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Scotland and the Spanish Armada

THE Spanish Armada has long been regarded as the great attempt made by Roman Catholic Philip to overthrow heretical Elizabeth. Too much emphasis, perhaps, has been laid upon the expedition, which, though of outstanding magnitude, was only one of a series—an armada sailed as late as 1599—but in the main the common view is correct. The fate of the Invincible Armada represents the defeat of Spain before English sea-power. Where, then, in this great duel is the place of Scotland? She had no great navy, although¹ she produced both traders and pirates in fair numbers; it was not against her that the mighty fleet set sail, and, indeed, her share in the event limits itself to dealing with the few weather-beaten ships which managed to reach her shores. In short, but for Tobermory and its treasure, we should not think of Scotland in connection with the Armada.

The object of this paper is to show that Scotland was vitally concerned, and that this country was during the whole period from 1580 to 1588 a most important card in the diplomatic game of Europe. She was more than a dark mirror in which world-politics were reflected;² she was the hinge upon which these world-politics turned.

Now the greatest force which was operating in Europe during

¹ *Cal. Scot. Pap.* passim.

² *Der Kampf um Schottland und die Gesandtschaftsreise Sir Francis Walsinghams im Jahre 1583*, Dr. Karl Stählin, p. 123: 'Wie in einem freilich trüben Spiegel wurden dort die Weltverhältnisse reflektiert.'

the second half of the sixteenth century was that of the Counter-Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church, reorganised by the Council of Trent, reinforced by the Order of Jesus, set itself to recover its lost dominions. It is possible to account for the Armada simply by considering it as one of the many attempts made by the Counter-Reformation to regain the unhappy souls over whom the heretic queen so cruelly tyrannised. 'Philip,' says a very modern writer in describing the genesis of the Armada, 'was in spirit a true Crusader, born four hundred years too late,'¹ and he considers that the king's wars were in essence wars of religion. To the average man of the period, it is fair to say, such an aspect of the case would be the only true one. To the Catholic the expedition was a holy crusade, to the Protestant it was but part of the devilish scheme of that Antichrist, the Pope of Rome, to regain his lost empire. In the mind of the Protestant the forces of Roman Catholicism were knit in an indissoluble bond and pursued one clear end. He imagined that the 'League' of Catholic powers had been made at Bayonne in 1565, and he saw in the bloody night of St. Bartholomew only the first-fruits of the dreadful harvest. Everywhere he felt the unseen presence of the agents of the League, the Jesuits especially.

The endless wars in the Low Countries, the plottings in England, Scotland, and Ireland, the secret diplomacy of Mary Queen of Scots, all these were but the outward manifestations of the hidden force, working noiselessly, inevitably to its conclusion. In Scotland, for example, Rizzio was considered to be an agent of the Pope, and when in 1579 Esmé Stewart, Sieur d'Aubigny, landed in the home of his fathers he was set down at once as an agent of the League.² It was noted also with horror,³ 'in the same day that d'Aubigné had sent Montgomery, accompanied with a number of the guard, to intrude him in the pulpit of Glasgow and expel Mr. David Wennies (*sic*), minister thereof, was the Prince of Orange shot with the foreknowledge of d'Aubigné and conspiracy at Dublin in Ireland, and Mr. William Creighton, principal of the Jesuits at Lyons, sent into Scotland for the great work that was in hand, so well did the enemies accord to subvert religion with common intelligence at one time in all countries.'

The continuity and the unity of the Roman Catholic design, as it appeared not only to Protestant bigots, but to cold-blooded

¹ *Master Mariners*, J. R. Spears, 133.

² Calderwood, iii. 488.

³ *Harl. MSS.* 291. 71. f. 146, quoted by Stählin, *op. cit.* p. 1.

'Politiques,' was largely a thing of their own imagining. Some kind of a league there may have been,¹ but it was certainly a theory rather than a fact. The Conference of Bayonne² was only a move in the crafty policy of Catherine de Medicis, and even the massacre of St. Bartholomew cannot be traced to any very deep-laid scheme. Briefly, it is plain that the Counter-Reformation, though perhaps the strongest tendency of the age, did not operate independently. It was bound to take into consideration other forces, and when it did issue into action, it was only as the resultant, so to speak, of the simultaneous action of a complex of religious and political ideals.

Let us dismiss, therefore, the plain notion of a crusade, and admit that the result of the religious upheaval had been to rearrange rather than entirely to displace the existing political settlements. Generally speaking, the balance in Western Europe had been England and the House of Burgundy *versus* France and Scotland; but apart altogether from the effects of the Reformation, certain important changes had been taking place during the sixteenth century. A series of marriages had united with the House of Burgundy not only the Empire but Spain, with the result, as is proved by the case of Charles V., that the 'balance' was utterly destroyed. It is true that, by his marriage with English Mary, Philip II. preserved the old relationship, and France steadily pursued her policy of maintaining a party in Scotland; but none the less, the unceasing pressure upon France produced its sure result. If she was not to be enclosed in the Habsburg ring France must join England, and in the reign of Elizabeth that is in effect what happened. The sheer necessity of resisting the overmighty power of Spain forced the two countries to forget their own quarrel, and despite much mutual suspicion, despite the shifty marriage negotiations, despite even the Great Massacre, they worked in unison. Both, for example, lent aid to the United Provinces, though the Queen of England hated rebels and the most Christian King of France detested heretics. Together they fought against the power which represented the Roman Catholic cause. Why? Because the Counter-

¹ The Rev. J. H. Pollen, in his introduction to *Papal Negotiations with Queen Mary*, doubts the existence of the League. Olivares, however (*Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* iii. p. 566), certainly writes as if some League had existed during the Pontificate of Pius V. But this may refer to the League made by the Pope, Spain, and Venice against the Turks. Vide *Camb. Mod. Hist.* iii. p. 134.

² Vide *Die Zusammenkunft von Bayonne*, Erich Marcks.

Reformation was bound to the wheels of the chariot of Spain. For the medieval theory of the world-state died very hard, and one of the many pale ghosts which survived it was the dream of Spanish imperialism. Philip II., the hero of the Faith, was seeking a political dominion; Elizabeth and Henry III., little as they liked Protestantism, were compelled to oppose him in the name of nationality—itsself as yet only an inchoate thing, thanks to these very wars of religion.

In this strange tangle of warring creeds and conflicting political ideals where is the place of Scotland? In spite of the altered balance of power, her geographical position still gave importance to a country which was the 'postern-gate' of England; and when Elizabeth joined hands with her traditional enemy, one of two results became inevitable. Either France would bring with her to the new friendship her old ally Scotland, or else Spain, losing England, would seek and find in Scotland the necessary counterpoise. The first solution of the question might seem to be rendered the more probable because there was in Scotland a feeble but persistent tendency towards union with England, and because, unless Elizabeth had children, the royal house of the northern kingdom was heir to the southern crown. In point of fact, this answer to the problem, foreshadowed by the various schemes of 'Association,' ultimately achieved reality by the Union of Crowns in 1603.

Not, however, without difficulty, for the alternative solution had much to commend it in the eyes of contemporary statesmen. To Philip Scotland could give some very real help, and the possibility at least of other and enormous advantages; it offered him both a convenient base from which to attack England in the rear, and also a potential successor to Queen Elizabeth. Since Elizabeth was a heretic, Mary was Queen not only of Scotland but of England too, and although she seemed likely to die in captivity, her son was free and the obvious heir to the dual crown. Clearly it would be worth the while of mighty Spain to gain the friendship of insignificant Scotland, and to this end Spain spent labour, skill, and money.

Even during her troublous reign Mary had got into touch with Philip, and after her imprisonment the genuine attempts at her release were made in reliance rather upon Spanish¹ than upon

¹The Guises, it is true, were staunch friends to Mary, but they cannot be definitely included in the term 'French.' At this time they were wavering towards Spain.

French aid. France, indeed, anxious to preserve the friendship with England, showed herself inclined to accept the *fait accompli*, and though obliged to act officially on behalf of Mary, was not really prepared to do very much. Spain, on the other hand, had entered into the various plots with weight, if not with celerity, and the Spanish Ambassador regularly became the centre of the schemes for Mary's deliverance. She, as will be shown, repaid the efforts of Spain to the best of her ability; but let us leave the tragic figure of the captive Queen and look at the position of her son—a very king of comedy. A gawky boy of fourteen or so, James shuffles on to the historical stage in the year 1580—spindle-shanked, goggle-eyed, of a queer precocity, convinced by hard experience that dishonesty and statecraft are the same thing.

There were, as stated, two alternative policies, and each presented its own difficulties. He might fall in with England and France, but this meant practically the adoption of Protestantism, and many of his nobles were Catholic. If once he took such a line James would alienate all the forces of the Counter-Reformation, would, in the event of Spain's success, utterly condemn himself—and all perhaps in vain. For Elizabeth would never name him officially as her successor, and the crown of England might escape him in the end. The other policy was to declare himself a Roman Catholic, seize the groping fingers of Spain, and join the march of the Counter-Reformation. Spain certainly was holding out a tentative hand, but, even so, the dangers of the course were great. Protestantism might emerge triumphant from the contest, and even if it were beaten James had still to dread the imperial spirit of Spain.

Enough has been said to show the nature of the great duel which was to be fought out in North-west Europe, and to explain the causes which made Scotland, small though she was, of immense value to both protagonists. With the English side of the controversy there is no need to deal. Elizabeth's policy was to resist the Counter-Reformation rather by underhand plots than by open war, and Scotland fell readily into her system. She supported a party there just as she supported one in Portugal, France, or the Low Countries. Her intrigues with the Scottish nobility are well known, but it is worth while to examine carefully the policy pursued in Scotland by Philip II.

In the autumn of 1578, Philip advised Mendoza, his able ambassador in England, to keep a close eye upon the Scots, and also upon the captive queen, since it appeared to him that Scottish

affairs were about to arrive at a crisis.¹ His prediction was correct, for in February, 1580, Vargas² reported to him from Paris a conversation he had just had with Archbishop Beaton, Mary's representative at the French court, who had assured him that his mistress had determined to put herself, her son, and her realm under the protection of Philip. Of this purpose, Guise was aware, but otherwise it was a profound secret.³ The King of Spain was swift to accept the trust;³ the affair promised well, for Lennox (d'Aubigny) was making great headway in Scotland, and Philip evidently thought that through Mary he could control James.⁴ Mary, who was soon in secret correspondence with her son, was of the same opinion, and prepared to use the 'Association'⁵ to secure joint action in favour of Roman Catholicism and Spain, though its ostensible purpose was to make easy an alliance between England, Scotland, and France. It soon became apparent, however, that James was somewhat slippery, and his signature of the Covenant of 1580 caused genuine alarm.⁶ Henceforth Philip is urging James' conversion,⁷ and Mary is anxious to prove that her son is likely to accept the true faith.⁸ James, as a matter of fact, had little faith beyond a belief in the necessity of being all things to all men. And not only was the young king a doubtful quantity, but even his Catholic partisans were persons distasteful to Philip. Thus, although Guise had been cognisant of Mary's first offer, and although he was an enemy of Henry III., the Spanish king trusted him very little—indeed, the first thing he did was to suggest Guise's exclusion from future negotiations. Again, neither he nor Mary had much confidence in d'Aubigny,⁹ and we find Granvelle quite testy on the subject of his envoy, Ker of Fernie-hirst, who arrived in Badajoz armed with a fine broad Scots tongue, and no Spanish.¹⁰

Philip, as is well known, was by nature unwilling to trust any-

¹ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. ii. p. 615. ² *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 4.

³ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 22. ⁴ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 103.

⁵ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 241, p. 216, p. 331; cf. too pp. 228, 250, 257.

⁶ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 90, p. 102.

⁷ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 31, p. 160.

⁸ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. pp. 241-242, p. 257.

⁹ For Spanish distrust see *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 124, p. 195, p. 204. For Mary's see *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 331, and her own letters in *Labanoff*, vol. v. p. 134, p. 124, p. 61; and *Cal. Scot. Pap.* vol. vi. p. 86.

¹⁰ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 7 n.

oné, but in this case the facts justified him. His own idea was to proceed quietly, confiding only in Mendoza and Mary. Neither Beaton nor Tassis,¹ who had succeeded Vargas at Paris, was taken into the secret, and though a few ardent clerics, notably Parsons and Allen,² knew of the scheme, it is plain that the bulk of the Jesuits did not. Mendoza soon got into touch with the Scots nobility, who moderately demanded the assistance of 2000 men,³ but before long the plot fell into the hands of several priests, and they pushed the scheme forward with an earnest zeal which produced a disconcerting publicity.⁴ Lennox became the figure-head of the conspiracy, and in March, 1582,⁵ he sent letters to the Pope, Mary, Glasgow, Guise, and Tassis, containing details of a plan of incredible and impossible proportions.⁶ All the various personages mentioned were to act along with Spain, and the assistance now set down as essential amounts to 20,000 men, as well as great sums of money and guarantees against loss. Such a scheme was the ridiculous product of frothy imaginations; Mary was vastly annoyed,⁷ and Philip withdrew.

Not, indeed, officially. Mendoza remained in England to be the centre of all plots until the discovery of the Throgmorton conspiracy⁸ led to his dismissal, and from the tangled maze of the plans for murder and invasion, which mark the next few years, a few great principles emerge. Joint action between the different Roman Catholic powers is proved to be an impossibility. France is naturally out of the question, and Guise, though hated by Henry III., and hating in return, is still French. Even between the Papacy and Spain there is little harmony, although a principle of joint contribution (one to three) for the English enterprise has been laid down.⁹ The correspondence between Paris, Rome, and Spain, published by Father Knox, reveals plainly that zeal for the

¹ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 197.

² *Vide Graves Law: Collected Essays*, pp. 217-243.

³ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 286.

⁴ *Vide* 'The Evolution of the Spanish Armada,' Martin Hume, in *The Year after the Armada*.

⁵ Kretschmar, *Die Invasionsprojekte der katolischen Mächte gegen England*. This information is well collected, pp. 61-63.

⁶ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 371, and Kretz. p. 123 ff.

⁷ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 331.

⁸ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 513. On Jan. 19th, 1584, Mendoza got 15 days' notice to leave England.

⁹ *Letters and Memorials of Cardinal Allen*, edited by Knox, p. 411.

common cause was not sufficient to produce a readiness to pay. As a consequence of this failure to combine, it is not strange to find two well-marked parties amongst the Roman Catholic refugees upon the Continent, one of which attaches itself to the Curia, whilst the other relies upon Spain. Paget, Morgan, and Father Crichton¹ agreed with the Duke of Guise and the Pope in believing that James might be converted, and their schemes of invasion always included the landing in Scotland of a composite army.² Allen,² on the other hand, and ere long Parsons too,³ inclined to use the help of Spain only, and to make the invasion by way of England. Indeed, by April, 1584, the plan of entering *via* Scotland is being discussed as a 'new design.'⁴

In effect, by 1584, the 'enterprise' has become definitely Spanish, and, as the death of Alençon⁵ in that year forced Guise to concentrate his energies upon France, Philip⁶ was able to take the game into his own hands. The 'enterprise of England' began to take a definite shape, and it is clear that, as the claims of Scotland to be the landing-place had been disregarded, so the claims of the Scottish candidates for the throne were treated with less and less respect. James' conduct, it is true, did not inspire confidence, and Mary⁷ was at times really inclined to make a bargain with Walsingham. It was partly for these reasons, and partly

¹ Knox, *op. cit.* pp. 320, 386, and 392.

² Mendoza had mentioned Allen as a reliable man in Oct. 1581 (*Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza*, vol. iii. p. 197), but he appears to have hoped for joint action for some time (Knox, *op. cit.* p. 201). Parsons certainly did (Knox, *op. cit.* pp. 425, 433; and Kretz., *App.* 8). The details of the plot captured with Fa. Crichton in 1584, referred to a scheme of Parsons' devising in 1582. In 1583 he was still working for a combined invasion (Knox, *op. cit.* lvii.); but in the beginning of 1584 he and Allen are relying upon Spain (Knox, *op. cit.* p. 222), and it seems from a letter of de Tassis of Nov. 1583, that Parsons distrusted James (*Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza*, vol. iii. p. 509). By May 27, 1584, both Parsons and Allen are resolute to exclude Scotland (*Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza*, vol. iii. p. 526, and Knox, *op. cit.* p. 231).

³ E.g., *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza*, vol. iii. pp. 333, 503, 521.

⁴ Tassis in his letter of Nov. 15, 1583, mentions as a fact Philip's intention to invade from Flanders, and treats the idea of commencing by Scotland as a thing of the past. Possibly the evil report of Maineville presented to Philip in June, 1583, (*Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza*, vol. iii. p. 479) may have aided Philip to come to this conclusion. It was the Nuncio in France who used the expression 'new design' in a letter to Como (Knox, *op. cit.* p. 230), but it appears to refer to the conspiracy as a whole.

⁵ June 10, 1584.

⁶ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza*, vol. iii. p. 544.

⁷ Knox, *op. cit.* Intro. lxix.

because Spanish imperialism¹ inevitably asserted itself, that Philip, whose councillor, Granvelle, had dismissed altogether the idea of conquest,² began very seriously to consider his own claims to the English crown. If he was to do the work, it seemed just that he should have the reward. His attitude to Mary is one of cold calculation. 'I see what the Queen of England, tired of her long imprisonment, wrote to you,'³ he observes callously to Mendoza, and he praises his ambassador for discouraging her scheme of escape. His satellites followed in the same strain—'Even if Mary was made queen, they trusted that Spain would not abandon them.'⁴

Philip, then, is fairly embarked upon a design of self-aggrandisement. In February, 1585, Allen is pointing out that the plan was in the hands of a very few,⁵ and in the autumn of the same year he and Parsons go off to Rome to urge the Spanish cause.⁶ The beginning of 1586 finds them busy assisting Olivares, the ambassador of Spain at Rome, to convince the Pope that James was not to be converted but *disinherited*.⁷ For that is really the sum of Philip's ambition, as his correspondence with Olivares plainly shows. In May, 1584, the ambassador was demonstrating to the Pope that the Scottish way was of little value,⁸ and in July of the following year, we find him refuting the views of the 'French' party at the Vatican, which was anxious for James' conversion.⁹

¹ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 506. When in Aug. Philip received a memorial in which Guise undertook to expel all foreign troops after Mary's restoration, he underlined the passage and wrote 'ojo' in the margin.

² *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 383. 'We cannot hope to hold the island for ourselves.'

³ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 476. Mary believed she could escape almost at will in 1583. *Vide* Knox, *op. cit.* p. 413. The Spanish schemes are quite callous on the possibility of Mary's death. Cf. Knox, *op. cit.* Intro. lxxxvi.

⁴ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 526.

⁵ Knox, *op. cit.* p. 247. He was quite correct; even he and Parsons were not told too much. Knox, *op. cit.* Intro. lxxiv. and lxxxvii.

⁶ Knox, *op. cit.* p. 222 n.

⁷ Philip had at first thought to use James as a tool. At first he expected the young king to be sent to Spain (*Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 23). As late as the early summer of 1584 we find him well disposed to James, and promising money (*Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. pp. 525, 527). At this time Tassis and Guise were still in favour of James (*Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 521), and it was to Tassis that these friendly messages to James were sent. He was never in the secret.

⁸ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 526.

⁹ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 541. The French party was led by Cardinal d'Esté.

Meanwhile the accession of Sixtus V.¹ had strengthened the hands of the vigorous party, and Olivares' position was also improved by the bad reports of the Scottish king.² His correspondence unluckily is not all extant, but an important despatch and memorandum of February 24th, 1586,³ reveal how very far the affair had gone. Philip had evidently decided to obtain the crown for his daughter, the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, but he shrank from having James publicly disinherited partly to avoid publicity, partly because he wished to make sure of the papal contribution before he showed his hand;—for Sixtus V. was no fool. Despite all these limitations, however, Olivares established two important points. The Guises were to be excluded from the enterprise of England, and the question of a successor to Mary was to be left in Philip's hands. Ostensibly the end of the design was still the liberation of the captive queen, but it is plain from Philip's own letters that he regarded with equanimity the prospect of her death.⁴ Without further preparation, however, it was impossible to broach the great secret of the Spanish design, and during the next two years Olivares was busily engaged not only in extracting a definite promise from Sixtus as regards the money, but also in preparing him for the announcement of Philip's intentions as to the English crown. One of the devices adopted was to persuade the Pope to make Allen a cardinal, as this would give a good head to the enterprise in the event of Mary's death,⁵ and would besides reinforce the Spanish party in the Sacred College. In public, of course, only the first of these two reasons was adduced, and after the news of Mary's execution had reached Rome, such an argument did not lack weight. None the less Sixtus was very slow to act, averring that, according to rule,⁶ all promotions should be made at Christmas, and in the end Olivares was compelled to adopt the extraordinary manœuvre of showing to the Pope instruc-

¹ April 24, 1585. Sixtus was full of great schemes, but short of money. He had no intention of being 'exploited' by Spain.

² *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 560 ff. Original text in Knox, *op. cit.* p. 251 ff.

³ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 547.

⁴ From the Spanish sources it is clear that Spain was quite sure of Mary's co-operation, but quite prepared for her death. After her death there were few regrets—indeed the event was considered rather fortunate (cf. *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. pp. 42, 43, 101, and Knox, *op. cit.* pp. lxxxvi, xc, xciv).

⁵ The story of Allen's promotion is well described in Knox, *op. cit.* cf. pp. lxxxvi and cii. It is plain that only a cardinal was wanted, and the scheme of making Allen, Archbishop of Canterbury, was negatived by Spain (Knox, lxxxix).

⁶ Knox, *op. cit.* p. lxxxix and p. 277.

tions which Philip was supposed to have written on the assumption that Allen was already a cardinal.¹ These instructions had been forged by the ambassador himself, but the device proved successful, for six days after the trick had been played Allen was duly promoted—August 7th, 1587. Henceforth the new cardinal was a person of much weight at Rome, and in 1588, just before the Armada sailed, he joined with Olivares in drawing up a scheme for filling the various benefices and appointments in England in the event of a successful issue.²

Meanwhile not a word was breathed of Philip's own claim; the matter was very far from easy, as Olivares found, when in March, 1587, he consulted Allen and Parsons on the matter.³ His own letter, as well as the written opinions of the two ecclesiastics, are still extant, and make it patent that all three were extremely doubtful as to the value of Philip's title by descent, and nervous about the possible claims of Parma. They were able to pick holes in the arguments adduced by the Bishop of Ross,⁴ as appears from a later memorandum,⁵ but suggested that, as the case was uncertain, it would be better to postpone the discussion until the succession had been first established by way of conquest. Olivares himself suggested three possible modes of procedure,⁶ but inclined personally to the following method: Philip should point out to the Pope, that the arrangement of February, 1586, had committed both to opposing heretical James, and that, accordingly, the Most

¹ Spain's urgency appears in the spring and summer of 1587 (Knox, *op. cit.* p. xciv and p. ciii). Olivares' trick is described, p. civ and p. 295.

² Knox, *op. cit.* p. cvi. The original is on p. 303, *et seq.*

³ Olivares' letter and Allen's opinion appear in Knox, pp. xc and 275, and pp. lxxxix and 272. Parsons' opinion of the same date is in *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 41. Olivares refers to this opinion of Parsons, Knox, p. xci (of date March 18th). Father Knox supposes (p. xcvi) that the memorandum he prints (p. 281) was enclosed by Olivares in his letter. This cannot be so, for Olivares' letter (23rd March) was written under the assumption that Mary was still alive, whereas the 'memorandum' refers to her death. The news of Mary's death arrived in Rome on March 24th (*Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 50). Olivares' letter is interesting as showing a great distrust of Sixtus, 'from whom no secrecy can be expected except by miracle or in affairs of no importance' (Knox, p. 275), and also as revealing a doubt in the writer's mind lest Philip should claim in person (Knox, p. 277).

⁴ The Bishop of Ross was a great upholder of the title of Mary and later of James. His vindication of the Scottish claim was published several times and in several languages. Latin editions were published in 1580 and 1584, and a French edition in 1587 (vide *Dict. Nat. Biog.* sub. 'Leslie, John').

⁵ Knox, *op. cit.* pp. xcvi and 281.

⁶ Knox, *op. cit.* pp. xciii and 277.

Catholic King, casting about in his mind for a successor, had thought of his own daughter. At this juncture arrived news of the will and last letter of Mary Stuart, which led to his examining the question very carefully, with the result that he discovered his own title to be better even than that of the luckless queen. Philip could disclaim any intention of disturbing Mary, and could represent his own right to the crown as a thing only recently discovered; but in any case, the ambassador concluded, it would be wise to lay most stress upon the actual fact of conquest, since Sixtus would, under any circumstances, hate to see England united to the Spanish empire.

It is quite clear that Philip's path was far from straight, but the death of Mary,¹ as Allen himself remarked, improved the situation, and it was Allen who was trusted, at the end of March,² with the delicate task of opening the question to the Pope. He was instructed to lay stress on the fact that Mary had recognized that her son was a hopeless heretic, and, if the matter of the succession came up for discussion, to state that Philip was quite aware of his own claim, and was determined, as a Catholic prince, sooner or later to attack the heretical King of Scotland. The French party, who believed in the possibility of converting James, naturally pressed his claim hard, but Olivares was inclined to allow them to talk, whilst Allen and Parsons quietly prepared a book on the subject of the King of Spain's just title to the English throne.³

Olivares, it will be observed, makes mention of a will⁴ according to which Mary Stuart made Philip her heir, and it has been generally believed that the angry Queen did in fact disinherit her son shortly before her death. Froude, who regards Mary's behaviour at her execution as a splendid example of the histrionic art, finds a conspicuous proof of her mendacity in her speech to Andrew Melville as she passed to the block—'Commend me to my son, tell him I have done nothing to prejudice his kingdom of Scotland.'⁵ Philip certainly believed that such a will had been made, and Mary's own letters are undoubtedly full of fierce anger and threats against the treacherous James; but that she actually disinherited him is at least not proven. What Mary did say was that if her son remained obstinate in his heresy she would make a will disinheriting him, but in a later letter she stated that it was

¹ Knox, *op. cit.* p. c, and pp. 286, 288. ² Knox, *op. cit.* p. c, and p. 289.

³ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza*, vol. iv. p. 122.

⁴ On this alleged Will see a note in *Scottish Historical Review*, vol. xi. p. 338.

⁵ Froude, *Elizabeth*, vol. v. p. 317.

unlikely that she would be able to make a testament at all. As far as can be discovered, no copy of such a will was ever found, and the Spaniards were evidently hard put to it to establish proof of its existence. Curle had seen minutes of it in Walsingham's house. Mistress Curle brought a message sent by Mary immediately before her death, which certainly made over the three crowns to Philip, provided her son remained obstinate, but which also besought Philip to do his utmost to bring James back to the true faith. The report that Elizabeth frightened James with the story of the will is credible enough, but it does not prove that the will ever existed; for Mary's letter of May 20, 1586, in which she threatened to disinherit her son had passed through Walsingham's hands. Thus the English government could assume the existence of the document, and the rumour that Elizabeth burnt it with her own hands was probably invented to account for the fact that no copy could be found.

And, on the whole, it seems likely that no such will was made; certainly it never came into the hands of Philip. His ambassador, Mendoza, did indeed receive a will, but this dealt with private affairs and did not mention the crown at all. The very zeal of the Spaniards in collecting the evidence of Mary's servants, and their manifest anxiety about her letter to the Pope, are additional grounds for believing that the famous project of the will was never carried into execution. The story, however, was bruited abroad on all hands, and obviously it was not the interest of Philip to contradict it. Officially he himself believed it, and used it as the coping stone to his claims upon the English and Scottish crowns.

James, it is clear, was in a parlous state. Ostensibly he was by virtue of the treaty of July 5th, 1586,¹ the pensioned ally of Queen Elizabeth; the execution of his mother supplied him with an excellent logical advantage over his paymistress, but he had no real intention of quarrelling with her.² He accepted her purgation of 'yon unhappy fact,'³ and, though he was inclined to make the most of his grievances,⁴ allowed himself to be soothed with

¹ Thorpe, *Cal. Stat. Pap. Scot. Eliza.* vol. i. p. 529.

² Calderwood, vol. iv. p. 611, and Froude, *Elizabeth*, vol. v. p. 327 and n. and p. 333.

³ Bruce, *Letters of Elizabeth and James VI.* (Camden Soc. 1849), pp. 45-6.

⁴ Thorpe, *Cal. Stat. Pap. Scot. Eliza.* vol. i. p. 549. James shows himself dissatisfied; but p. 551 of the same calendar contains a receipt for £5000. Cf. Bruce, *op. cit.* pp. 47-50, and Calderwood, vol. iv. p. 612, and Robert Carey's *Memoirs*, p. 49. Cf. too Archibald Douglas' correspondence in *Hist. MSS. Com. Salisbury*, vol. iii.

soft words and hard cash. None the less the English ministers were far from easy about their northern neighbour, and the reports of their agents certainly supplied grave cause for disquietude. It was the practice of those political jackals¹ to send in 'scare' news, and they did not always understand the meaning of the information they sent even when the facts were correct, but on this occasion they were close to the mark. For James VI., even though Philip had decided to dispense with him, was still the central point of many Roman Catholic intrigues. The pages of Calderwood reveal the nervous dread felt by the ministers of the Papists in Scotland, but it is less easy to get a clear picture of the relations between the King and continental Catholicism. These may be regarded as the interaction of two distinct tendencies—Rome was still stretching out her hand to James VI., and certain Scots nobles were still seeking help from their fellow-believers in other lands. To the design of Philip II. both these tendencies were fraught with danger. He, as will be shown, did his best to make the first abortive; the second he succeeded in exploiting for his own advantage.

The French party at the Vatican, as already stated, was anxious for James's conversion, and early in 1587 we find Olivares hard at work persuading Cardinal Mondovi that James VI.² was a hopeless heretic, and urging the futility of sending an envoy to him in the person of William Chisholm, Bishop of Dunblane. Chisholm³ had first become famous as the bearer of Mary's demand for a dispensation to enable her to marry Darnley, and after his mistress' downfall he had been offered a see in France (Vaison), which, however, he soon resigned. For twenty years he had lived as a Carthusian friar, but now at this crisis in his nation's history the old man had entered once more the political arena, thrown himself at the Pope's feet, and begged to be allowed to return and convert his sovereign. This at least is Froude's story, but other evidence states that he was sent by the authority and at the

¹ Thorpe, *Cal. Stat. Pap. Scot. Eliza.* vol. i. pp. 547 and 548. Ogilvy of Powrie and John Colville are correspondents of the type mentioned. Their letters err in assuming the unity of the Catholic forces. Thus Colville (p. 548, Thorpe) supposes the Bishop of Dunblane was sent by Spain. He was sent in spite of Spain.

² *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. pp. 4, and 40, 51. Froude, *Elizabeth*, vol. v. p. 337, quotes another letter of Olivares which does not appear in the calendar.

³ An account of Chisholm appears in Forbes-Leith's *Narratives of the Scottish Catholics*, but fuller information is given in *Papal Negotiations with Queen Mary* [edited by the Rev. J. H. Pollen for the Scottish History Society.]

expense of Owen Lewis, Bishop of Cassano,¹ a stout opponent of Allen.² Plainly the mission was an effort of the anti-Spanish party, whose hopes had been excited by the news that James had restored their temporalities to Dunblane and Glasgow, and wished to continue the latter, Mary's old ambassador, as his representative at Paris.³ By October the envoy was gone to Scotland, much to the disgust of Mendoza, who compared these Scottish bishops to mothers who, 'although they see their children do ill, continue to hope for their amendment.'⁴ Soon, however, the ambassador has news which pleases him better—the bishop was persecuted on his arrival, and has little chance of an interview with the King.⁵ Reports of March 30, 1588, from London represent Chisholm as conferring with Chancellor Maitland since he could not obtain speech with James himself, and as obtaining for his pains nothing but the statement that James was greatly afraid of Spain, and would never change his religion.⁶

None the less even Mendoza is compelled to admit that the audience has taken place,⁷ and though he represents the bishop as arriving at Paris utterly disillusioned,⁸ it must be remembered that this is only the Spanish side of the story. According to the other version⁹ James was induced to promise—on conditions,—that he would admit the armada to his realm, and put himself into Philip's hands. On the whole it is likely that James tried to temporise, for besides the efforts Rome was making to reach him, he had to consider the attempts made by some of his nobles to get into touch with Spain.

The general line of Philip's policy was, as has been shown, to leave Scotland out of the question, and to carry on the enterprise

¹ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 542.

² *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 212, and Knox, *op. cit.* Index *sub.* Lewis, Owen. Father Knox tries to prove personal esteem, but admits divergence of policy—very necessarily. See Knox, p. cvi.

³ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 84 and p. 100. Olivares recounts the great effect produced at Rome by these restorations. But before long Mendoza reports that James has really annexed their temporalities [p. 139 and p. 158].

⁴ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. pp. 155-6.

⁵ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 180 and p. 194.

⁶ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 242.

⁷ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 255. In Thorpe's *Calendar of Scotland, Elizabeth*, vol. i. p. 547, Ogilvy of Powrie is made to announce the interview. But the letter is plainly put under a wrong date.

⁸ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 367.

⁹ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 542.

of England with as little noise as possible. It was therefore not through Spanish efforts, but by the agency of Guise that the Scottish nobles renewed relations with continental Catholicism. Philip, though he encouraged the Scottish conspiracy, regarded it as a mere piece of by-play. Naturally he did not enlighten the Scots nobles on this point, nor does he seem to have informed either Parma or Guise. The last-named, in fact, was furious at his gradual exclusion from his own design, and may have taken his revenge by giving James a hint to beware of trusting Spain too far.¹

Guise never had approved of any scheme for deposing James, and in July, 1586, he came forward with an enterprise which he asked Mendoza to communicate to Philip.² Robert Bruce, a busy spy, whose manifold treacheries eventually ruined him,³ had arrived with letters of credit for the Earls of Huntly and Morton and Lord Claude Hamilton,⁴ and with demands of the usual kind,⁵—6000 paid troops for one year, 150,000 crowns to carry on the war, and further supplies of money for two years if necessary. In return the lords promised to make James a Catholic, and to put him at Philip's disposal, as well as to hold a few good ports near the borders. To show that their offer was *bona-fide*, they suggested that the money should not be paid over at once, but deposited within reach and used as necessary. Mendoza received the offer coolly enough, and demanded further information as to the kind of troops required, the nature of the financial arrangement, and so forth,⁶ but in the meantime he sent Bruce on to Spain, where he pressed the scheme very hotly.⁷ It was represented to Philip, that though there was need of haste, the plan was easy, cheap, and well guaranteed, for the lords were persons of reputation, and would be content to receive the money after the

¹ Guise's dissatisfaction appears plainly in *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 100 and p. 108, and it is clear that Spain feared he would divulge the plan to James. Martin Hume, in a note on p. 100, says that Guise eventually did so, but does not give any authority for his statement.

² *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. pp. 589-90.

³ For an account of Bruce, see Grave's Law, *Collected Essays and Reviews*, p. 313. See also *MSS. Scotland, Elizabeth*, vol. lxiv. No. 48 and vol. lxv. No. 88.

⁴ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. pp. 580-1.

⁵ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 590.

⁶ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. pp. 595-6.

⁷ Bruce was in Madrid by Aug. 1586 [*Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 597], and it seems likely that the 'Memorandum on Scottish Affairs,' published by Teulet, vol. v. p. 355, represents the case as put by Bruce himself.

fait accompli of converting the King. Philip, however, had heard fine promises before, and in any case the conversion of James was the last thing he wanted. Accordingly he replied to Guise, thanking him and the earls very warmly,¹ but explaining that he would have to consult Mendoza and Parma; as a matter of fact he wrote to Mendoza on the very same day,² saying that the lords were probably too sanguine, and bidding him ask Parma whether 4000 men if sent to Scotland would be sufficient to make a real diversion.

Mendoza, on receiving his master's instructions, wrote to Parma, warmly commending the scheme, but suggesting the necessity of making further enquiries as to the position of the King of Scots in regard to the affair.³ It is significant of Philip's method that Parma was not told what was the ultimate object of all these conspiracies,⁴ that Guise was given in the meantime no information,⁵ and that, though Bruce, the official pivot of the plot, did not arrive in Paris till the beginning of November,⁶ Mendoza had had Philip's views a fortnight before, and had been able to get a long start in the negotiation with Parma. But the prince did not receive the letter till six weeks later, and when he did reply it was to counsel delay, so that before anything was done Bruce had urgent letters from his employers demanding a speedy decision. Mendoza could reply only in the vaguest terms,⁷ and towards the end of December, 1586, we find him sending on to Philip Parma's unfavourable epistle, but urging for his own part immediate action; he had now got all possible details, he said, and had no further excuse for delay.⁸ The beginning of 1587, however, finds Philip still marking time, though content to make a

¹ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 631.

² *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 630. Philip plainly regarded the whole thing as a diversion. He speaks of 'the 4000 men they request.' They asked for 6000. It seems likely that Philip's other vast designs left him little attention for this aspect of the 'enterprise.'

³ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 635. Oct. 15, 1586.

⁴ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 665. Parma's reply to Mendoza's letter, Nov. 27, 1586, makes it quite plain that he did not yet know 'the designs which His Majesty has in his royal breast'; he is uncertain whether the real blow is to be struck at England. Cf. p. 683.

⁵ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 639.

⁶ Bruce arrived on Nov. 2, 1586 [*Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. p. 648]. Obviously Mendoza had Philip's instructions before he wrote to Parma on Oct. 15.

⁷ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. pp. 667-8. Nov. 28, 1586.

⁸ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iii. pp. 681-688. Dec. 24, 1586.

nominal acceptance of the lords' offer if there is no other way of keeping them in hand.¹ So Spain played with the anxieties of the Scottish conspirators, until the leaden foot was stirred to motion by the news of Mary's death. The Most Catholic King now wrote promising money as soon as James was liberated, and advising the earls to hasten his conversion,² but,—what is more important,—Parma had meanwhile become convinced of the practicability of the scheme, and in his capable hands the affair at once took on an air of reality.³ The only question was how to get the troops across the water, and he and Bruce hit upon a rather neat device.⁴ Bruce was to hasten to Scotland, and there freight thirty ships for the Baltic; they were to load wheat at Danzig in the usual way, but were to return to Scotland *via* Dunkirk, where they could drop their cargoes, and take the soldiers instead. One incidental advantage of the scheme was that it would enable the Prince to feed his army, whose supplies were short, and indeed the whole prospect seemed bright. Bruce was despatched with 10,000 crowns, and instructions to act with all possible speed, while Guise⁵ was tardily given a partial knowledge of the facts; and Philip, who meditated the disinheriting of James, sent him a friendly message, which was transmitted to Bruce by Beaton.⁶

So the plan seemed to prosper. Crichton,⁷ who arrived at Rome with all the details, was induced to hold his tongue, and led to believe that the object of the whole thing was to benefit James, but throughout the summer no word came from the arch-plotter Bruce. He had been delayed in Brittany,⁸ and when he eventually

¹ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 10. Jan. 28, 1587.

² *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. pp. 57-8. March 31, 1587.

³ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 28. It is significant that what changed Parma's point of view was the 'minute information' furnished by Bruce; it is when he takes up the matter that essential details such as dates are first seriously considered.

⁴ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 68. Parma, it will be observed, invented this scheme himself. Philip's idea was to send money, but the Prince, though he heard his master's views in April [*Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 76], preferred to keep to his own design.

⁵ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 78, p. 89, and p. 108.

⁶ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 57, p. 79, p. 90, and p. 107.

⁷ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 122.

⁸ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. Bruce's long silence caused general anxiety. See pp. 98, 100, 120, 134, 156. He wrote on Oct. 2 (p. 144) a very full account of all that happened, but it appears from Mendoza's letter to Philip (Oct. 27) that Bruce had sent in September two letters reporting progress (p. 159). For exaggerated reports of his embassy see *Stat. Pap. Scot. Eliza.* xlii. 71, and 95.

arrived at Lochryan he found Morton gone, and the season so far advanced that the scheme was useless, for the Baltic would be frozen before his ships were ready to sail with their wheat. He reported that he had seen the King on three occasions, and had found him prepared to negotiate with Philip; convinced, however, that James was a Protestant at heart, he had confined himself to generalities, and refrained from mentioning the design of the wheat ships. This design was, of course, abandoned by Parma, and Bruce remained in Scotland with his 10,000 crowns.

Such was the situation in 1588, when the execution of the great enterprise against England relegated to the back-ground the affairs of Scotland, although the advent of the Armada was of as great moment to the northern Kingdom as to the southern. The year of long-predicted wonders¹ had arrived, and it found Scotland as troubled as ever before. It found the King 'occupied in commenting of the Apocalypse, and in setting out of sermotes thairupon against the Papists and Spainyarts; and yit by a piece of grait oversight the Papists practeised never mair bissellie in this land, and maid grait preparation for receiving the Spainyarts nor that year.'² So runs James Melville's *Diary*, and goes on to describe the constant alarms of the Armada's landing, the constant fasting and prayers by which the ministers sought to avert the danger.³ James, in fact, was ostensibly in good relations with Elizabeth, and he seems to have told Robert Cary about some of the offers made to him from abroad;⁴ but England was far from sure of him, and Lord Hunsdon described him as of doubtful disposition and evil companionship.⁵

Bruce was still active, and, along with his party, concocted a plot for capturing James about the middle of February. Huntly, Crawford, Montrose, and others met at Dunfermline, where Huntly had a house, and the Hamiltons gathered their friends at Linlithgow.⁶ This scheme came to naught, but Bruce was still hopeful of achieving his end under cover of a cry for reform of the administration,⁷ and during the month of February James

¹ Calderwood, vol. iv. pp. 648-9; James Melville's *Diary*, p. 264.

² James Melville's *Diary*, p. 260.

³ James Melville's *Diary*, p. 261. Cf. Calderwood, vol. iv. p. 647, p. 650.

⁴ Bruce, *Letters of Elizabeth and James VI.* p. 47.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 49 n. (quoting Murdin, p. 591).

⁶ For Bruce's activity, see *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. pp. 204, 210. The account of the kidnapping plot is in the same calendar, p. 227.

⁷ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 224.

seems to have had a very friendly interview with Father James Gordon, although he showed no signs of changing his religion.¹ Before long too the Roman Catholic party received fresh help from Spain, but this reinforcement, to the disappointment of the lords, came not in the shape of troops, but merely in the person of two Scotsmen.² The Earl of Morton, who had left Scotland to seek Philip, was sent back with 5000 crowns, and with him came Col. Semple, a stout soldier of fortune, with a commission from Parma to the King. At first the Prince had intended to give him a definite message, but Mendoza, who wanted to keep clear of bargains with James, persuaded him that such a course would only reawaken English suspicions to no purpose. In the end all Semple got was a vague letter of credence with instructions to use it or not according to the advice of the Scots nobles.

In the middle of April³ the two set sail quietly from Gravelines, on the errand of making trouble in Scotland.⁴ The Colonel on arrival did actually see the King, 'and got the usual answer from him.' Morton,⁵ however, contrary to Semple's advice to concentrate in the North, made a premature rising in his own district of Galloway; and James, considering the excitement of the country and the small prospect of Spanish assistance, was compelled to act vigorously. The Earl was captured on the 5th of June, and a few days later Lochmaben was taken and its captain hanged—much to the delight of Elizabeth. Notwithstanding all this, the Catholics remained very hopeful until August,⁶ but James, the moment the

¹ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 260.

² The movements of these two Scots can be traced in *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. P. 171 shows us Morton equipped with 5000 crowns. Semple's journey to Parma, via Paris, appears from pp. 171, 174, 179, and 231. The Colonel, whom Philip describes as 'a zealous man, though, doubtless, a thorough Scot,' had arrived in Paris by Dec. 6th, 1587, and was sent by Mendoza to Parma, who gave him a letter of credit of date 27th Feb. 1588, and sent him back to Paris with a missive to Mendoza (p. 201), in which he proposed to entrust his envoy with a message to James inviting him to avenge the death of his mother. Mendoza (p. 231) regarded James as hopeless, and Philip (p. 254) was glad that he should confine himself to generalities. In the end he was instructed to see what the Scots nobles thought on the point (p. 241).

³ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. pp. 241, 277, 297. *Graves Law (Collected Essays,* p. 325) states that Semple landed in August, but this is incorrect.

⁴ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 231, gives details of Morton's intention of stirring up strife. Parma thought that Semple might give exact information on the situation (p. 201).

⁵ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 351. Calderwood, vol. iv. p. 678.

⁶ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 361.

Armada appeared in sight, put himself unreservedly into the English camp.¹ He wrote to Elizabeth offering his help upon her own terms, and her agent Ashby, alarmed at Parma's intelligence within the country, made the Scottish King some fine promises which were never fulfilled,² although money was soon sent. But by this time the crisis was passed; the Armada had come and gone, sorely mishandled by the weather and the English guns, and when James said it had never come 'within a kenning of Scotland,'³ he was, in the main, telling the truth.

For a while the Spaniards fondly imagined that the great fleet had found some Scottish port,⁴ Newcastle, perhaps, or the Moray Firth, and one sanguine report described it as increased to 300 sail, by the capture of a great fishing fleet near the Orkneys. These hopes were short-lived. Early in September Mendoza wrote to say that a St. Andrews ship had seen the Armada far north,⁵ between the Orkneys and Shetlands, and advices direct from Scotland mentioned only one little and doubtful point of contact. Colonel Semple had left the Firth of Forth to speak with a Spanish pinnace, and on his return had been arrested.⁶

At first Huntly's authority was sufficient to secure his release, but ere long he was captured again and warded in Robert Gourlay's house,⁶ whence he speedily escaped. Forbes-Leith⁷ tells us a romantic story of the valiant Colonel's escape, in which the usual pies and rope-ladder play a conspicuous part. According to his account, Semple, a stout man, descended from the seventh storey on a slim rope, and escaped the guard round the house—400 men—by acting the drunkard, and falling into a muddy pool. Thus did he save himself from instant death. The narrative is a fairy tale; the only true thing is the figure 400. It was precisely 400 crowns which were paid to bribe Semple out of prison.

The fact is that the story of Semple is an excellent instance of James' duplicity. Philip was playing a double game, but he had his match in the Scottish King. The Colonel arrived, spoke with

¹ Bruce, *Letters of Elizabeth and James VI.* p. 51; Calderwood, vol. iv. p. 682.

² MSS. *Scotland, Elizabeth*: vol. xlii., Nos. 108, 110.

³ Bruce, *Letters of Elizabeth and James VI.* p. 55.

⁴ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. pp. 410, 411, 415, 434.

⁵ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 405 and p. 425.

⁶ Calderwood, vol. iv. p. 681.

⁷ *Narratives of Scottish Catholics*, pp. 368-9.

the King, and remained in the country quiet and unharmed¹—until the Armada had passed. Then James arrested him as a proof of his Protestant zeal, but allowed him to be bought out of prison,² possibly because he felt that a strict examination would not throw a favourable light upon the royal honesty. The King published abroad his story that Semple had ‘reparit laitlie within this realme allegeand him to have commissioun to the Kingis Majestie albeit he had na sic commissioun or instrumentis,’ and he accused the Colonel of treasonably dealing with his subjects.³ Semple, however, certainly had a commission—it exists to-day among the Balcarres MSS. in the Advocates’ Library.⁴

Such was the brilliant result of all the plottings. The Roman Catholics were slow to accept the verdict, and clamoured for fresh assistance, which appeared in the shape of 10,000 crowns delivered by John Chisholm to Bruce in Huntly’s house at Dunfermline.⁵ Even Mendoza was of opinion that Parma might still send troops to Scotland with great advantage,⁶ but the doom of the Catholic hopes was written in a marginal note on one of Philip’s letters to

¹ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. Before July Semple had spoken with the King, and got the ‘usual answer,’ p. 351; on the 31st of July he and Bruce wrote to Parma an account of the situation.

² *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 429, and Calderwood, vol. v. p. 24, where Bruce accounts to Parma for the sum of 400 crowns.

³ *Reg. Privy. Coun.* vol. iv. p. 316.

⁴ *Balcarres MSS.* vol. vi. No. 5. In a foreign clerk’s hand, but signed ‘Alexandres.’ The letter was a mere letter of credit to ‘Guillaume Simpel present porteur,’ but asked for ‘benigne audience foy, et credence . . . en ce qu’il luy declairera plus amplement,’ and referred the King to a verbal commission. As Semple saw the King, James must have known of the letter, one imagines. It is, however, possible that Semple, acting on his instructions, was vague in his statements.

George Conn, *De Duplici Statu Religionis apud Scotos*, p. 145, supposes that Semple had a commission from Philip. ‘Hic a Philippo Hispaniarum Rege (qui celebrem illam classem qua maiorem oceanus nunquam viderat contra Angliam tum parabat) ad Iacobum secretiora quaedam negotia pertracturus missus.’

An interesting but very lame defence of James’ action is found in Father Crichton’s *Apologie* (1598).

⁵ Calderwood, vol. v. p. 20. It is difficult to date the arrival of this money. Bruce acknowledges it on Jan. 24th, 1589, but Chisholm had arrived in Scotland before Aug. 5th, 1588 (*Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. p. 361). As Bruce wrote several times to Parma without mentioning the money, in the autumn of 1588, it seems likely that Chisholm had gone back to the Continent, and returned later in the year with a fresh supply of cash.

⁶ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza.* vol. iv. pp. 476-7. The correspondence between Bruce and Parma was maintained all autumn. Bruce and the Lords still thought the chance good (pp. 426, 479).

his ambassador. 'I will have the Scottish matter you mention well considered,' he said in the body of his letter.¹ But the note is as follows: 'I do not remember to what this refers. Tell me.'

The Spanish Armada² then has left in Scotland few tangible traces of its passing, and on the national history its effects seem equally small. The Catholic lords remained Catholic, and continued to bargain with Spain and with Rome; the King still played a double game, and shared to some extent in his subjects' conspiracies. Throughout the rest of James' reign in Scotland, there was a restless undercurrent of plots fomented by Papal emissaries and by Spanish gold. But the great 'Enterprise' had at least this result—it made the King of Scots all the more resolute in his determination not to rely on Spain.

The product of a strange medley of actions and motives, of courage and distrust, of piety and knavery, of the lowest of lies and the highest of ideals, the Armada failed in its purpose. So far from recovering Great Britain for Catholicism, it had left her more Protestant than ever. Yet even in his downfall Philip commands our admiration, even as his poor storm-stricken soldiers attract our pity. His courage was undismayed, his faith was unshaken, and from the depths of his defeat, he rose with dogged resolution, prepared to try again.

J. D. MACKIE.

¹ *Cal. Span. Pap. Eliza*, vol. iv. p. 499 n.

² A very able resumé of the situation was drawn up by the Master of Gray in 1590. [*Papers Relating to Patrick, Master of Gray*, Bannatyne Club, 1835.]