THE COUNTER-REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND

FIRST JESUIT ASSAULT

1580—1603

I

WHEN the barons and nobles of Scotland requested the Privy Council to convene "all the lieges," on October 20th, 1572, to defend themselves against the "furious rage and lawless creweltie of the bludy and treasonable Papistis, executouris of the decreis of the said devillische and terrible Counsall of Trent,"[1] they were giving strong expression to well-grounded fears of a repetition in Scotland of the orgies of St. Bartholomew committed barely two months previously. For the decrees of Trent set no limits to the means used, nor to the manner of their execution, provided the end in view was attained, viz., "the abolishing or rooting out of the religion reformed."[2] Hence it is that the enactments of the Reformed Church, the form of her procedure, the denunciations of her preachers, the seeming intolerance of her polity for many generations after, take their colour and tone of harshness and severity,—an inevitable re-action—from Rome's execution of the decrees of "the devillische and terrible Counsall of Trent." For such severities, which are said to mar the face of the Reformed Church, are not of the essence of the reformed faith, but are abnormal by-products caused by outside irritants. But the effects of the "decrees" were not confined to the Church; for they entered into the body politic itself and largely influenced its actions. For Philip, the Guises, and Mary of the Scots were powerful rulers who were responsible for much bloodshed and strife which cannot be explained by political causes alone. In fact the political and religious ambitions of these rulers were so interwoven that, in the last analysis, they corresponded with the full programme of Trent. Trent inspired rulers with the spirit of persecution and intolerance, and in Scotland, as in other countries, no explanation of that ugly history of governmental persecution and intolerance can be adequate, if it does not take due account of the influences and effects of the decrees of Trent.

[1] *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland* (R.P.C.S.), II, p. 168.

[2] *Calendar of Scottish Papers* (C.S.P.), V, pp. 636-7.

II

There were three Jesuits—Laynez, Faber and Salmeron—present at the Council of Trent, specially chosen by the Pope as his theologians in that assembly. In this capacity they had no small influence in framing its decrees. Laynez who was learned and consummately clever may indeed be looked upon as the real founder of the Jesuit Society as history knows it.[1] In 1556 he became the general of the Society. From that year the Jesuits became the most vigorous and unscrupulous executors of the Council's decrees. The older Roman Catholic priests were in the main lax, lethargic, indifferent and tolerant, but the new Roman Catholics were wholly the reverse. To Britain after 1580, an eminent authority writes, " the seminary priests brought in a new sort of Catholicism—the Catholicism of the Counter-Reformation and the Jesuits, which generally contained more sedition than religion. Men like Parsons and Allen and Sanders were much more anxious to stir up rebellion than to minister to the spiritual needs of the recusants. On the one side then was a body of loyal men who deserved every consideration, on the other a gang of plotters whom no government could spare."[2]

Between London, Paris, Rome and Madrid there was a continuous intercourse by a spy system of such complexity and perfection as would defy the greatest vigilance. Among these dark intriguers for the re-establishment of the Roman faith in Scotland, were James Beaton, Archbishop of Glasgow, Queen Mary's ambassador in Paris, a wily and astute ecclesiastic; William Chisholm, nephew of Bishop Chisholm of Dunblane, created Bishop of Vaison, zealous and fanatical; John Lesley, Bishop of Ross, and Queen Mary's faithful friend and advocate. He was deeply involved in plots against Queen Elizabeth.[3] He was

[1] *Ency. Brit.* eleventh ed., V, 15, p. 344.

[2] H. W. Gwatkin, *Church and State in England*, p. 268.

[3] " What is much to be regretted, Bishop of Ross, and Mary's faithful but imprudent advocate, was one of the propagandists of this very mischievous mistake," John Hungerford Pollen, S.J., *Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot* (1922), p. XVII. This is but an excuse to cover Lesley's complicity in the plots against Queen Elizabeth. Walsingham, who knew Lesley's movements too well, writing to Bowes uncovers the real nature of the "imprudent ' Lesley's propaganda. " Whatever pretence," wrote Walsingham, " or show of love he (Esmé Stewart) makes in respect of kindred, his repair to Scotland was to overthrow the religion, as may easily be gathered by the choice he made of H. Ker, a professed enemy to the religion, and an especial executor and furtherer of such plots and practices as have been devised by the bishop of Ross on his being at Rome and Spain," (C.S.P., V, p. 493. *Cf.* D. Hay Fleming, *Mary Queen of Scots*, pp. 36, 458, 459, *en passim.*

an active propagandist, and a clever schemer, whose zeal outpaced his prudence.

There was Juan Bautista de Tassis, the Spanish ambassador in Paris, an ardent Counter-Reformer. It was to de Tassis that Mary wrote in 1581 strongly encouraging Philip of Spain in his great crusade against British Protestantism, which Pope Gregory XIII regarded as the "holy enterprize." "Things," said Mary, "were never better disposed in Scotland to return to the Catholic religion and to be satisfactorily settled." With a clear view of the military aspects, and a strong belief in Scotland as the important pivot, she adds hopefully "that English affairs could be settled from these subsequently."[1]

There was also the Spanish ambassador in London, Mendoza, an adroit politician and a slim papalist, tireless and restless. Mendoza's character and mentality are best mirrored in his own words: "I wrote them two letters by different routes [i.e., to the Babington plotters] encouraging them to the enterprize." Then, he proceeded: "If they succeed in killing the Queen Elizabeth, they should have the assistance they required from the Netherlands . . . I promised . . . I urged . . . I thanked . . . I advised that they should either kill or seize Cecil, Walsingham, Lord Hunsdon, Knollys and Beale of the Council." The execution of Morton on June 2nd, 1581, he hails with rhapsodies, and of it he wrote: "This is a great beginning from which we may hope for the submission of the country, that God should have decreed that this pernicious heretic should be removed with so exemplary a punishment."[2] That was Mendoza as described by himself. Around these high officials of state was an army of spies in Spanish pay, and the most active among these were the Jesuit priests. For they were admirably suited for such a purpose, as they had free access to secure refuge in houses of their order throughout Europe. Not only so, but they made their penitents, "when treating of their consciences," their ready servants in their work.[3]

The Counter-Reformation in England, which was vigorously promoted by Fathers Campion and Parsons, who regarded Scotland as coming within the ambit of their orders, had direct bearings on the fortunes of the same movement in Scotland.

[1] *Calendar of Spanish Papers* (S.P.), III, pp. 98, 291-2.

[2] S.P., III, p. 181; Pollen, *Babington Plot*, p. clxxxv.

[3] T. G. Law, *Collected Essays and Reviews* (1904), p. 219 (Law).

III

In January, 1579, Father John Hay, of the family of Dalgaty, landed in Dundee from Bordeaux. He was the first Jesuit Missionary to enter the country since the Reformation for active service in Scotland. The people of Dundee were in no small commotion with the news of his arrival. Hay informs us that the Dundee people, " who had originally adopted the Lutheran heresy from the Germans, and then abandoned it for that of Calvin, now defended the latter errors with greater pugnacity than in any other part of Scotland." He gives an account of Roman practices at Turriff, where three hundred people frequently assembled in linen clothes, and imploring " the aid of God and the Saints." " Rosaries were also offered for sale in the market at the fair of Turriff." Hay warmly approves of all the decrees of the Council of Trent, and cordially assents to all the definitions of the Council. His recommendations, in a somewhat gloomy report to his General, are interesting and instructive. They are (1) that D'aubigny (Esmé Stewart) should be encouraged by the Pope by " advice and pecuniary assistance " in his successful efforts to detach the king from " the heretics," and so Roman Catholicism could possibly be restored. That (2) a legate should come to Scotland " accompanied by some men of piety and learning, as well as of public celebrity and fame, who could withstand the controversial attacks of the ministers." Here is further proof, if such were necessary, of the religious and mental poverty of the old Roman Catholics, and the evident superior learning of the Reformed ministers. Hay was ordered by the Council Meeting at Stirling to leave the country before the 1st October, 1579, " wind and wedder servand," and cautioned against proseletysing efforts, and anything " offensive to the trew and Cristine religioun established."[1] His mission was not barren of fruit or information. The policy suggested in his recommendations was actively pursued by the Jesuits in England as well as in Scotland.

Parsons, who arrived in England in the summer of 1580, and Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, became the masterful leaders in the execution of this policy through tortuous political intrigue. For " the most scheming Jesuits were always priests first and politicians afterwards." Parsons himself excelled as a missionary,

[1] W. Forbes Leith, S.J., *Narratives of Scottish Catholics*, pp. 141-165; Michael Barret, O.S.B., *Sidelights on Scottish History*, p. 135; R.P.C.S., III, p. 204.

as a controversial writer, and a spiritual director. "His main or only real end was the subjection of England to the Roman Church." The best means for attaining that end appeared to be Spain; and it was in exploring the possible avenues to that desired consummation that Parsons fixed his heart and eyes on Scotland. The men of his order with breviaries and missals, "combined the office of priest and spy, missionary and recruiting-sergeant, confessor and conspirator,"[1] and they entered heartily into their work. True it is that Mary was raising her head again, and in this year (1580) she intimated her desire to have a priest sent to Scotland to convert her son, who was now showing, under the tutelage of the influential Esmé Stewart, distinct Romeward tendencies. The nationality of the priests who were to work in Scotland was a question that agitated the minds of Mary and Mendoza. Mary preferred Scotsmen on the ground that "the English were not popular, especially among the common people, . . . and do not understand their language." They therefore could do no good in her opinion. Mendoza, on the other hand, carefully indoctrinated by the clever Parsons, preferred Englishmen, and he ultimately prevailed on Mary to concur in his opinion.

IV

The first missionary that Parsons dispatched to Scotland was, however, not an Englishman but a Welshman. This William Watts was a secular priest who was trained in the seminary of Rheims. Watts' immediate duty was to explore the border counties, and find, apparently for military purposes, an easy access to Scotland. He reported favourably on the matter. Watts was then sent back to Scotland furnished, this time, with "heads of arguments" to be plied on young King James. These were (1) that James should "undertake the patronage of the afflicted Catholics," "seeing that it was Catholics alone who favoured his hereditary right to the kingdom." This was, of course not true, but it was a wily appeal to James's well-known and constant obsession. (2) The king was to be induced "to detect heretics," because the Catholics and Catholic princes would secure his succession to the English throne. The heretics were to be abhorred because they slew his father, inflicted imprisonment on his mother, and plotted against himself. (3) Watts

[1] Law, p. 245.

was commanded to offer to the king the help of the Catholics, "but chiefly the priests, to reduce the kingdom of Scotland to the Catholic faith with whatever risk to our lives."[1] Watts on his return from this expedition at once reported to Parsons on his diligence.

His report shows that Watts visited Lord Seton at Seton, and that he was introduced to the king, "but what I said or transacted with him must not be committed to these sheets." He met and conversed with many of the Scottish nobles, who, anxious for a visit from the redoubtable Parsons himself, desired Watts to assure him that they would ensure Parsons' protection while in Scotland. Among the nobles who met Watts were, Duke D'aubigny, Earls of Huntly, Eglington and Caithness, and Barons Seton, Ogilvy, Gray and Fernihirst. They assured him that the priests labours would neither be unacceptable nor profitless, but they cautioned him that in this matter they themselves must not be put to "any expense." Watts emphasised that the priests to be sent on this Scottish mission "must be carefully selected, and eminent for virtue and learning." Parsons immediately communicated with his General the importance and urgency of the speedy conversion of Scotland. "Scotland is to be won," he wrote, "if at all, within the next two years." He was determined to press the attack with vigour, and, without waiting for his General's sanction, he sent Holt direct to Scotland, even though Holt was intended by the General for the English mission.

Mendoza, however, wrote to the King of Spain suggesting that Parsons himself and Father Jasper (Heywood) of the Company of Jesus, who had recently arrived in England from Germany "would be the best persons to go, as it was necessary that they should be very learned to preach and dispute, as well as of signal virtue." The "signal virtue" of Parsons and Jasper from Mendoza's point of view can be understood when it is realised that it was these two men who were entrusted "with the slaughter of Queen Elizabeth"; and that both of them were ready to do so, as soon as they received their General's command.[2] But it was Holt and not Jasper, who proceeded to Scotland, for the latter was incapacitated at the time by sciatica. Holt was accompanied by an unknown English priest, an emissary of the

[1] Forbes Leith, *Narratives*, pp. 167, 168; Law, pp. 223-4.

[2] S.P., III, p. 195; Pollen, *Babington Plot*, p. 172.

six English lords interested in the enterprise. Holt did not succeed in interviewing the king, but he made such observations on the situation in Scotland as showed him a convinced believer in the success of a determined effort in Scotland. "Most of the inhabitants of the towns are heretics," he reported, "but there are a good many Catholics scattered up and down, and one of us gave communion to a hundred last Christmas." Much to Holt's surprise he was introduced to Mendoza. At a two days secret conclave in Mendoza's house the ambassador "carefully instructed Holt as to the course he was to pursue." Mendoza immediately reported to his Spanish master the substance of this interview.

The Roman Catholic plan of action, as disclosed to Mendoza by Holt, is highly important, and in order to grasp its full significance it is necessary to notice it in detail. According to Holt the Scottish nobles, already named by him, and "particularly the Duke of Lennox," were all "desirous of bringing the country to the Catholic faith," and "they unanimously pledge themselves to adopt four means of attaining their object": "(1) To *convert* the king. (2) In case the king be not converted, to learn if the Queen of the Scots will allow them *to force him* to open his eyes. (3) With the Queen's consent they would *transport him* out of the kingdom. (4) As a last resort they would *depose him* until the Queen should arrive. To forward these expedients they request a foreign sovereign to furnish troops to subject the ministers and heretics and provide against English invasion. *Two thousand soldiers would be enough.* They would prefer Spaniards, but in case of jealousy on the part of France, they suggest Italians in the name of the Pope. They would be sent to Friesland, and thence to Eyemouth. With these they would undertake to convert the country and to bring it to submit to the Pope. They (the nobles) asked Father Holt to return to England, to communicate with English personages interested, and with the Queen of the Scots if possible. Priests should be sent from France dressed as laymen. On no account should these men be Scotsmen, but English, whom they could expel from the country with forty days notice. The English who go pretend to be exiles. The language is almost the same, and they do almost as well. Holt and his predecessors have converted many, and said mass and preached on Christmas day and Epiphany at Lord Seton's house."[1] That was the grandiose plan of campaign submitted

[1] S.P., III, p. 286; Law, p. 233.

by Mendoza to Philip of Spain ; but it was sufficiently practical to alarm the Scottish people.

Mendoza henceforth became the mainspring of the campaign in Scotland, which he promoted with tireless enthusiasm. He promised Spanish help to the Scottish nobles through Holt whom he sent back to Scotland with that assurance.

To Cardinal Como he wrote at the same time, giving the "hopeful accounts," which were reported to him by Holt and Watts from Scotland. The adroit ambassador affected to be ostensibly interested only in the "conversion," or "salvation" of the youthful King James, and "such a multitude of human souls," which being a purely religious motive would not rouse the jealousy of watchful and suspicious France. But after the conversion, the two kingdoms of England and Scotland would be brought under the shelter and protection of Spain. So thought and schemed the wily Mendoza. These reports were sent to the Pope, and their contents were to be "kept profoundly secret."[1] Matters were "looking extraordinarily bright" for the Roman Catholics, and correspondingly ominous for the Protestants. Queen Mary was calling back military forces from the Netherlands, and Roman Catholics were flocking back to Scotland and to power.[2]

The Scottish Reformers knew that the evil genius of the whole movement was Esmé Stewart, Duke of Lennox. They saw the effect of his spell on the king, not only in the restoration of the noblemen of Mary's party, and in James' dislike of Presbytery, but also in unmistakable evidences of a Roman Catholic revival. Esmé Stewart was busily instilling into the king's receptive mind definite ideas of monarchical absolutism, which became the parent of Scotland's future woes. For a time he was James' inseparable companion, gaining such ascendancy over him as made Esmé Stewart virtual master of the whole kingdom.[3]

Scotland's only hope of defence lay in organised Presbyterianism. But forces were gathering to strangle Presbyterianism at its very birth, when it had not yet thoroughly established its power and influence through its several judicatories. The most trenchant of its preachers was suspended by the Privy

[1] S.P., III, p. 194; Law, pp. 233-4.

[2] "Many known Papists and Jesuits are returned into Scotland, showing themselves boldly there without fear," C.S.P., VI, p. 93.

[3] *Cf.* Hume Brown, *Surveys of Scottish History*, p. 55.

Council, for having boldly attributed the prevailing troubles to Esmé Stewart, Duke of Lennox, "The autoritie of the Kirk now being abrogat, censures contemned, violence used aganis ministers, and no punishment for it, whereby religion, reformation, discipline, is lyke to be trampled under foot."[1] Presbyterianism emerging from such birth-throes could not escape assuming stern and militant characteristics, and Esmé Stewart's baneful influence over the king cannot be ignored in any true estimate of Presbyterian tendencies.

V

Meanwhile there arrived in Scotland two fully-trained and famous Scottish Jesuits, Fathers William Crichton and Edmund Hay. They were sent by the Pope and the General of their Society, with the hearty concurrence of both James Beaton, Archbishop of Glasgow, Mary's ambassador in Paris, and the Papal Nuncio in Paris. Crichton was directed to take his instructions from Parsons. Crichton, who bore the honours of a superior of several colleges, and was the Provincial of Southern France, was specially chosen, because of his pleasing account of Scottish affairs to the Pope in 1581, his relationship to the Scottish nobles, and his intimacy with the new methods, acquired in de Gouda's company in 1562. With Parsons he visited the Duke of Guise at En in Normandy. He conferred there with the Duke "about the advancement of the Catholic cause in both realms of England and Scotland, and for the delivery of the Queen of the Scots, then prisoner."[2]

Crichton arrived in Scotland in February, 1582. He was brought to the King's palace at night, where he was hidden in some secret chamber there for three days.[3] Here, too, he secured the hearty approval of Lennox to the military part of the scheme, now more fully developed by himself. Crichton then went back to France primed with the details of the plan, and backed in all particulars by Lennox and the Scottish Roman Catholics. James Beaton, Mary's ambassador, received him warmly at St. Dennis, as did Cardinal Allen and the redoubtable Parsons, at Rouen. The Duke of Guise also was greatly pleased with Crichton's report. They "all considered the Catholic cause

[1] Row, *Historie*, 96, 97.
[2] Knox, *Letters and Memorials of Cardinal Allen*, p. 129.
[3] Forbes Leith, *Narratives*, p. 181.

as good as gained."[1] Crichton was sent to Rome and Parsons to Spain with the "plan." In May, 1582, the papal nuncio in Paris wrote Cardinal Como, secretary to the Pope, disclosing details of the plan to harass Queen Elizabeth, by a diversion in Ireland, while the real enterprise—the invasion of Scotland—was to be conducted by the Duke of Guise. The adulatory nuncio is confident, that "His Holiness will be ready on his part to embrace the glorious enterprise; for if Gregory I is much praised for having won that kingdom to Christ, of far greater merit with God and fame with the world will Gregory XIII be for bringing back two kingdoms to Christ."[2] The bright dawn in Scotland, the appeal to vanity by the nuncio, and the scheme of Crichton had their effect on the Pope, who not only eagerly adopted the "plan," but urged on Philip of Spain to forward it zealously. The Pope promised 4,000 gold crowns, and Philip 12,000, annually, to finance the undertaking.[3] The final draft of the plan was drawn out by Crichton and signed by Lennox, as noticed already. Holt, who saw Lennox about the same time, stimulated him with the assurance given in a letter from Mendoza to the effect that both Philip and the Pope were heartily backing the affair. Lennox thereupon wrote Mary promising that when he had her reply he would proceed to France to raise some French Infantry, and "receive the foreign troops." With his courage screwed up, Lennox proceeded to write bravely to the Queen. "I promise you," he said, "on my life that, when I have the army which is promised me of 15,000 men. . . . I will land. Courage! Then your Majesty . . ."[4] Tassis, the Spanish ambassador in Paris, also got a copy of the "plan" from Crichton. He immediately sent the complete details to his royal master, the King of Spain.[5] According to Tassis' detailed report Lennox was prepared "to restore the Catholic Religion and release the Queen of Scotland." Further Lennox was prepared "to employ his life and estate in the carrying out of the same, on condition that he is supplied with all the things set forth in a statement taken by this bearer (Crichton)." The "things set forth" were that he (Lennox) should be provided with an army of 20,000 mercenaries,

[1] Forbes Leith, *Narratives*, p. 182.
[2] Knox, *Letters and Memorials*, p. 405.
[3] Forbes Leith, *Narratives*, p. 182.
[4] Law, p. 236.
[5] S.P., III. pp. 371, 382-3; Knox, *Cardinal Allen*, pp. xxxiii, 114.

equipped with the necessary war material, to be paid for for eighteen months by Philip, and that Philip should in addition pay for the equipment of the Scottish troops, and pay down at once 40,000 crowns for necessary outlay on the re-construction of Scottish forts. But to avoid any personal loss, in the event of failure, Lennox bound down the Pope and Philip to secure for him, in a safe place, the equivalent of his Scottish estates.[1] Thus, the brave words of Lennox to Queen Mary were conditional on his being compensated for any personal loss. It is unflattering to the character of the Scottish nobility, but nevertheless a fact, that in every military enterprise of the Counter-Reformation from Crichton's before us to the debacle at Culloden the services of the Scottish nobility, with some notable exceptions,[2] from Lennox and Huntly to Cluny Macpherson[3] and young Lochiel, were conditioned by money payments or assurances of the security of their personal estates.

It is not to be wondered at that the Protestant nobles were becoming seriously alarmed and grieviously offended with the government of Lennox. The merchants "lament and fear" with the Church the overthrow of religion. So the Earl of Angus informed Queen Elizabeth in a memorandum containing the suggestion that Lennox should be removed from the King's company.[4] The offences of Lennox to Church and estate were not unknown to Elizabeth ; and, as these had a direct bearing on English interests, Elizabeth took action, and in fulfilment of a promise made to her by King James, Lennox was ordered to leave Scotland. He obeyed, and retired to France, where he died

[1] Father Forbes Leith asks us to be so credulous as to believe that this vast army and war material was intended merely to guard the king and Esmé Stewart, *Narratives*, p. 182. *Cf.* Law, p. 239. Bellesheim and his translator glide over the Crichton "plan" by merely saying that it was "an endeavour to procure help towards a Scottish expedition." *History*, III, p. 258. But Father Pollen is more candid. He admits that "Crichton's enthusiasm unfortunately outran his prudence," and that his "plan" failed for "lack of caution"; and he frankly confesses that Parsons proceeded to Rome and Crichton to Madrid "to urge the execution of the plans." *Babington Plot*, p. xvi.

[2] For example, there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Lord George Murray of the Forty-five when he thus wrote to his brother of his intention to support the Prince : "My life, my fortune, my expectations, the happiness of my wife and children, are all at stake (and the chances are against me), and yet a principle of (what seems to me) honour, and my duty to king and country, outweighs everything." *Winifred Duke, Lord George Murray and the Forty-Five*, p. 72 (1927).

[3] Cluny Macpherson deserted the Government forces and followed the Prince only when his possible personal losses were amply insured "by upwards of £30,000 delivered him by the Chevalier's orders." Having secured "the loyalty" of his clansmen to himself and the Prince by distributing among them £16,000 of that sum, Cluny pocketed the remaining £14,000, "to cover his own losses, and refuses to return it to the Prince although repeatedly requested by the Prince through couriers to do so." MS. 98 (18). Nat. Libry. Edinr. Such was Cluny's sense of loyalty and devotion that he sternly repulsed the appeals of the impecunious and defeated Prince !

[4] R.P.C.S., VI, p. xvii.: "That the Diuk Lennox, authour and grund of so gret evill, may be removit from his grace's companye."

on the 26th May, 1583. "The Scottish Catholics deplored his loss as that of the foundation-stone of their hopes."[1] But he did not disappear without a struggle, in which Mary and the lure of Spanish gold were the stimulants.

But before he could take Edinburgh, which was his objective, and seize his enemies, King James himself was in the custody of Gowrie, Mar, and their confederates. From that hour Lennox vanished from the scene, leaving behind only the evil record of his dangerous influence and power to attest his real character.

James was not to continue long the prisoner of the Ruthven lords. Precocious and wily, he remained an enigma to the skilled diplomat, Mendoza. Obsessed with the idea of being King of England, James dexterously applied the resources of his cunning to keep himself aloof from either religious party, till he should discover which was in highest favour in England. But one thing he did not conceal, and that was his dislike of Presbyterianism. With the aid of Fenelon and de Maineville, the agents of the French King who threatened Elizabeth for the imprisonment of James, he was able to extricate himself, and take the reins of government in 1583.

Meanwhile, although the spear-head of the movement seemed to be broken with the death of Lennox, the Jesuits were active. Holt was in Scotland befriended by Lord Seton. He was arrested by Bowes, and sent to England, where secret letters from Mary were found in his possession. He recovered his liberty in 1583, and in 1584 he was again active in Scotland. He wrote that the king "shows me greater marks of favour every day, and has not only permitted, but even approved of my remaining in the kingdom. He condescends to make use of my assistance in some important affairs, but this he wishes to remain a profound secret."[2] The Earls of Huntly, Crawford, Montrose and Morton, and Lords Herries, Home and Grey, and Col. Stewart, commanding the guard, are, if not Catholics, nearly so, according to Holt. These were Privy Councillors with corresponding power and influence. But the future history of most of these nobles does not justify Holt's optimism.

In the same year (1584) Holt wrote that the Scottish people who abandoned their ministers were asking for "Catholic preachers."

[1] Bellesheim, III, p. 272.

[2] C.S.P., VI, pp. 346, 348; Forbes Leith, *Narratives*, p. 190.

Edward Hay, who was in Paris, made a similar request for Jesuit missionaries. Crichton, who was then at Rouen, was equally insistent and sanguine. In the same year James Beaton, Archbishop of Glasgow, who was in Paris, pleaded earnestly with Pope Gregory XIV that "Father Edmund Hay, James Gordon, James Tyrie, William Crichton, and others whom he considers fit persons" should be sent to Scotland, insisting however, on a subsidy for their work. Beaton in this letter disclosed the important fact that some of the older priests were still functioning secretly in Scotland. "For Catholics have chaplains of their own to say Mass in their houses,"[1] he wrote. He further stated that he had on his own responsibility sent "Dr. James Cheyne to whom Your Holiness has granted an ordinary pension which he finds sufficient." This Dr. Cheyne was a secular priest, and Principal of the seminary at Pont-a-Musson in France, who carefully concealed in Scotland the purpose of his mission by "pretending to come for his health only."[2]

VI

This stream of appeal issued in instructions being given to the two Jesuit Fathers, James Gordon and William Crichton, to proceed to Scotland. They embarked for Scotland in August, 1584, but their ship was intercepted by the Dutch who, finding the Jesuits on board, sent Crichton, with treasonable papers in his possession,[3] and Adie, chaplain to Bishop Lesley, to Ostend, threatening reprisals on them for the assassination of the Prince of Orange, which assassination was the direct result of the papal ban on the prince.[4] The Papal ban on William of Orange had made regicide popular among Roman Catholics of all grades and classes. Jesuits openly preached the doctrine of Tyrannicide, and refused to keep silence even at the request of their own general. Crichton, as a Scotsman, was sent as a prisoner from Ostend to England, where he remained in captivity till 1587. In prison he affected great piety, and succeeded in securing his

[1] Forbes Leith, *Narratives*, p. 197.

[2] C.S.P., p. 93.

[3] Law, p. 306.

[4] The "ban against the Prince of Orange . . . familiarised Catholics with the defence of regicide, and caused a distinct lowering of moral standards on this subject, even among Catholic churchmen in high places." Pollen, *Babington Plot*, p. xxix. Mendoza "rejoices in the prolonged sufferings of Orange, who is punished," for he was wounded, "with more terrible sufferings than ever were undergone by man." Mary Stewart too "praised God" for Orange's sufferings, "seeing the advantage that may accrue to the Church." *Spanish Calendar Elizabeth* (S.C.E.), pp. xxxvii, 334.

own release by appearing to deny the lawfulness of the contemplated assassination of Elizabeth, which denial, however, cannot be dissociated from his natural instinct to preserve his life. The pardon that was granted to him he soon abused by active renewal of his former scheming.[1]

Adie was exchanged for Gordon by the merchant who chartered the ship, because he feared death at the hands of Gordon's powerful nephew, the Earl of Huntly. Gordon made good his escape and arrived in Fintray, in Aberdeenshire in the later part of autumn, 1584. The laird of Fintray, David Graham, was a nephew of Archbishop James Beaton, and a determined Roman Catholic. Gordon, who was by far the most erudite and clever of the Jesuits in Scotland, soon began to make his influence felt in the north, under the protection of the almost sovereign power of Huntly. Gordon was soon followed by two other Jesuits, Edmund Hay and John Dury. These landed in Aberdeen in August, 1585, disguised as servants to the notorious conspirator and spy, Robert Bruce of Binnie, secretary of Archbishop Beaton, and the trusted agent of the Roman Catholic nobles in Scotland, the Jesuits, and the King of Spain, in their various conspiracies.[2] All the Jesuit missionaries had thus arrived. Actuated as much by ecclesiastical pride and political ambitions as by genuine religious zeal, they adopted all sorts of means, fair or otherwise, to carry out the full programme of the Counter-Reformation.

Edmund Hay was in Perthshire. He proceeded north to Aberdeenshire, where Gordon and he were safe from the King's threat of banishment. Wotten, the English envoy in Scotland, reported on the Jesuit activities and success in the north. Mass was said openly, and great numbers of the people visited relics and holy places, which was a scandal to all honest men, and yet no punishment was meted out to the Jesuits. The Archbishop of Glasgow wrote Aquaviva that the "harvest seems likely to be great." Gordon appeared before "King James and eight ministers" to discuss justification, and gave them "the definition of the Council of Trent." The result of the discussion was inconclusive. But Gordon had unbounded confidence in his own versatility and persuasive power. For two whole months he followed King James to the chase and everywhere else, "always

[1] Pollen, *Babington Plot*, XXVIII, pp. 162-168.

[2] Law, pp. 313-319.

seeking an opportunity to make some effort for his conversion."[1] But all his efforts were fruitless.

The venue of discussion was after this in the north. There Gordon engaged in public debate with George Hay, whom Crichton describes as "the most learned of the ministers, a man of good birth, fairly versed in Greek and Latin literature." If we are to believe Crichton, the honours fell to Gordon, and in consequence " a large number of persons returned to the religion of their fathers, and others were encouraged to persevere therein. Among the former was Francis, Earl of Errol, Master of the Horse."[2] Father Tyrie wrote to Aquaviva from Paris, September 31st, 1585, giving definite figures that show the amazing success that attended the efforts of the Roman Catholic priests. Tyrie stated that the sources of his information were letters he received from, among others, the notorious spy, Robert Bruce, not an unimpeachable authority, and personal intercourse with Edmund MacGuaran, Bishop of Ardagh in Ireland, who was in the north of Scotland with Fathers Hay and Gordon, but was then in Paris. Tyrie reported that Hay and Gordon were in the north, with the Earl of Huntly ; that Holt and Dury were in the west with the Earl of Morton ; that the number of Catholics increased every day, and that Bishop MacGuaran assured him that during the short time the Bishop was in Scotland he administred the sacrament of confirmation to at least ten thousand persons.[3] Tyrie mentioned in a letter dated January 18th, 1586, that Holt had gone north and Dury west, " determined on no account to quit a country where they are reaping so fine a harvest." He craved for money and literature, as the latter, he believed, would contribute more than anything else to the conversion of the country.[4] That was written to Archbishop James Beaton. Beaton sent similar information to Queen Mary. The Earl of Morton was a prisoner in Edinburgh Castle for having had mass said openly in Dumfries, New Abbey and Lincluden, at which a large number of people and nobility of England as well as of Scotland were present. Many of the nobles and others, both in the north and west, were reconciled to the Church, since the Jesuits arrived in Scotland. The Earl of Huntly favoured them as much as he could, " and is

[1] Forbes Leith, *Narratives*, p. 203.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 204.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 206.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 208-9.

always the most affectionate subject and servant of your Majesty." So wrote Beaton to Queen Mary.[1]

The execution of Queen Mary in 1587 put an end to her subsidies to the Scottish priests, but it also fanned their fanaticism. Additions were made to the staff of Jesuit missionaries in the persons of Robert Abercromby and William Ogilvy. Crichton, who was freed from the tower, came back to Scotland accompanied by Alexander MacQuhirrie, at the close of 1587, and in the following year appeared William Murdoch and George Dury.

The success of these Jesuits was obtained mostly in the north aided by Errol and Huntly whose lieutenancy extended to the north-west Highlands. In the south, particularly in Dumfries, the sympathy and protection of Lord Maxwell accounted for the numerous converts claimed by Dury. In districts of territorial magnates like Earls of Angus and Cassilis, Lords Maxwell, Herries, Semple and Crichton, who were all claimed as Roman Catholics, knots of their vassals identified themselves formally with the religion of their superiors.[2]

The revival of Roman Catholicism in its Jesuit form could not be ignored, particularly as a subversive political force. Whether the nobility, whose loyalties were variable, were Roman Catholic to the extent of two-thirds according to Roman writers, or one-third according to Protestant writers, need not concern us as much as the undoubted fact that Roman Catholicism was sufficiently strong and influential to make its power a factor of immense value to the ambitions of Philip of Spain.[3]

[1] Record Office, Scotland, M.Q.S., 17, 31.

[2] Pollen, *The Counter-Reformation in Scotland* (1921), *passim*: Calderwood, *History*, IV, pp. 657-666. With reference to this matter of numbers, Fr. Macbrek, S.J., writing on January 15th, 1655, corroborates what is said above. He wrote: "I see (modern spelling) by what Fr. Gall writes there is not so much performed by these seculars as they take off, and what they write is of the mountaineers, who as they are easily gained, so are they soon perverted, neither says he, hear they much of great conversions, saving of christening of some children." M. V. Hay, *The Blairs Papers*, 1606-1660 (1929), p. 211.

[3] Rome made no impression on any of the larger towns except Dumfries. *Cf.* Pollen, *Counter-Reformation*, p. 62. There are varying estimates. "The number of Protestants seemeth not great, specially after so long preaching the Gospel." *Relation of the State of Scotland*, 1586, *Grampian Club*, 1873. "A number of nobility almost equally divided anent their religion into protestants and papists, make that party both greater in number of nobility, and stronger in force. *Hatfield Calendar*, III, p. 295. "Within ten years after popery was discharged in Scotland, there was not in all Scotland ten persons of quality to be found who did not profess the true reformed religion, and so it was among the commons in proportion." Kirkton, *The Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland*, pp. 21, 22. Hume Brown in his *Surveys of Scottish History*, p. 56, writes that the Scottish Roman Catholics were at this time, "relatively as numerous as their brethren in England," i.e., one-third of the population. In 1591 there were sixteen "Papists and discontented Erles and Lordes," and eight "Protestants and well affected to the course of England" (*Estimates of the Scottish Nobility during reign of James VI*, pp. 62, 63.) A further account for 1592 in the same source, which includes persons of inferior ranks to those already given gives these figures: "Protestants, 28; Papists, 13;

VII

The Jesuits were, as we have seen, busily employed as paid agents and spies of Rome and Madrid, in the attempt to recover Scotland for the Pope, not by persuasive preaching merely, but oftener by dark political intrigue. Mary handed over the rights of succession to the English throne from her son to the King of Spain.[1] The Scottish Roman Catholic lords sent their ubiquitous spy, Robert Bruce the conspirator, to Guise and Philip with the projected scheme "to re-establish the Catholic religion in this country," and they craved Philip "6,000 paid troops," and "150,000 crowns" for raising an army.[2] For three years Philip of Spain had been making his stupendous preparations to hurl Queen Elizabeth from her throne, and compel her subjects back into the Roman Catholic faith and allegiance to Spain. The interests of Scotland demanded defensive and offensive action in close co-operation with England. This issued in a league of common action against Spain to the last extremity.

These tireless intriguings of Jesuit priests, who prostituted their higher religious mission to treacherous political ventures, the plots of Huntly and Hamilton, the ominous correspondence of high Roman Catholic functionaries with Spain and other Roman Catholic powers, had at last awakened Protestant Scotland to realise its imminent peril. The wreck of the Arran ministry in 1585 was followed by a coalition ministry of banished lords sent back to Scotland by Queen Elizabeth, and the still more effective Chancellor-Premiership of Maitland had created a political situation which compelled King James to act in his own interest and that of his realm. The Presbyterian ministers, now headed by the returned patriot, scholar and ecclesiastical

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neutral, suspect, or doubtful, 6; minors, 9". Quoted in *The Blairs Papers*, pp. 73, 74. But recent research has conclusively proved all these estimates to be grossly exaggerated in favour of Roman Catholicism. In support of this we need only quote here two new witnesses, and these Roman Catholics: William Leslie, in a memorial presented to the Pope in 1689, declared that in 1650 "there were not more than twenty Catholic families in the whole kingdom." In a letter written by Fr. James Anderson on April 30th, 1654, or four years after the date referred to, he ridicules the large lists of Roman Catholics sent to *Propaganda* in Rome. "The relation" (modern spelling) he wrote, "sent to Fr. Thomson by the Dominicans seemeth very absurd, for I am far deceived if there be 4,000 Catholics in all Scotland." *The Blairs Papers*, pp. 192, 214. We agree with Fr. Anderson, as we have other proofs as well as his testimony, that the figures sent to Rome, and accepted by Bellesheim, and all modern historians, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, as correct, were indeed "very absurd."

[1] "Considering the great obstinacy of my son in his heresy," wrote Mary to Mendoza in 1586. . . . "I have resolved that, in case my son should submit not before my death to the Catholic religion, I will cede and make over, by will, to the king your master, my right to this (English) crown . . . whom (King of Spain) she regards as "the most zealous in our Catholic faith," and, "most capable, in all respects, of re-establishing it in this country." S.C.E., III, p. 150.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 286-9.

statesman, Andrew Melville, detected the sinister workings described, and were alert. At an informal convention held in Edinburgh in January, 1588, and presided over by Andrew Melville, and at a regular assembly in the following month, of which Robert Bruce, the famous evangelical minister and sufferer for the faith, was Moderator, the "remissness of the King and Council in the business of seeking out and extirpating all such relics of the Spanish leaven" were the subjects of speech and written resolution and manifesto.[1] The assembly expressed in unmistakable terms their determination to deal with Jesuits, Priests, Papists, "practicers and traffiquers against the true religioun, and the present libertie of this realme," so that "in tyme coming they dare not attempt dangerous interpryses." In this, as in other matters, the voice of the ministry was the voice of alarmed Scotland. Accordingly James, who was particularly sensitive to the opinion of a majority, bent himself to the popular wish, and he agreed to co-operate with the Church "anent the purging of the land of idolatrie, and seditious enticers."[2] And he proved the sincerity of his purpose by crushing the effort of Lord Maxwell to open a way in Dumfriesshire for the coming Spanish army.[3]

Philip, meanwhile, fanatical and determined, sent forth his proud Armada, to execute the decrees of Trent, by crushing England's power on the sea. The story of the Armada is in general histories. Suffice it here to say that the superb skill of Admirals Drake and Hawkins, and the superior seamanship of English sailors, completely overwhelmed the Spanish navy in the English channel. Units of the defeated fleet were driven before terrific storms to the north of Scotland. Defeated by superior skill, driven helplessly by violent storms, benumbed by unusually inclement weather, hungry and exhausted, the seamen of Philip left at the Fair Isle, Lochaline, Salen, Tobermory and elsewhere their wrecked vessels, an impressive warning to their proud master that his executing of the decrees of Trent had not the approval of Heaven. For Scotland these months were full of terrible anxiety, but believing Scotland, with the sincerity and earnestness of a triumphant faith, fasted and prayed, and believing Scotland saw in the issue the working of the mighty

[1] R.P.C.S., IV, pp. xxxix, 248, 332, 358; *Cf. Booke of the Universalle Kirke*, pp. 323-332.

[2] Melvill's *Autobiography*, p. 260.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 261; Calderwood, *History*, IV, pp. 678-9.

hand of God. These same Protestants, in Anstruther, showed the quality and the character of their religion by hospitably entertaining Admiral Juan Lopez de Medina, and his starving ship-wrecked sailors,[1] who left Spain intent on depriving Scotland of its liberty and religion. So did the Town Council of Edinburgh show later a similar charity to groups of these miserable mercenary sailors of King Philip.[2] For Scotland, fortunately, did not experience, like Holland, the horrors of Spanish tyranny and consequent uncontrollable bitterness, which is illustrated in the case of the Holland "Beggar" referred to by Fruin, who tore out the heart from the enemy he had slain, fixed his teeth in it, and then threw it away because it tasted bitter.[3]

But neither Philip nor the Scottish Roman Catholics realised the full significance of the annihilation of the Armada. Soon the machinery of intrigue with Spain was again set moving more actively than ever. Hamilton, Errol, Crawford, with their new recruit, Bothwell, a nominal Protestant, had the Jesuit Fathers not less active than their paid spies Bruce, Semple, Pringle and the zealous Romans Graham of Fintray and John Chisholm. The Duke of Parma was to land forces in Scotland. With good Spanish soldiers and a sufficient supply of money, the re-establishment of Roman Catholicism in Scotland would soon become a visible fact. So thought Huntly and the priests. Mendoza was of the same opinion, only Lethingham, the Chancellor stood in the way, and he must be removed by death.[4]

But the ministers and the General Assembly were cognisant of all these activities, and being alive to the value of their inherited political liberty, and their recently acquired religious freedom, they enacted more stringent laws to root out the "Poperie, superstition, bloodshed, and all kinds of villanie" that defiled the land. The King through his Privy Council concurred in these enactments in February, 1589.[5]

[1] "They" (Lopez and his mariners) "were for the maist part young, berdless men, sillie, trauchled and houngered, to the quhilk a day or twa keall, pottage, and fische was giffen." Melvill's *Autobiography*, pp. 261-4.

[2] *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh*, 1589-1603, pp. 10, 48.

[3] R. Fruin, *The Siege and Relief of Leyden in* 1574 (Eng. trans., 1927), p. 99.

[4] S.C.E., IV, p. 428; *Calendar of State Papers (Dom)*, IX, pp. 681-697.

[5] R.P.C.S., IV, pp. 351, 360. Harsh as these laws may appear they were the nation's unavoidable defence against Roman Catholic intrigue and policy of open rebellion. The only alternative to these laws was the abdication of Scottish freedom to Spanish and Papal rule. Only one of the many proofs of this need be quoted here. It is definite enough, and is as follows: In a letter on

The conspiracy of Huntly and Errol was forcibly brought before the King's notice by Queen Elizabeth. Huntly was formally cast into prison, but in a few days he obtained his release. The Roman Catholic lords were again imprisoned for their revolt in the north which James easily suppressed; but their imprisonment was again of short duration. The people were becoming exasperated with King James' continued indulgence with the Huntly in spite of the latter's proved conspiracies with Spain. A Spanish ship arrived at Whitehorn in 1590, and its captain confessed that its mission was solely to help Huntly and his coadjutors with Spanish money to raise an army to help Philip in another effort to attack England through Scotland.[1] Feeling ran high when a further plot, known as the Spanish "blanks," was unfolded in 1592.

VIII

The authoritative sanction and ratification of all previous acts establishing the Church in Scotland, as well as the re-enactment of all the former anti-papal measures, in 1592, forms the charter of the Church's liberties. That event clearly proved the power and influence of the Church through her outspoken and alert ministry, who had behind them, unquestionably, the heart and mind of the people.[2] King James knew that, and he accordingly reluctantly concurred in the re-sanctioning of a creed which he disliked. All this the Roman Catholics of all ranks and professions interpreted as affording them what might be their final opportunity to regain Scotland, and through it England, for Rome before King James became actively unsympathetic, and before Presbyterianism became everywhere supreme. So the plot of the "blanks" was hatched. The King of Spain was wholly won over to the plot in spite of, or perhaps because of, the failure of his attempt through England in 1588. He was by the help of the Scottish Roman Catholics to seize the King of Scotland and convert Scotland to Roman Catholicism, as a prelude to his still sanguine hope of recovering

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the state of affairs written in 1596 by the Papal Agent at Brussels to the Cardinal Secretary at Rome, the Agent writes: "The Jesuits hold it as an axiom . . . that only by force of arms can the Catholic religion be restored to its former state. . . . The alumni (Seminary priests) on the other hand are naturally attached to their country, opposed to the idea of a revolution and the evils consequent on the introduction of a foreign sovereign and the law of Spain." *The Blairs Papers*, p. 72.

[1] R.P.C.S., IV, pp. 739, 827-831.

[2] *Cf.*, Law, p. 247.

England to the Roman faith. For this effort he was to provide a Spanish army of 30,000 men which was to land in 1593 at Kirkcudbright or the mouth of the Clyde "according to the opportunity of the wind."[1]

The Roman Catholic nobles, Huntly, Errol and Angus, who were to be responsible for a Scottish army of about 4,000 or 5,000 men, as a pledge of their sincerity, were willing to send their sons as hostages to Spain or the Netherlands.[2]

George Ker, brother of Lord Newbattle, was to be sent to Philip of Spain with credentials from these Earls. And what is more important, and to the point, he was to carry blank letters with the Earls' signatures and seals. But the above details were to be filled in by him when he was safely landed in Spain, and he was out of danger of being intercepted in his enterprise. But Bowes, Lord Burleigh's agent in Scotland, had sharp eyes and quick ears. He discovered that Ker was to leave for Spain with the details of the plot. Burleigh advised Elizabeth. The English Queen in stern terms warned James of the coming Spanish invasion and of the necessity of banishing the over-active Jesuits and punishing Huntly.[3] Bruce, the arch-conspirator and double traitor, who was in the payment of the King of Spain and was the confidential agent of the Jesuits, apparently in a fit of remorse, promised Bowes to become informer of his former accomplices in intrigue, provided King James granted him remission "for treason, negotiation with foreign princes, and Jesuits, for the alteration of religion, for the receipt and distribution of money from Spain and other offences."[4] Much to the surprise of many, King James granted pardon.

The plot could not be kept secret, and secrecy was necessary for its success. Andrew Knox, the minister of Paisley, apparently knew that Ker was about to sail for Spain. Knox collected a number of Glasgow students and zealous neighbours, boarded Ker's ship moored off the Isle of Cumbrae, quickly apprehended Ker, and took possession of his papers. The papers were immediately forwarded to Edinburgh by an armed convoy, with Ker himself as prisoner. The seriousness with which

[1] S.C.E., IV, p. 603.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Cf.*, Law, p. 253.

[4] S.C.E.; Law, pp. 253, 313-19.

Scotland viewed this new "and terrible discovery," and the ferment into which a peaceful people and ministry were thrown, can best be gauged by the precaution of the magistrates of Edinburgh. To allay alarm, and in order to fortify public confidence the magistrates ordered a force of sixty horse and 200 foot to meet the cavalcade from the west with Ker as prisoner. They met at Midcalder where the culprit Ker was transferred to the Edinburgh contingent, thus terminating his career of treasonable misdeeds.[1]

Scotland was alarmed. King James issued a proclamation threatening severe penalties on the Roman Catholic nobles and Jesuits. But Scotland was weary of the King's good, but unredeemed, pledges, and its ministry gave unmistakable expression to Scotland's impatience. For the second time the zealous evangelical, Robert Bruce, boldly gave utterance to Scotland's wish in the King's presence, exhorting him to do justice, and rescue his name from an indelible stain, or else "the chronicles would keep in memory James the Sixth to his shame."

The imprisoned Ker made full confession of his guilt, and he disclosed the secrets of the plot. Graham of Fintray, another of the eight who signed the "blanks," was executed. But the Earls were in open revolt. King James refused to have them attainted for treason, and in November, 1592, the proceedings against them were dropped, and they were asked to go abroad or conform. The plot of the "blanks" originated in the fertile brain of the fanatical zealot, William Crichton, S.J.[2] It has been already noticed that when Crichton obtained his freedom from the Tower he promised never to return to Scotland. Nevertheless he returned hither at once (1588-89), and thence proceeded to Spain, where he evolved the famous plot. The details were to be carried out for him in Scotland by four Jesuit accomplices: Gordon, Ogilvie, MacQuhirrie and Abercromby. What a real danger these Jesuits were to the state can be realised by their influence with such grasping but powerful Roman Catholic nobles as Huntly, Errol and Angus whom they persuaded to risk their own and their adherents lives and properties on blank sheets bearing these nobles' names and seals.

[1] R.P.C.E., V, pp. 34, 35*n*; *Calendar of State Papers relating to Scotland*, pp. 618, 622; Spottiswood, *History*, pp. 390-1.

[2] *Cf.*, Thomas J. Campbell, S. J., *The Jesuits*, 1534-1922, p. 152; J. R. Elder, *Spanish Influences in Scottish History*, *Appendix*, pp. 306, 307-312; Law, "The Spanish Blanks" and "Father William Crichton, S.J."

Huntly and Errol taking full advantage of the King's leniency towards them renounced their claims under the recent Act of Abolition. The protestant ministers were irritated at the King's delay in dealing with these Earls. Accordingly a Band or Covenant was formed in Aberdeen to resist the defiant Earls. That did not overawe Huntly. On the contrary, with the help of a large sum of money brought from the Pope by the papal nuncio Sampiretti, and with the assistance of his own uncle, Father Gordon, he organised an open revolt. The youthful Earl of Argyll, brother-in-law of the murdered Earl of Moray, the unatoned guilt of which Huntly still bore, was sent by the King to suppress the revolt. Huntly, with trained soldiers ministered to by the Jesuit Fathers, defeated Argyll at Glenlivet on October 3rd, 1594. The King, who was then at Dundee, marched north, drove Huntly and Errol into the fastnesses of Caithness and Sutherland, and burnt their castles. In the following year Huntly, Errol and Angus were permitted to go into voluntary exile, but they were back again to Scotland in September of 1596, and by such enactments as many think harsh they accepted the Presbyterian creed and recanted their errors, in June 1597. With solemn pomp and much festivity the three Earls were absolved from excommunication. But this recantation, solely for personal interests, was a hollow mockery. For the three speedily returned to the Roman fold. But this, even though temporary, renunciation of the Roman faith by the three Earls, had its effect on their followers, who, without any troubles of conscience, deeming material possessions of more vital value than the spiritual gifts of Rome, finally forsook their allegiance to Rome.[1]

The first wave of the Counter-Reformation was then receding with a hissing sound as of a broken wave on the shingle. For evil-doers always complain of the severity of the laws that punish them. But traitors, propagators of sedition, plotters for the overthrow of the state (such as these Jesuits were), men who had forfeited every claim to be regarded as ambassadors of the Prince of Peace, had no just ground of complaint, if the

[1] Father James Gordon bitterly bewailed this fact: "The Catholic barons and nobles of inferior rank were thrown into perturbation by this decision of their leaders. Almost all have wavered, and most of them have trod in the footsteps of the two Earls, and have either renounced their religion, or at least consented to attend heretical worship. . . . Every day we heard of some deserting their faith, either by interior defection, or at any rate outward profession." From a letter to Father Claud Aquaviva, General of the Society of Jesus, 1597, quoted in Forbes Leith's *Narratives*, p. 233.

executive of the state punished them according to the categories of their crimes. It was these who suffered most, for the common people, whose religious conscience was elastic, easily compounded. The net result of the long period of twenty-three years of constant intrigue by the Scottish priesthood with the Roman Catholic powers abroad was the defeat of their purpose with the inevitable sufferings of defeat.

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