, Stair to Stanhope, 28 August 1719; f. 88, Stair to Craggs, 30 August 1719.
Time only served to deepen Stair's conviction that a coup by Torcy had been imminent, for by 9 September he saw every aspect of the French government's behaviour as confirming Dubois' fears and threatening a possible reversal of policy in favour of Spain. The sustained secret contact with Spain; the delay and "shuffling" over the encouragement of the Catalanion revolt; the succour of the Spanish forces in Sicily by French mercantile shipping, a long-standing British complaint; the threats to British trade; the renewed activity at Dunkirk; "and twenty other things of the same nature ..." - all furnished proof for his interpretation. The French promotion of the Anglo-Prussian treaty which seemed to run counter to it was dismissed by him as a momentary response when the invasion threat from Philip V seemed real and "they were diffident of their own army ...". No such cooperation could, he thought, have been expected if the recently successfully concluded Anglo-Swedish negotiations had been drawn out. Indeed he suspected that Torcy's allegations of ineptitude in failing to hinder these latter negotiations was the main cause of the disfavour under which Dubois felt he suffered. Stair related that "Pecquet told an under-secretary of mine the other day: My Lord Stair est un habile Ministre; il fait de l'Abbe du Bois tout ce qu'il veut. Je le sais bien".

Time, too, provided Stair with further examples of Law's ill-intentions against Britain; he could recount Law's public boasts to Lord Londonderry and Colonel Pitt that he contemplated the ruin of British and Dutch financial structures including the Bank of England. As he ended his letter of 9 September, he pleaded with Craggs to be alert "whilst we seem to suspect nothing" and to conclude rapidly the war in Sicily and Sardinia in order that adequate defences might
be raised against Law's threat, which was not underlined by D'Estrees' ambition to expand the navy, in two years, to a hundred ships of the line. 20

Stair did not content himself with a spectator's role; when Dubois talked of resignation and had "begged of me that I would make one last effort with the Regent against Torcy ...", he took the proffered cue. His tactic was to depict for the Regent the situation upon Louis XV's attaining his majority. He claimed that, if the Regent had not made himself indispensable to the young king, as Cardinal Richelieu had to Louis XIII, then any potent opposition, such as that which would be fostered by Alberoni's surviving in power in Spain, would easily rob the Regent of his influence. Salvation, he alleged, lay in following Richelieu's example of monopolising the field of foreign affairs so that the new government would fail without the knowledge which the Regent exclusively held. That was why he called for an end to the practice of keeping Torcy fully informed on foreign affairs, a questionable one at best; Torcy could be safely fobbed off with honours and rewards. Of course, Stair conceded, once the framework of the new reign's administration had been safely secured, if Torcy had remained faithful, then the Regent could contemplate re-employing him.

Orléans promised Stair that he would seriously consider his advice. And, hinting at the likelihood of his acceptance of it, he went on to question Stair on the antipathy between Dubois and Torcy, but Stair denied anything more than a slight knowledge of it. Two weeks later Dubois, secure again resumed his pursuit of the

Cardinal's red hat, seeking to acquire it by healing the schism within the French church. A month later, even more secure, he attempted, through Stair, to promote again the idea of employing Anglo-Imperial pressure upon the Papacy to realize this cherished ambition.

Craggs responded to Stair's relation of these events with levity:

"the little Abbé has whittled himself I see by your letters almost out of his master's favour. I am glad he behaves so to your Lordship and of what you have told the Regent about Torcy, but the Cardinal's cap will at last I doubt prove a Fool's cap to him".

Craggs too was more confident of the resilience of British commerce and did not share Stair's apprehensions in the face of Law's boasts.

This lighter mood pervaded Craggs' view of the propriety of investments by ambassadors in the economies of foreign countries.

Stair had stated:

"I did not think it became the King's Ambassador to give countenance to such a thing, or an example to others to withdraw their effects from England, to put them in stocks here; which would have been followed by many ...".

He had thus foregone a possible profit of £30,40,000 because "I thought it was my duty, considering my station, not to do so". Such scruples, Craggs declared, were too fine for him; he might have hesitated, but, he alleged, only

"from fear and not from honour, for if I could have dreamed of this success, I would have got a million of money and owned it at Charing Cross."
There is no doubt that Craggs' mood would have been radically altered if he had known of the activities of Arbuthnot, Stair's current agent in London. With an eye to the British stock market and on Stair's orders, Arbuthnot was attempting to exploit the news carried by the diplomatic couriers from France, who were directed to reveal to him the news they carried before making it known to the ministry. On 4 September he expressed regret to Stair that the latest courier, Theodore, had evaded him. Arriving on a Sunday, Theodore had gone straight to Craggs' house

"in time for dinner who (sic) gave joy of the good news to his guests and so everything was all over town by Monday morning before any business could be done with any prospect of success".

Arbuthnot's next letter announced greater success; Theodore and the "Duty Post" had arrived simultaneously on the Monday at 4 p.m. and, as the latter contained a report of a Spanish advance to relieve besieged Messina, which was news that would depress an already static market - an effect that would be reversed if Theodore's news of Imperial success at Messina was released - "so I shut Theodore up till Tuesday afternoon ...". By then prices had fallen a quarter of a point,

"which saves brokerage, at which time I brought all I wrote of and then carried Mr. Secretary his dispatches and told him what was true, that Theodore had received hurt by a fall and could not go abroad but sent for me to deliver."

26. Nat. Library Scot. MSS., 3044, f. 66, Stair to (Arbuthnot), 26 March 1719; f. 67, Stair to Arbuthnot, 2 April 1719; f. 68, Stair to Arbuthnot, 14 June (1719). The last time Stair's messengers had been in trouble with Craggs' office was in April, over the noise they made "by riding through the streets from Southwark" which led to them being re-routed through Lambeth for a speedier and more private approach (P.R.O.: S.P. 78/163, f. 320, Crawfurd to Stanyan, 19 April 1719).

Arbuthnot lamented that he had not had more time to buy shares, having had to break off to deliver the dispatches to Craggs' office. He suggested that Stair should employ Theodore as a private courier, to work in advance of the diplomatic courier, in order to repeat his manoeuvre with greater efficiency (though Arbuthnot's sense of guilt was exposed at the letter's end in his request to Stair to burn it). However, despite such management and a later essay upon the Parisian market, Stair's parlous financial state remained unrelieved, and he had to turn to Craggs for private assistance.

Stair was confronted with a bewildering complexity of business on hand - Dunkirk; the Commission on American boundaries; Dubs's aspiration to the Cardinalate; Law and the Mississippi boom; Cobham's expedition to Vigo; the continuing siege of the citadel at Messina; the efforts to persuade the Dutch and Portuguese to embrace the Quadruple Alliance; the need to keep the French complacent over Britain's effort to preserve Sweden and to diminish the Tsar's influence in the North; the departure of Scotti to Spain on a further bid to secure peace; and the opening of Berwick's new campaign. Yet he chose to ask Stanhope on 6 October for leave to attend to his personal affairs in Britain.

Stanhope's refusal was predictable but made with tact; peace in the South was now a definite possibility, and events in the North trended towards a crisis in which France's influence would be required.

"for these reasons His Majesty judges that you're being at Paris at so critical a juncture is indispensably necessary for the public service with respect to both North and South ... I am sure the interests of both can never be in better hands than Your Lordship's and I heartily wish, as I sincerely hope, that Your Lordship may have the credit of giving the finishing hand to those negotiations, in which you have had so great a share".31

In reply Stair claimed that while he would never put his interests before his monarch's and was ready to sacrifice himself, he had asked for leave as he needed to be in Britain "to lop some branches of my estate to prepare the rest to secure myself for my old age ...", for experience had taught him that friends were notably unreliable.

Striking again a prophetic note, he went on,

"to what regards myself, My Lord, I own to you very frankly, to judge what is to come and therefore I have set my heart upon retiring and living the rest of my days in quiet".

Again he claimed that he could not last at a French court facing changed circumstances and controlled by Law. And Law had provided Stair with a further example of his menace, for a company was currently being floated for the purpose of fishing in Scottish and Newfoundland waters.32

32. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165, f. 429, Stair to Stanhope, 7 November 1719. A curious omission from this account was the fact that a lack of response on the investment market led to the immediate dissolution of the fishing company. This Stair had already noted in writing to Craggs on 5 November and had confirmed it on 7 November. Perhaps this company's absorption by the Mississippi Company on the latter day led Stair to think that such manoeuvring was of no interest to Stanhope (P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165, f. 407, Stair to Craggs, 5 November 1719; f. 411, Stair to Craggs, 7 November 1719; f. 423, Crawford to Craggs, 7 November 1719).
Since the dispute in September about the propriety of investment by Stair there had been no detente between the latter and Law, and London had been copiously supplied with warnings from the Paris embassy about the consequences of Law's ambitions. Yet the reports of the extraordinary scenes in a Paris smitten by a fever of speculation - that have served historians so well - were factual and without rancour.33 What is more Stair abandoned scruple and invested34 (while Craggs hesitated),35 proving that he had no more foresight or prudence than the other speculators who jostled and fought to win a share in Law's fortunes.

The British government's determination to live with Law36 was revealed by its response to Law's angry complaint of late November that a British newspaper, the name of which he had forgotten but which he was convinced was printed under government patronage, had insulted him by calling his Indies company a chimera. Craggs supported Crawford's exoneration37 of the single Court newspaper, the London Gazette, and promised the pursuit of the culprit and the

34. S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 19b, Craggs to Stair, 26 November 1719 o.s.; G.D. 135/141, Stair to Sir David Dalrymple, 12 December 1719, Stair was at pains in this letter to stress that he had made his investment through the good offices of the Regent rather than Law's.
36. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 326, f. 84, Stanhope to Dubois, 8 October 1719.
37. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165, f. 483, Crawford to Craggs, 29 November 1719.
protection of the Regent and his administration from further attacks (within the, admittedly restricted, bounds of the law). Yet he attempted to put the incident into perspective by stating

"when it is evident that what he complained of could come only from some author that deserves no attention, I need not observe that any public vindication would be so far from being necessary, as even to commit itself to doing too much honour to such a scribbler, and produce disagreeable effects to the Nations concerned ...".

This reply on 7 December coincided with the crisis of the Mississippian fever; a waver in confidence led to a small run upon the Bank. Law, so it was rumoured, imputed the run to an attack by Stair and hostile British interests. Stung, Stair, when clearly his government would have wished him to do otherwise but perhaps emboldened by Stanhope's statement of confidence in him, sought to have Law censured by the Regent. He cunningly induced the latter to refer to the rumour in the course of an audience. Whereupon he was able to deny his or, for ought he knew, any other Briton's part in the attack. Driving home the advantage, Stair said that the Regent ought to be convinced not only of the falsity of Law's statement "mais que c'est la calomnie du monde plus atroce, et plus indigné", for not only had Law slandered him but, by claiming that the British court lay behind the attack, he had embroiled George I, the Regent's true friend and ally. He asserted that, if proof was not forthcoming, then the Regent ought to name Law as "un calomniateur", a man who sought to deceive in matters of the greatest consequence. Stair had further cause for complaint; for that very day,

38. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/31, Craggs to Crawfurd, 26 November 1719 o.s.
11 December, and in the presence of British subjects, Law had sought
to prove that Britain was insolvent. Such, he said, were Law's
public utterances, and the Regent could form his own judgment of the
man who styled himself France's first minister. He ended by stating
that he had restrained himself for as long as possible as he had
had long experience of Law's boastful character.

The Regent listened with his face convulsing, blurring out at
the end "My Lord, voilà veritable les discours d'un fou". To which
Stair replied that he had said nothing that he would not repeat before
Law or that he could not prove and took the opportunity to proclaim
his concern for the interests of the Regent. At length Orleans
expressed his pleasure that Stair had aired this grievance, for he
had long been his friend and it had hurt him to hear that he had
allegedly sought to destroy his financial operations. Stair
might have left the audience with some feeling of satisfaction but he
had delivered the coup de grâce to his career in France.

The full implication of his action was to remain hidden from him
for a full month. The next day, 12 December, the current nego-
tiations were resumed; the Regent listened calmly to Stair's de-
mand for the French to withdraw from the island of Santa Lucía and
to his request, which was reluctantly conceded in February, that

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40. Hardwicke, vol. 2, p. 600, Stair to Craggs, 11 December 1719
(private). A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 327, f. 165, Destouches to
Orleans, 16 December 1719.

41. Though Craggs chided Stair early in the month for his claim to
be distrusted and for his jealousy over the private correspon-
dence between Dubois and Stanhope. Craggs could claim, as
Secretary of State for the Southern Department, that his
jealousy should exceed Stair's, but, as he only wished for the
success of Stanhope's policies, he expressed disinterest in the
19b, Craggs to Stair, 27 November 1719 c.s.).

42. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165, f. 512, Stair to Craggs, 12 December 1719.
Poland be subsidised with 60,000 ecus in order to broaden the resistance to the Tsar and produce a peace that would ensure a reduction of the Russian domination of the Baltic.

On 18 December Dubois and Stanhope simultaneously pressed each other not to allow this personal quarrel to widen into a public one, but it was three weeks before Stair knew of his government's view of his attempt to curb Law. And in the meantime Stair had to endure the taunts of William Law over the failure of the Commission on American Boundaries, though he could share the delight of his principals over the news of Alberoni's dismissal on 5 December.

43. A.A.E.: C. P. Ang. 327, f. 128, Dubois to Stanhope, 18 December 1719; f. 169, Destouches to Orléans, 18 December 1719.

Craggs' first words, on 29 December, on the subject of Law, were

"I could really wish that, after having so often told us we must henceforth look upon him (Law) as first Minister, you had not openly attacked him without the King's order about it". 45

Craggs put paid to the rumour that Lord Ilay (the Duke of Argyll's brother and prominent opposition Whig, whose recent forays to Paris to play the stock-market and fraternise with Law had aroused the suspicions of Stair and Craggs) 46 had been charged to deliver the ministry's orders for Stair's future conduct towards Law and indeed denied that any such orders existed. Craggs reserved his anger for his rejection of a suggestion from Stair, which was made in reference to the release of Mar and the rehabilitation of Bolingbroke, that he should disburse a sum of £10,000, supplied by the Bolingbroke interest, to members of Parliament, each receiving a bribe of £500, in order to ensure the repeal of Bolingbroke's attainder. 47

Stanhope, who had already told Destouches that Stair would be recalled after the end of the Parliamentary session, 48 said nothing to Stair on 29 December but reassured Dubois that he was confident that Stair, inflamed by his quarrel with Law, was guilty of exaggeration and proffered Stair's recall. 49 Then he received Stair's letter of 27 December, which claimed that Dubois was lost to Law

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and Torcy and that a separate peace with Spain was now France's objective. It convinced him that he had to make a first-hand assessment of the mood of the French.

Immediately, on 2 January, Craggs wrote Stair both public and private letters to announce Stanhope's departure on the morrow for Paris. In the public one he ordered Stair to explain to the Regent that the purpose of the visit was to establish a common attitude in advance of any peace proposals from Spain to avoid any misunderstandings arising within the alliance.

Privately, Craggs revealed that, as Stair had expressed a wish for an hour's conversation with him, he had offered to go to Paris during the Parliamentary Christmas recess in the hope that Stanhope, who was an intimate of the Regent and Dubois and was better versed in foreign affairs, would be prompted to go himself. Craggs claimed that

"when you apprehend a design to invade the Low Countries, to set up the Pretender, to conclude a separate peace with Spain, to ruin our trade and our credit, and to embarrass our affairs in the North, it is high time we should know what to stick to and to depend upon".

Stanhope agreed to go, "but", Craggs alleged,

"the true reason is that Your Lordship could not be spared to come home at such a nice conjuncture. The King and his servants have thought it proper a man of his weight and abilities should go over to talk with you and be particularly informed on all circumstances ...".

He asserted that the intention was that Stanhope and Stair should treat each other with complete candour, discussing everything that

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51. Williams, op.cit., p. 343.
they would say to the Regent, Dubois and Law

"to endeavour first by the most private, the most friendly, and the most pathetic expos- tulations to divert them from any such base or unheard of measures, but if he cannot succeed to bring over H.M. (is) (George I's), yours and his thoughts upon the whole, that at least we may take our measures accordingly".

And in the course of their probes into French attitudes Stair would be given an opportunity to raise with Stanhope such matters as the fates of Bolingbroke and Marlborough.\(^53\)

On 7 January Stair provided a further synopsis of Law's threats (including the exclusion of Britain from America; a proposal for Franco-Spanish collaboration, which Stair thought unlikely because of the antipathy between the Regent and Philip V; and a boast that within a year the British South Sea Company's stock would be worthless). But he was able to record with satisfaction that the Regent had taken Law to task over his behaviour. Orléans had, he alleged, stated that he would take care to see that relations between France and Britain were not impaired and that he had upbraided Law when Pentenziedter had complained of his hostility even though he had just appointed him Controller General of Finances. Stair closed by affirming that Dubois knew of his desire to resign because of his uselessness in a France dominated by Law. This sombre mood was dispelled by the news that Stanhope's support would soon be at hand,\(^54\) for Craggs' letters were delivered to him as he concluded his own.

Stanhope arrived the next day, 8 January, but he provided no support for Stair's stance. He was disarmed by the willing compliance

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of the French; they agreed that the Allies should answer the extravagant Spanish peace proposals, which had just been received, by a joint declaration of adherence to the formula embodied in the Quadruple Alliance, and accepted Schaub as the most suitable man to present the Allied case at Madrid. The standing British grievances were answered, and in February orders were issued to expel the Jacobites from France, to evacuate Santa Lucia and to dispatch the Polish subsidy. Stanhope found little evidence of Torcy's influence over Dubois and that the malevolence of Law paled under scrutiny. And, because he was sensitive to the need to assuage the passions aroused at the French court, just as he was embarrassed by the complete severance of relations between Law and the British embassy, he announced that Stair would be withdrawn.\textsuperscript{56}

Stair could, in truth, boast to Sir David Dalrymple on 20 January that "I bear my part of the mortification with great moderation ...",\textsuperscript{56} for his letter to Craggs of the same day, announcing Stanhope's action in dismissing him, contained only a factual report, though he thought it was necessary to call attention to his stoical detachment by stating that he had always been ready to sacrifice himself if duty required him to do so. He urged that his replacement should be of outstanding quality and solemnly reiterated his thesis on the ambitions of Law.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{56} S.R.O., G.D. 135/144, Stair to Sir David Dalrymple, 20 January 1720.
His bitterness was kept for the eyes of Sir David Dalrymple, He referred to his unpopularity in ministerial ranks and stated "I have ill-deserved of these gentlemen no otherways than by telling them the truth ...", which he owed them as much from duty as from friendship. He averred that he had gone beyond the bounds of his employment to urge the shoring up of defences, lest Britain be Law's victim. He acknowledged

"'tis very true that I did not think that it was honourable or adviseable for the King's Ambassador to make court to a man who held every day and publicly such language and worse of the country whose King I had the honour to represent. Upon this I forbear to visit Mr. Law, but there never was one ill word passed between him and me; but Lord Stanhope has made him ample reparation for my want of respect to so great a minister. He has declared to the Regent and to him that I am re-called ...".58

However, on 21 January Stair abandoned his restraint and, as we learn from Craggs, who burned the letter, treated him to a tirade of invective, denigrating Stanhope's behaviour in France. Craggs sent a stinging reply. Stressing the value of candour between friends, he laid Stair's faults bare. He had tried, he asserted, to prevent him from fending with the Regent's entourage, and his failure had made Stanhope's intervention inevitable, particularly as Stair's latest letters had depicted the Regent as betraying the alliance. George I had sent Stanhope "to see whether we were upon the brink of ruin and destruction". The king had ordered his minister to interview Law, yet the latter had been barred from Stair's threshold. "Was Lord Stanhope, who was dispatched to see whether Hannibal was at the gate, to be disputing puntilios?" Was he, Craggs asked, to find other

lodgings, or, perhaps, to fail to see Law? There was no doubt that Stanhope had had to seek out the latter immediately despite Stair's feelings. Craggs admitted that Law's ambitions needed to be watched carefully but did not think they were sufficient grounds for hazarding the alliance by a demand for his dismissal. He confessed himself to be puzzled

"how you came to those overt acts against him without the King's orders. Why now I find that, (as) Lord Stanhope has been in France to explain some of those matters where there has been some things done and others promised to remove those jealousies we conceived, your Lordship thinks yourself concerned in a point of honour, they will not do anything pursuant of their fair words, Lord Stanhope has protected our enemy Law, we shall be undone, you have been given up and are to be sacrificed to him ...".

Craggs despaired. He had seen Stair in almost the same position over Dubois, and now he would destroy his position at home by a feud with Stanhope

"and pray what is to come of all this? I vow to God, you put me in mind of what I have often seen you do at play, that when once you began to lose, you would, though it was against all the Sharper and Swordmen in the Den, play on for all you was (sic) worth, and, if a friend spoke or pulled you by the sleeve, may had a Lady required your attendance, 'twas all one to the Earl of Stair, Mistress, Friend, Estate, tout au Diable rather than yield, and then one heard and agreed this man has vast qualifications, he's a good soldier, he's an able statesman, he's a fine gentleman, he's an excellent scholar, he's an agreeable companion - mais voici qui gâte tout".

First Stair had been jealous of the correspondence between Dubois and Stanhope,

"then picqued at Law's conduct. Now that Lord Stanhope has not entered entirely into your sentiments ... you'll support your own opinions at any event, as if the King's judging differently from Your Lordship in his own affairs were not a sufficient reason for you to acquiesce with honour."
As Stanhope's promise to the French to withdraw Stair had not yet been confirmed by George I, Craggs went on to urge his friend to salvage what he could. If he could not live with the French, he should

"come home as a man weary of so long and expensive an Embassy, entitled to the King's favour at home and the friendship and thanks of your fellow servants".

If, Craggs warned, he should choose the other course,

"you'll be in a fortnight at daggers drawn with the Court. If you get the better you'll be the occasion in my poor opinion of inextricable confusion, if you don't you'll not make a very great figure, and so I finish this long letter in which as I believe I have been more sincere than wise, I will not read it over for fear I should think it necessary to put out somewhat for I am sure it contains my real mind and judgement and I am as sure that if you are angry with me for it, you are very much to blame, for nothing but an entire friendship could have produced it ...".59

It must have seemed to Craggs when he opened the reply of 14 February that the lesson had been learnt, for Stair prefaced his letter with an avowal of his humility; "I have read it", he said, "over and over again, in that spirit and temper with which one ought to receive advice and reproof from a friend".60 But he then launched out on a full, even verbose, defence of his conduct. It was, however, a milder and more polished one than appeared in his first draft.61

Though the two versions digress early to such an extent that textual comparison is difficult, Stair's mood is made clearer by them. He portrayed himself as an honest man, free from pique and animosity, loyal to his friends, and feuding only with public enemies. He was

sure it had been his duty to attempt to hinder Law's ambition to
dominate France but even then he had only acted under the provo-
cation of allegations of murderous intent, which had led to the
Banker being guarded, and of a design to ruin the Bank. The Regent
provided Stair with proof by his statement that Law was besotted
with vanity and by his promise that the latter would be excluded from
involvement in foreign affairs.

On the subject of his quarrel with Law there is a curious dis-
crepancy between the two drafts. In the first Stair claimed to
have avoided a direct confrontation and consequently to be pusiled
why Law should presume himself excluded from Stair's hospitality.
Yet in the letter he finally sent to Craggs he wrote,

"I thought it was fit to make Mr. Law lose (his)
temper, and to make him act in passion and rage.
I had not succeeded in all these views when Lord
Stanhope arrived ...". 62

This ploy, he alleged, had been ruined by Stanhope's conciliatory
behaviour towards Law which involved the honouring of the latter's
relatives in Britain as well as Stair's removal from Paris.

Stair intended to convince Craggs when he sketched in rough the
argument that he would have accepted his dismissal without rancour,
as perhaps the only method of bringing Law to heel, if Stanhope had
worked privately and subtly (when he would have had a chance of real
success, for Law's morale was ebbing). But he had dishonoured his
office and that of George I's Ambassador by bluntly and publicly
asking Law what was amiss. As to the claim made by Law to Stanhope
that the rage that had led him to impugn Britain had been provoked

62. Hardwicke, vol. 2, p. 604; Stair to Craggs, 14 February 1720
(private).
solely by Stair, it was odd, the latter could claim, that that rage could sustain itself for twelve months and he pointed out that it had arisen long before their clash in September. He questioned whether his dismissal was more than a sop to Law's vanity, for the Regent had shown a willingness to allow him and Law to co-exist and had not wavered in his loyalty to the alliance. But now, he alleged, it was unlikely that Schaub would have time enough to reach Madrid before a separate peace between France and Spain had been signed, while every day brought confirmation that Law's aims were unaltered.

In his final draft Stair muted his disgust at finding himself sacrificed to Law and omitted his claim that

"I imagine the nation will think it pretty strange that Mr. Law deserved better of the King than Lord Stair, the parts that he and I have played are pretty well-known, one day or the other I shall be able to justify myself to my master whatever impressions may be given him at present, he is just and I have served him honestly and faithfully ...".

He was convinced that he would be able to clear himself publicly. 63

As Stanhope had done his work effectively, Stair could find no justification for Craggs' claim that perhaps Stair's embassy could be resuscitated. Indeed, possibly unknown to Stair, Dubois was currently pressing the British government to effect Stair's withdrawal as quickly as possible in order to placate Law. 64 Stair spurned Craggs' suggestion of a contrived honourable retirement as a "grimace" though he ended with a proclamation of his continuing loyalty to George I and of his intention to live quietly, untroubled by ambition. 65

If the terseness of Craggs' replies to Stair (he rebutted only the allegation that he had displayed the latter's private letters to other parties) and the promptness with which he produced the orders for Stair's revocation betrays his hope that he had seen an end to this particular correspondence, he was to be disappointed. On 12 March Stair sought to provide him with the view of Law's activities which he had largely deleted from his last letter, claiming to be prompted not by vanity but by a desire that the British ministry should know the truth. He recounted the history of his confrontation with Law, of his revelation to the Regent of the danger of entrusting "the reins of his chariot to that Phaeton Law, because he would overturn it", and of the Regent's acknowledgement of the truth of the claim. Then he told of Stanhope's contrary behaviour; his deference to Law, greater than that which would have been paid to Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin; and of his proclamation of George I's friendship and declaration that Stair was insane, had acted without orders and would be recalled. Now Law acted as Prime Minister, while Stair had lost his intimacy with the Regent and was granted only formal audiences.

66. Yet Robethon was to later give Senecterre the impression that Craggs had been opposed to Stanhope and in league with Stair, encouraging the latter to rebel and cause chaos (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 331, f. 115, Senecterre to Dubois, 13 May 1720).


In his concern to prove that Stanhope's drastic action had been unnecessary Stair claimed that no crisis had existed; of this he would brook no argument as he was, brushing vanity aside, the foremost expert upon French affairs. However, he declared that he sought no revenge. He would attempt only to clear his name and do what he could to muster support for the ministry.

But he remained adamant that, if Law retained his office, a Franco-British war was inevitable. Just as if Law, as seemed likely, achieved the return of Gibraltar to Spain, Britain would be rendered permanently insecure.

Thus the rage of the populace against Law as the Mississippian venture foundered came as a comfort to Stair. He was quick to report that the Regent's confidence in Law was flagging. Indeed he told Craggs on 12 March that the Regent in upbraiding Law had

"used him most cruelly to his face, and called him all the names than (sic) can be thought of, 'Knave and madman' etc. He told him, he did not know what hindered him to send him to the Bastille; and that there never was anyone sent thither deserved it half so well. This scene happened in the presence of Le Blanc. The Duke of Orleans was upon the close stool when Law came in. The Duke was in such a passion, that he run to Law with his breeches about his heels, and made him the compliment above mentioned".

Stair claimed that, to add to the Regent's disillusionment, Law himself was so disturbed that he could not sleep; he suffered "formal fits of phrenzy" and had to be restrained. Yet Law had confidence enough to proceed with a devaluation while he averred his faith that a little time would see him repair France's finances and destroy Britain's.

The co-incidental announcements on 21 March\(^70\) of Stanhope's second mission to Paris and of the appointment of Stair's successor, Sir Robert Sutton, an experienced diplomat and a recent Ambassador to Turkey, afforded Craggs the opportunity to suggest that, as Stair's return was imminent, conversation would be a more satisfactory method of giving vent to personal feelings. He also pointed out that Stanhope's presence in Paris would give Stair an opportunity to mend his relationship with him.\(^71\) The moment was not lost by Stair, for later he could confide to Sir David Dalrymple, "I think we agreed perfectly in everything and parted very good friends."\(^72\)

There was a further co-incidence, for Stanhope was coming to settle the Gibraltar dispute and to support Dubois in the face of a challenge from Law and Le Blanc at the moment when Stair, by inducing the Regent to nominate Dubois for the vacant Imperial Archbishopric of Cambrai,\(^73\) had scored his single triumph in those difficult days after his dismissal. Stair had played a part from October 1719 in Dubois' renewed attempt to gain the Cardinalate.

But the Abbé was ignored in December when the Pope named nine new cardinals,\(^74\) despite the efforts of his agent in Rome (the Jesuit

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\(^70\) S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 24, Craggs to Stair, 10 March 1720 o.s.; 10 March 1720 o.s. (private). A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 330, f. 201, Destouches to Dubois, 20 March 1720; f. 207, Senece- terre to Orleans, 21 March 1720; f. 211, George I to Orleans, 24 March 1720 o.s.

\(^71\) S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 24, Craggs to Stair, 10 March 1720 o.s.

\(^72\) S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, Stair to Sir David Dalrymple, 12 April 1720.

\(^73\) Stanhope acknowledged the truth of this assertion (S.R.O.: G.D. 135/141, vol. 24, Montrose to Stair, 29 May 1720 o.s. (copy in Graham, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 423)).

\(^74\) Lablercque, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 23.
Lafitau), of St. Saphorin to secure Imperial support and Stair's initiative in having George I plead directly with the Regent, thereby securing his sponsorship. The death of Cardinal Tremouille, the incumbent of the rich Archbishopric of Cambrai, gave Dubois a chance of taking a step towards his ultimate goal.

As the Regent was indifferent, he sought support from London through the French diplomatic mission there and, in Paris, from the Imperial ambassador, Pentenriedter, who elicited Stair's assistance. Armed with a letter from George I, procured by Destouches, the secretary to the French embassy in London, and approaching the Regent at a most favourable moment on 4 February, the day that the news of the Spanish accession to the Quadruple Alliance (on 26 January) arrived, Stair was successful in his advocacy. Then he readily agreed to the Regent's request to keep silent about the matter lest a bid to heal the schism within the French church (the result of the Bull Unigenitus) be spoilt. The church remained divided but in early June Dubois was consecrated, though he had to await Pope Clement XI's death before the Cardinal's hat was his.

78. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/165, f. 489, Stair to Stanhope, 29 November 1719.
82. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/167, f. 77, Stair to Stanhope, 5 February 1720.
83. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/167, f. 503, Stair to Cragge, 8 June 1720.
The quarrel over the return of Gibraltar to Spain originated in a promise made by Stanhope in Madrid in the summer of 1718 in the hope of persuading the Spaniards to accede to this Alliance. It was mentioned in the French declaration of war in January 1719 and it was reviewed inconclusively a year later during Stanhope's short sojourn in Paris. Stanhope himself was indifferent to the retention of Gibraltar, but the public uproar which followed his kite-flying, which included a proposal to introduce legislation to place the disposal of the colony at George I's discretion, meant that, after the Spaniards' accession to the Quadruple Alliance, their claim had to be denied. Destouches apprised his government on 12 February of the British refusal, but Craggs chose to hold back from Stair until the month's end the details of the public and Parliamentary rejection and provided him at first with only a sketchy thesis that the heavy wartime losses had invalidated the British commitment.

Thus ill-prepared Stair had to face the anger of the French over the betrayal, made only worse by Stanhope's earlier reassurance which had emboldened the Regent to seek to quieten Spanish fears that Britain might retract her promise on Gibraltar. The hapless Dubois, battered now by an assault upon his dominance of foreign affairs by

87. P.R.O.: S.P. 104/31, Craggs to Stair, 1 February 1720 o.s.
Le Blano and Law, who were calling for war with Britain, had to endure the Regent's irate accusation that his indiscreet display of Philip V's and Scotti's correspondence had been responsible for the withdrawal of the British promise. Annoyed as he was with Dubois, and with Stair discredited, the Regent decided to deal directly with London; he compelled Count Senetere to take up there his appointment as envoy which the latter had postponed for a year. Dubois looked to Stair to mollify the Regent, but the Ambassador, while disturbed by the latter's displeasure, had not seen the British reply to the Spanish demand and could only offer to communicate the facts to London.

At an audience on 21 February the Regent at once made plain his sentiments to Stair; he had been surprised, he said, at the British refusal and, as he had twice promised Gibraltar to Philip V, once in his formal declaration of war and again recently, expected George I to save his from embarrassment. Stair had to state that his lack of instructions made his powerless to reply. Yet he was bold enough to make the observation that when the withdrawal had been proffered Philip V had rejected it and that, as a war had since been fought, the same conditions no longer subsisted. The meeting terminated lamely, for, while the Regent maintained that he continued to trust in George I's integrity, Stair could do no more than promise to report the Regent's views.

89. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/167, f. 117, Stair to Craggs, 22 February 1720.
90. Ser. Conn, Gibraltar in British Diplomacy in the eighteenth Cen-
2, p. 133.
92. A.A.E. i: C.F. Ang. 330, f. 171, Destouches to Orleans, 7 March
1720.
The French efforts - letters from Dubois to Stanhope,\(^93\) a direct approach by the Regent to George I,\(^94\) and the dispatch of Senocterre - had little influence. The British ministry would not defy public opinion, as Craggs revealed on 29 February to Stair while providing an answer to the Regent, already translated into French, which merely elaborated upon the claim that subsequent events had rendered the promise void.\(^95\) This rebuttal earned Stair a stormy audience on 11 March, at which an emotional Regent declared both his disinterest in the fate of Gibraltar and his outrage at being cast as the dupe.\(^96\)

However, though French pressure counted for nought, the matter was still eventually resolved in Paris. But it was effected without Stair's participation, for the gravity of Law's challenge to Dubois (portrayed in Stair's reports\(^97\) and Dubois' pleas for support)\(^98\) brought Stanhope himself to the French capital. There he shored up Dubois' position in a confrontation with the Regent on 27 March which was remarkable for the latter's complete abandonment of the stance he had adopted over Gibraltar; he agreed that any decision should be made at the forthcoming peace congress.\(^99\)

98. Hardwicke, vol. 2, p. 608, Stair to Craggs, 26 February 1720 (private); f. 610, Stair to Craggs, 12 March 1720 (private).
Although on 17 February Spain had committed herself unconditionally to the Quadruple Alliance, there remained in Sicily a formidable force which had been driven from its strongholds but which had not been finally defeated. And the fear that Spain might yet defeat the Allied purpose dictated Stair's last, if inconclusive, involvement in international affairs - in the efforts to rid Sicily of the Spaniards and to strengthen the alliance by the inclusion of Portugal.

Firstly Admiral Byng's standing orders to prevent any evacuation (a legacy of the earlier phase when any regrouping of Spanish forces might have threatened France) had to be revoked by new instructions to which both Stair and Stanhope appended their signatures. Then, on 16 April, Abbé Landi, the Parmesan diplomat and current representative of Spain, informed Pententiedter that a courier had arrived from Madrid carrying instructions and powers for the Spanish army commander in Sicily to negotiate the evacuation of that island and Sardinia. But at a subsequent meeting at Stair's house Landi revealed to the Allied diplomats the real substance of the instructions which was that the Spanish army should stand its ground until a peace congress had been successfully concluded. Their protests were echoed on the morrow when they apprised the Regent and Dubois of the Spanish intention. But their concern was unnecessary, for on 6 May the opposing generals, De Lede and Mercy, concluded a treaty providing for evacuation of the islands.

As the same courier from Madrid brought a demand for France to Relinquish all Spanish territory in order that the status quo at Utrecht, upon which the Quadruple Alliance was based, could be restored, Stair joined Pentenriedter, the Regent and Dubois in be-
rating Landi over the perfidy of Philip V. 104

Landi's replacement by the Irish Jacobite, Sir Patrick Lawless, occasioned a further meeting on 19 May, when the latter entertained Pentenriedter, Dubois and Stair with the salient points of his in-
structions, encompassing Philip V's rights in Sicily and the fate of his artillery and shipping and reserving to the last the revelation that de Lede had been ordered to sign the convention with Mercy. 105

The depth of Stair's distrust of the Spaniards was plumbed when Schaub wrote to Dubois of Philip V's uniosibility towards the Regent. As the tone of this letter contrasted so sharply with earlier ones, Stair, through whose hands all diplomatic mail passed and who possessed discretionary powers over that affecting France, failed to deliver it and sent it to Stanhope for consideration. 106

In the second issue, Pentenriedter, Dubois and Stair were to find the conferences with the Portuguese Ambassador, Ribeira, fruit-
less, for the Portuguese continued to hedge over the request for a deeper involvement. 107

107. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/167, f. 378, Stair to Stanhope, 1 May 1720. A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 331, f. 4, Senetere to Dubois, 1 April 1720; f. 100, Senetere to Dubois, 9 May 1720.
Sir Robert Sutton's dilatoriness (he resisted even Craggs' direct commands) frustrated the intention of Stair and the ministry that his assumption of office should be immediate, and Stair's departure from France was postponed for three months. 108 He bore the delay stolidly, merely complaining mildly to Stanhope that he saw himself "to be between two mill stones." 109

However the delay afforded him time to restore further his reputation in the eyes of the ministry through his renewed friendship with Stanhope. Craggs' letters to him slowly warmed in tone, he was granted his plate and money for the balance of his extraordinaries was found. 110

The delay also allowed him to witness the rapid decline in the fortunes - though not the final disgrace and flight - of Law. Yet this erosion of the position of the man to whom he had been sacrificed did not induce complacency in him. Convinced of the undiminished menace of Law, Stair was provoked by British inaction to exceed more passive observation and to draw up proposals for tactical defence, proposals which displayed the influence of the environment in which he had lately been living.

108. Sutton's immediate excuse was illness (S.R.O.: C.D. 135/141, vol. 24, Craggs to Stair, 24 March 1720 o.s. (copy in P.R.O.: S.P. 104/51)). Three weeks later there was no hint of illness (S.R.O.: C.D. 135/141, vol. 24, Craggs to Stair, 14 April 1720 o.s. (private)). On 16 May Sutton was ordered to leave for France (P.R.O.: S.P. 104/31, Craggs to Stair, 5 May 1720 o.s.; Craggs to Sutton, "proceed ... with all imaginable speed", 5 May 1720 o.s.). Dubois felt that though the delay might have lasting ill-effects, Sutton was of such character that he should have been able to disperse them (A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 331, f. 51, Dubois to Seneat, 3 May 1718).


When he discovered in late March that Law was using French gold to speculate in silver and to buy a large stake in the British South Sea Company (evidence of which eluded Craggs), Stair proposed a way to avert foreign domination of Britain's finances - by prohibiting the import and export of money, while the attractiveness of the specie was diminished by a reduction in the value of the guinea to twenty shillings. As he was also concerned that Britain should learn from France's experience, he urged the immediate creation of a national bank, entirely divorced from any other commercial undertaking, particularly the South Sea Company, to assume the National Debt (curiously ignoring the existence of the Bank of England).

Further he pressed for the rigorous curbing of excessive speculation in South Sea Company stock, but Britain, with the speculator already in full cry, paid no heed.

Craggs' gentle refutation of Stair's claims and ideas did not prevent their repetition since Stair was determined that they were


valid and should be understood. However, though the bubble of the South Sea Company would endure until the autumn, the menace of Law was drastically eliminated after the public rejection of his edict of 21 May which devalued the shares of the Mississippi Company and the hitherto stable banknote (previously only the coinage had been affected). Amid the uproar ("La Ville de Paris paroit comme une ville prise d'assaut", was Stair's description) the Regent was forced to repeal the edict and dismiss Law as Controller-General, though he retained him as Director-General of the Bank and the Company.

Law's disgrace provided Stair with an opportunity to justify personally to the Regent his confrontation with Law. He secured his audience on 1 June and opened with a demand for the release of the British workmen who were being held in the prisons of Rouen and Dieppe after having tried to leave France, whither they had been lured to fulfil Law's ambitions to improve the variety of France's manufactures. Yet when the Regent began to reply in detail, Stair interrupted to say that their time would be better spent upon other issues. He regretted their late estrangement and his having been engaged upon this problem for a full month having submitted a memorial on it on 1 May 1720 (P.R.O.: S.P. 78/167, f. 349, Stair to Craggs, 1 May 1720; f. 366, Stair to Craggs, 4 May 1720; f. 488, Stair to Craggs, 25 May 1720).
been cast as the enemy of France and affirmed his constant and con-
tinuing loyalty to the Regent. The latter broke in to say that
he had never lost his affection for Stair but that he had had to
complain when the Ambassador had opposed his financial system and
had sought to promote defiance in France.

The Regent knew as well as anyone, Stair replied chidingly, his
views on the system: he had found it sound, but, while he had seen
the necessity of exploiting Law's undoubted talents, he had seen
clearly the danger posed by Law's ambitions and had urged their con-
trol. He had revealed to the Regent his own intimate knowledge of
Law; his vanity, ambition, presumption, intolerance of others' views,
insolence and his conviction that he would not rest until the Regent
had capitulated to him. "Souvenez-vous en? Faîtes y réflexion?", he asked, "Agissez-je comme votre ennemi, ou comme votre serviteur?
Et dîtes moi à présent, meritay-je votre haine ou remerciments?"

In an emotional tone the Regent acknowledged the veracity of
Stair's warnings. The Ambassador pressed his advantage: had he
not said that the Regent should not entrust the reins of his chariot
to the phaeton Law?

This too the Regent acknowledged and with patience heard Stair's
full defence: he had confronted Law without malice drawn by his
duty to defend himself, his monarch, his country and indeed France
in an attempt to avert the impending disasters. Thanking Stair for
his frankness, the Regent proclaimed that he had learnt the lesson;
thereafter, though Law's talents would be exploited, his ambitions
would be shackled. And he had, he thought, something to teach
Britain; much to Stair's satisfaction, he warned that the current
level of British shares was dangerously high. Combined with an
over-large foreign investment (his estimate was £15,000,000) this
placed Britain in unenviable circumstances. The intrusion of the Duke of Bourbon precluded any further exchange. 121

Stair had thus defended himself before the Regent and Stanhope and he was anxious (doubtless with a view to his personal future) to do likewise before his king. But George I was due to leave London for Hanover, and it was there in the autumn that Stair would have to conduct his defence, 122 for, as Craggs could not, after a third written demand, get Sutton on the road to Dover before 8 June and the latter took nine days to reach Paris, Stair after introducing him could only leave Paris on 23 June, too late to intercept the king. 123

When Stair realized that Sutton's non-appearance by 12 June had thwarted his design, he made plain his disappointment to Craggs, remarking (in a letter prefaced with an expression of his gratitude for his plate and the money for his extraordinaries, which would offset his investment losses in France) that

"I see plainly I shall not be able to see the King in England. It is a great while ago since Mr. Law told his friends here, that I should not be allowed to have the honour of seeing the King. It is pretty hard to digest, I own, if, after serving the King very faithfully, very zealously, and with some success, I should have the mortification not so much as to have my Master's good countenance. However that happens to be, I am very glad His Majesty's affairs go so very well ...." 124

121. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/167, f. 464, Stair to Craggs, 1 June 1720 (private).
The recovery of that "countenance" evaded Stair and it was denied to him permanently by the early deaths, in the coming year, of his patrons, Stanhope and Cragge, and by the rise to prominence of Sir Robert Walpole who would, as long as he dominated the political scene, prevent a reversal of Stair's fortunes.

For the moment Cragge, interpreting perhaps Stair's words too literally, confined himself to saying,

"I only observe that you must be very much hurt when you can imagine there has been a laid design to prevent you waiting on the King and that Mr. Law is in the secret. An hour's conversation will clear up a thousand of these things better than a year's correspondence. I wait with impatience for that honour ...".125

Stair's departure was as quiet as it was hurried; it had been his expressed intention to leave the details of his withdrawal to his staff,126 and the British government, anxious for him to avoid a second embroilment with the Princes of the Blood, waived the formalities of departure.127

If Stair was denied any accolade - none has survived and he received no material reward beyond his plate - there remains an incident worthy of Dumas with which to close the story of his mission. Stair's last duty was to resolve the consequences of a fracas on 6 June (George I's birthday). A group of celebrants had met at a cafe frequented by Britons but had moved from there, after having been harrassed by Jacobites, to a room, which was taken nightly by

[[125. S.R.O.: C.D. 135/141, vol. 24, Cragge to Stair, 6 June 1720 o.s. (private).]
[126. Fordwicke, vol. 2, p. 620, Stair to Cragge, 12 June 1720 (private).]
[127. P.R.O.; S.P. 78/168, f. 3, Stair to Cragge, 12 June 1720; f. 41, Cragge to Stair, 6 June 1720 o.s.; f. 47, Stair to Cragge, 19 June 1720 (copy in S.R.O.; C.D. 135/141, vol. 3b); f. 51, Stair to Cragge, 21 June 1720.]
one of their number, Buckworth, at a tavern at the sign of the
Town of London, Rue Dauphin. They had supped and had toasted the
king when their singing of "Vive le Roy" was matched by abusive
Jacobite songs from the next room. A foray by Captain De La
Mellonière uncovered there a number of musketeers, Britons in French
service. A bottle aimed at his head led to an unequal fight in the
corridor, with the Captain's stick parrying two Jacobite swords.
Buckworth interposed and was run through the stomach. The fight
was ended by De La Mellonière's securing a sword. The party sought
sanctuary with Stair. 128 When questioned by Craggs, Sutton, who
disclaimed any responsibility, revealed that Stair had ordered
Buckworth, who had come close to death, and his company to leave
Paris to avoid further incidents, rendering it unnecessary for the
matter to be carried to the Regent. 129

128. P.R.O.: S.P. 78/168, f. 43, Stair to Craggs, 17 June 1720; f.
45, Account of the incident (undated). A.A.E.: C.P. Ang. 354,
f. 256, De La Mellonière's deposition; f. 257, Hugh Hamilton's
deposition; f. 258, Buckworth's deposition, 11 June 1720;
f. 259, Gordon's deposition; f. 261, Will Jemmens' deposition,
11 June 1720.
CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE CONCLUSION

If Stair could have found a solution to his quarrel with Law in time, it is reasonable to assume that his diplomatic career need not have been interrupted. Indeed the British government had in the autumn of 1719 expressed its intention - in fact its willingness - to continue to employ him as its representative in France at least until peace with Spain had been concluded. And, although Stair had identified himself closely with Stanhope's political stance (except in regard to the forfeiture of the Jacobites' estates),^ the Whig factions were reconciled in 1720. Thus it is conceivable that Stair could have served under Walpole. But he could not unbend enough to coexist with Law and as a result was dismissed from his post. This probably destroyed any prospect of immediate re-employment, even if Stanhope had lived, for foreign courts were unlikely to receive a diplomat who had been sent home in partial disgrace. The consequence was that, though Queen Caroline considered him for the embassy at Vienna in 1734, as a method of silencing his opposition, twenty-two years were to elapse before a new post abroad was found for him.

As no government assistance was forthcoming for the payment of
the debts he had incurred in France, Stair was forced on his return
to Britain to place his estates in the hands of trustees and to
contrive methods of recouping his losses. In 1721, after a year
in London, he returned to Scotland, where he occupied himself with a
non-too-successful effort to improve his property. With the help
of fatigue parties from his regiment he laid out the woods and gardens
at Castle Kennedy and Newliston. He also saw to the improvement of
his livestock, bought ploughs from Jethro Tull, undertook ventures
in woollen and linen-manufacture and coal-mining, and is credited
with introducing the turnip to Scotland. But he was never able to

Sir Robert Douglas of Glenbervie, The Peerage of Scotland,
Edinburgh, 1833 ed., vol. 2, p. 550. Douglas claims "it was
during this period that the elegant Hamilton of Bangour addressed
to the Earl of Stair his imitation of Horace's ode, Laudabant
alii clarum Rhodun, containing these lines:
"But whate'er place thy presence boast,
Let not, O Stair! an hour be lost.
Whether beneath the open sky
Stretch'd in the tented couch to lie
Thy fate ordains to shine again
Great on some future Blenheim's plain,
Higher to raise thy deathless name
Triumphant to sublimer fame.
Or if, secure from fev'rish heat
Newliston cover thy retreat,
Where wit conspires with live's delights,
To grace thy days and bless thy nights."

154/113 14/15 October 1723 o.s. (Land acquisitions and disposals).
Robert Maxwell, Select Transactions of the Honourable Society of
Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland, Edinburgh,
1743, pp. v, xxii. George Ormonde, Arniston Memoirs, Edinburgh,
o.s.
shake off his debts and, when his uncles would loan him no more money, he turned to Sarah, the Dowager-Duchess of Marlborough. But despite her generosity and his confident predictions of profit, in 1753 his widow had to seek assistance from George II who granted her a pension of £400 a year.

Stair's financial straits led him in 1729 to petition for the position of Vice-Admiral of Scotland, which Montrose had relinquished after an estrangement between his Duchess and Queen Caroline over Walpole's censoring of John Gay's "Beggar's Opera." His request was granted. But he had already joined the party which Dr. Foord has described as "the haughty dispossessed", including the remnants of the Squadrons, Aberdeen, Montrose, Queensberry, Erskine, Tweeddale and Marchmont, in opposing Walpole's patronage of the Campbell brothers, Argyll and Islay. And his part in the opposition to the Excise Bill

5. Blenheim Palace MSS.: E36, Stair to Sarah, 22 June 1736 o.s. There is no mention of the sum borrowed, but in 1738 he had to turn again to Sarah for assistance because he owed £700 in interest to Middleton, a goldsmith in London, and he sought to borrow a £1,000 to meet it, revealing at the same time that he owed Middleton £12,700 (E.36, Stair to Sarah, 8 February 1738 o.s.). Sarah paid Middleton £500 immediately (E36, Stair to Sarah, 14 February 1738 o.s.). She was generous enough to make a codicil to her will releasing him from a debt of £1,000 which he owed her on bond (Graham, op.cit., vol. 2, app. 0. 445).

6. S.R.O. P.5.3, 3/6, p. 517, 27 March 1753 o.s. In 1755 Lady Stair pleaded for an extra £5 to be added to her pension (B.M.: ADD. MSS., 32, 852, f. 553, Lady Stair to George II and Lord Bristol (February 1755)). She died on 24 November 1759 o.s. (W.P. Anderson, Silences that Speak, Edinburgh, 1931, p. 362).


in 1733 and in particular his personal attempt to intercede with the Queen (in the audience which she granted him his forthright, even bullying, attitude recalls his dealings with Orléans) caused him to be deprived of the honour. Unlike his fellow opponents, he was allowed to retain his regiment as there was no desire to see him ruined. Yet he lost even this in the following year when he voted for the Duke of Marlborough's bill which proposed to have officers' commissions made life-long appointments. His action prompted the king to declare "he would never let a man keep anything by favour who had endeavoured to keep it by force". In the same year he was not elected by his fellow peers and became increasingly vociferous of his criticism of Walpole, particularly over his handling of the War of Jenkin's Ear and the amount of support given to Maria Theresa in the Austrial Succession War. Influenced by Bolingbroke, he came to share with Chesterfield the idea of a broadly based government of patriots and looked to the Prince of Wales for leadership.
After Walpole's resignation in February 1742 Stair wrote to George Dundas, casting himself in the role of Quintus Cincinnatus,

"if in this critical situation I can be of use to the Country, I shall think it my duty cheerfully to obey the call of great men, if otherwise, I shall very contentedly indulge myself in my love of quiet and of my plough".

His remark was opportune, for, after Argyll had resigned from his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the Forces which he had only just taken up, Carteret prevailed upon George II in March to promote Stair to Field-Marshal and to appoint him to command the "Pragmatic Army" then assembling in Flanders. He was also named Ambassador-Extraordinary to the United Provinces for the purpose of persuading the Dutch to provide troops for the Pragmatic Army.

He failed in this last task; all he gained was permission to station his army at Ghent. Having been given no objective, he returned to Britain in August to urge that he be allowed to invade France and conclude the war swiftly by capturing Paris. George II and Carteret were at first in favour of the idea but soon abandoned it when others, including Marshal Wade, ruled it to be impracticable. Despite pressure from the Austrians, the Dutch and Stair, who

he restored and offered his resignation, the British ministry remained indecisive and left the army inactive. By February 1743 Stair still had received no orders and took it upon himself to march his troops across the Rhine in an effort to take advantage of Maria Theresa's change of fortune in Italy and Bohemia.

While attempting to prevent the French from reinforcing their army in Bavaria, Stair contrived to allow them to cut his communications at Aschaffenburg. There George II superseded him and marched the starving army into Noailles' trap at Dettingen on 16 June. Though surprised, the Pragmatic Army fought its way out and was robbed of a complete victory only by the king's refusal to listen to Stair's pleas for a pursuit of the routed enemy. Thereafter George ignored the suggestions of Stair and Marshal von Browne, while attempting to prevent the French from reinforcing their army in Bavaria, Stair contrived to allow them to cut his communications at Aschaffenburg. There George II superseded him and marched the starving army into Noailles' trap at Dettingen on 16 June. Though surprised, the Pragmatic Army fought its way out and was robbed of a complete victory only by the king's refusal to listen to Stair's pleas for a pursuit of the routed enemy. Thereafter George ignored the suggestions of Stair and Marshal von Browne, Maria Theresa's emissary, for further military activity because he wished to await the outcome of the (ultimately abortive) attempt by the Duke of Hesse-Cassel at Hanau to mediate between Charles VII and Maria Theresa. Infuriated by this inaction and by the rejection of his resignation, Stair offered his resignation, the British ministry remained indecisive and left the army inactive. By February 1743 Stair still had received no orders and took it upon himself to march his troops across the Rhine in an effort to take advantage of Maria Theresa's change of fortune in Italy and Bohemia.

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of his advice, Stair resigned his commission and his embassy in September; he ended his letter to the king with the statement that

"I hope your Majesty will give me leave to retire to my plough without any mark of your displeasure."

Though after his resignation Stair was in sympathy with the opposition to Carteret, he was soon to offer the king his services again when France declared war and threatened to invade Britain. He was appointed Commander-in-Chief of South Britain in February 1744. In this capacity he counselled the king and the government until the end of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. In 1744 he aired again his idea for a thrust at Paris only to have it again rejected. In the following year he was considered for service abroad by George II but was rejected by the Dutch as being too adventurous. He had regained his regiment, the Inniskillings, in April 1742, and in May 1745 exchanged it for the Greys. He was given the Governorship of Minorca in 1742, and was made General of Marines in June 1744 and was made General of Marines in June 1744.

23. Owen, op.cit., p. 184. Duffy, op.cit., p. 80 (Browne called Stair "this good old man").
27. Owen, op.cit., p. 227. Ligori, who had supported the idea in 1742 thought it was now impracticable in the face of Saxe's unbeaten army (Whitworth, op.cit., p. 87).
29. Sir Herbert Maxwell, The Lowland Scots Regiments, Their Origin, Character and Service to the Great War of 1914, Glasgow, 1918, p. 60.
30. Maxwell, op.cit., p. 60.
31. Nat. Library Scot.: MSS., 7064, Stair to Tweeddale, 13 October 1744 o.s.
1746. He died at Queensberry House in Edinburgh on 9 May 1747 after a short illness and was buried at Kirkliston on the 23rd with considerable pomp.

While Stair's younger contemporaries provide us with comments which show that he retained to the end of his life characteristics which were his in 1720, none of them attempted a detailed assessment of him. Thus it is fortunate for the purposes of this study that he was sketched so fully in the years of his embassy to France and both by friend and foe - by Cragge, as we have seen, when attacking and defending him, and twice by Saint Simon in 1715, the vital first year.

Saint Simon's first description of him illustrates how exactly Stair fulfilled the requirements of George I and the British government for an obstinate, vigorous man of unquestioned loyalty who would doggedly resist the wiles of the aged Louis XIV and his courtiers as they sought to avoid meeting the conditions of the Utrecht Settlement. Saint Simon wrote:

"C’était un Écossais grand et bien fait, qui avait l’ordre du Chadron ou de Saint-André d’Écosse. Il portait le nez au vent avec un air insolent, qu’il soutenait des plus audacieux propos sur les ouvrages de Hardayk, les démolitions de Dunkerque, le commerce, et toutes sortes de querelles et de chicanes, en sorte qu’on le jugeait moins chargé d’entretenir la paix, et de faire les affaires de son pays, que de causer une rupture. Il poussa si loin la patience et la douceur naturelle de Torcy, que ce ministre ne voulut plus traiter avec lui. Stair même étoit si peu mesuré dans les audiences qu’il demandoit frequemment, et avec la plus grande hauteur, que le Roi prit le parti de ne le plus entendre. Il tâchait à se mêler avec ce qu’il pouvoit de meilleure compagnie, qui se lassa bientôt de ses discours, dont il répandoit l’impudence aux promenades publiques, aux spectacles et chez lui, où il cherchoit à s’attirer du monde par sa bonne chère. J’aurai lieu plus d’une fois de parler de ce personnage, qui ne sut que trop bien jouer le sien et faire peur, tandis qu’il en mouroit intérieurement lui-même, et avec grande raison. C’était un homme d’esprit, de toute espèce d’entreprises, qui estoit dans les troupes, où il avoit servi sous le duc de Marlborough, et qu’il haïssoit merveilleusement la France. Il parloit aisément, éloquemment et démesurément sur tous chapitres, avec la dernière liberté."
The second is to be found in Saint Simon’s account of the first days of the Regency and though it contains much that was in the first statement, it complements it by its broader perspective:

"C’était un très simple gentilhomme écossais, grand, bien fait, malgré, encore assez jeune, avec la tête haute et l’air fier. Il était vif, entreprenant, hardi, audacieux par tempérament et par principe. Il avait de l’esprit, de l’adresse, du tour; avec cela actif, instruit, secret, maître de soi et de son visage, parlant aisément tous les langages suivant qu’il les croyait convenir; sous prétexe d’aimer la société, la bonne chère, la débauche, qu’il ne pouvait pourtant jamais, attentif à se faire des connaissances et à se procurer des liaisons dont il put faire usage à bien servir son maître, et son parti à lui-même. C’était celui des whigs et de tous ceux que le roi Georges avait remis en place, et la famille et les amis du duc de Marlborough, dont il était créature, à qui il avait de tout temps été attaché, sous qui il avait servi, et qui l’y avait avancé et procuré un régiment et l’ordre d’Écosse. Il était pauvre, dépensier, fort ardent et fort ambitieux, et il voulait servir de façon, dans son ambassade, que, avec appuis que le protégéçient, il put faire une grande fortune en Angleterre, où son parti, auquel il était dévoué, et ses patrons dominéçient, et à qui il plaisoit d’autant plus qu’il haïssoit la France autant qu’eux."36

Saint Simon’s depiction of his physical appearance as a tall, lean, severe man with a high forehead and a long nose set in a narrow face is confirmed by his portraits, though they in no way suggest the insolent nose-in-the-air attitude.

Likewise the Frenchman’s analysis of Stair’s attributes is proven sound by his subsequent behaviour and by the statements of others. Perhaps the key to his character lies in the assessment of him said to have been made by his father and recorded by his anonymous biographer, who wrote:

"He was the easier to permit his son to follow his inclination, for the army, as he found in him an openness and honesty of disposition, a noble, generous, frankness of temper that scorned the little mean arts of dissimulation and cunning which are so necessary to make the greatest talents useful in the political sphere. It was a common saying of his "That his son John had too much blunt honesty to be a courtier, and that he would never make his fortune by flattering the folly or administering the vices of the Great". Therefore he chose the Camp as his proper sphere where dissimulation was not necessary and plain honest truth was not dangerous." 37

His "frankness of temper" or "blunt honesty" was an undoubted asset for Britain when facing Torcy over the Dunkirk or Majorcan issues, but it served her ill when it led to the untimely clashes with Dubois, the Princes of the Blood, and Law. Combined with Stair's obstinacy, it forced Craggs to go to the lengths of confessing to Dubois that the ambassador was

"... naturellement tres ombrageux et il a une fierte qui ne convient pas toujours aux temps et aux lieux". 38

He had to berate Stair for flinging "the handle after the hatchet" and, as he pursued the argument over the rights of ambassadors to the bitter end in spite of the wishes of his principals, for never knowing "when to give over to a loser." 39 Just as, on the occasion of the clash with Law over the trivial matter of whether it was proper for an ambassador to invest in foreign schemes, the Secretary, while drawn to acknowledge that Stair had "vast qualifications", that he was "... a good soldier, ... an able statesman, ... a fine gentleman, ... an excellent scholar, (and) ... an agreeable companion", 40 yet felt himself forced to castigate him for his myopic ineptness in

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38. Quoted above on p. 297.
39. Quoted above on p. 320.
40. Quoted above on p. 382.
allowing the quarrel to reach such proportions that both governments were embarrassed by it. The abiding nature of this trait is illustrated by a statement made in 1733 by Lord Hervey, who recorded in his diary that "His Lordship was of very warm, prompt temper, and when he was angry did not hesitate to express his being so in very strong and irritating terms." 41

Also in 1733, Horace Walpole (the elder) described Stair in much the same terms as Saint Simon, as "a man of good parts with the worst judgement in the world and insufferable proud and haughty." 42 In deriding his judgement he must have been prejudiced by Stair's political activities within the opposition because earlier it had been trusted enough for Craggs to delegate to Stair the instruction of both Admiral Byng and Stanhope whilst the latter was in Spain in August 1718. 43 Yet Stair was certainly prone to exaggerate and was intolerant of ideas other than his own. Marchmont noted in September 1747:

"At Lord Chesterfield's ... Mr. Thomas Villiers came in as Count Bentinck went away, and Lord Chesterfield told him that Bentinck exactly resembled Lord Stair, who would allow no facts or reasoning against his own hopes and schemes".

Chesterfield himself wrote: "Bentinck talks more extravagantly than ever poor Lord Stair did". 44

Stair's Francophobia, on which Saint Simon lays such emphasis and which found expression in Stair's constant warnings that the French, and Torcy in particular, would lose no opportunity to worst

43. See above p. 278.
44. Dobree, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 1005. Frederick the Great said of Stair that he upset everyone by "talking big in Louis XIV terms like a feu furieux" (B. Williams, Carteret and Newcastle, Cambridge, 1943, p. 130).
Britain, proved enduring. Bolingbroke in October 1747 remarked to Marchmont, alluding to Chesterfield's performance as Secretary of State for the Northern Department,

"I know not whether Stair, if he was now alive, would change his opinion about the importance of characters; but I am sure, he would enjoy with vast delight the thirty thousand Russians, that are on the way to help us conquer France ..."46

Craggs' statement to Dubois, in December 1718,

"Mais son plus grand malheur et auquel j'attribue la plus part de ses defects ce sont ses affaires particulières qui le pincent, et qui aigrissent toutes ses bonnes qualités".47

echoes Saint Simon's verdict and underscores Stair's reputation as an inept manager of his personal finances and as an incurable spendthrift. Hervey described him as

"a man of honour and integrity, and though he had much more of the profusion of money in his conduct than is common to his countrymen, yet the desire of getting it was as predominant in his composition as in the most thrifty Scotchman of them all ...".48

He was also an inveterate gambler and was inclined to pursue "Lady Luck" with a recklessness which accorded with his most glaring deficiency as a diplomat, in that he was unable to accept compromise once he had determined upon a course of action, despite pleas or orders from Craggs, Stanhope or even George I.

His arrogance, inordinate pride, shortness of temper and quickness to take offence, as well as his humourless view of himself, are

45. See above p. 299. Lady Mary Cowper found that the French reciprocated: "The French hate the Earl of Stairs" (Diary of Mary, Countess Cowper, London, 1864, p. 101).
47. Referred to above, on p. 297.
all revealed in his pompous and long-winded defences of his conduct. Yet he was loyal, confident, rarely overawed, and able to mask his emotions with a poker-face, a useful talent when confronting Torquay or when suffering such indignities as having to interrupt his ceremonial entry to remove horses to satisfy the pettiness of French protocol. His dignified bearing earned a description of him in the euphoric days of the signing of the Triple Alliance, as the "finest gentleman in Europe". He had proved by 1720 to be not only a brave but an inventive soldier, though he had shown a marked dislike for the rigours of sleeping rough and dieting upon apples. He was intelligent, well-travelled, with a gift for languages, affable, lively company and, as recanting Jacobites were to learn, a generous and forgiving friend.

Louis Wiesener writes of him as one of the more remarkable men of the first half of the eighteenth century, and without doubt by his life's end he warranted that description. However, by 1720 he was yet to win distinction as a soldier and as a diplomat had returned home in partial disgrace. This misfortune had befallen him because of his proclivity to dispute, as Craggs said, "puntillos" when great issues were at stake. Thus it does seem unlikely that, lacking the essential flexibility of character of the successful diplomat, his embassy could have endured for much longer; indeed, he was fortunate that it lasted as long as it did.

Yet in 1715 the hostility of the French court did not allow him an opportunity to display his weakness as a diplomat. And there can be no doubt that his performance there justified his choice;

49. Quoted above on p. 196.
his uncompromising stand against the French attempts to pervert the intentions of the Utrecht peace treaty and his watch on and relentless pursuit of the Jacobites were extremely valuable services. If Sarah, the Dowager-Duchess of Marlborough, referred to this period when she spoke of him in 1734 as having been "a very good ambassador ...", then she was justified in doing so. It is interesting that Stair himself, albeit when seeking to be re-employed in 1744, recalled his effort against the Jacobites in 1715 as an achievement. Perhaps it was his one real achievement and certainly it was the reason why Stanhope, while the Jacobite threat remained, did not agree to his frequent requests to be withdrawn.

His least controversial period as ambassador was during the making of the Quadruple Alliance. But the achievement of this end of the Triple Alliance was due entirely to Stanhope, who took up the negotiations for both at the crucial moment to work exclusively with Dubois. Thus the compliments paid to Stair on these occasions were little more than form, and he was not misled by them.

Nevertheless, he harried Louis XIV, drove Torcy from power, uncovered the Jacobite secrets with commendable efficiency and gave his government a timely warning of the imminence of the revolt. He forged a link with Orleans and assisted in the establishment of the Regency. If he failed to procure a rapprochement with France in September 1715, the moment was hardly opportune. He helped Stanhope found the alliances, propped up Dubois when his morale wilted, and engineered the latter's promotion in order to oust Huxelles from the control of France's foreign affairs. He secured the French

52. H.M.C. Denbigh MSS., 1911, p. 244, Stair to Newcastle, (February) 1744.
declaration of war, dazzled France with his entry and encouraged her war efforts. That he managed, despite his shortcomings, to retain his post for six and a half difficult and momentous years was an achievement in itself.
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