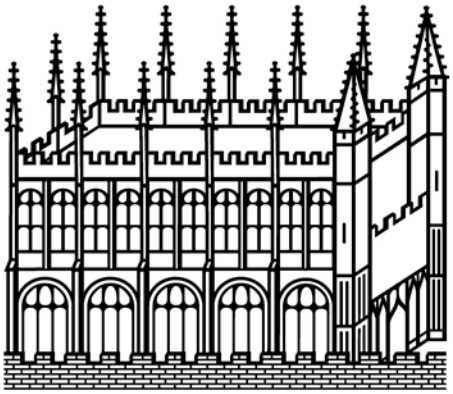
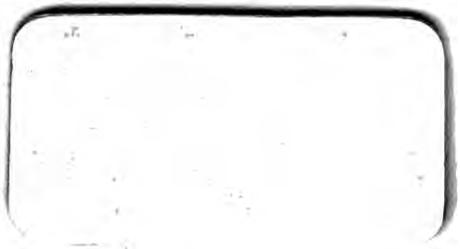


THE COUNTER-REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND

BY

J. H. POLLEN, S.J.



THE COUNTER-REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND

The Counter-Reformation in Scotland

With Special Reference to the Revival of 1585 to 1595

A paper Read before the Catholic Students' Guild of the University of Glasgow, 21st February, 1920. Rewritten and Enlarged

By

JOHN HUNGERFORD POLLEN,

Editor of *Papal Negotiations with Queen Mary*

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The Counter-Reformation in Scotland

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY IDEAS

WHILE Scotland is noted in history for her romantic struggles, her noble love of liberty and independence, the history of the catholic Scots in particular reflects in full the grand characteristics of the national heroism. No clan, nor family, no kirk, nor religious confession, no region, county, or town, has striven for freedom with greater perseverance, or a more indomitable endurance than they.

Nor have historians been wanting to their cause. James F. Gordon, Walsh, Bellesheim, Forbes-Leith, Barrett and Kinloch—to mention only such moderns as are constantly in

our hands—are names honourably familiar; and there are many more still, not of our faith, whose fairness and generosity are universally praised. Would that we had more of them! Would that we had more assistance in the series of excellent texts now being brought out with government assistance.

But as yet we have no history specially devoted to the Scottish Counter-Reformation. Whether ancient or modern, whether catholic or protestant, all our writers on this period treat miscellaneously and chronicle-wise of all occurrences with equal care, as of so many by-gone events. None dwell in particular on this one line of action and re-action, subordinating or passing over, if need be, all that is off that line. On the contrary our writers are all, one may say, too narrowly Scottish in this respect. They pass over many foreign events and persons, the Council of Trent for instance, and the reigns of certain popes, because they do not advert to the influence which those events and persons exerted on the Scottish Counter-Reformation.

Yet soberly considered the history of that

movement is of conspicuous importance both for catholic and for protestant. It is impossible to write a history of the nation fairly, and yet to neglect a party, which was once in a great majority, and has never been extinguished. It is impossible to appreciate the true character of a movement like the Reformation, if all accounts are omitted of the counter-movements by which the course of the reformation was conditioned, counter-poised or off-set. Again, as it is impossible to understand Scotland's Reformation, without knowledge of the Reform in Germany, England and France, so it is impossible to grasp the meaning or direction of her Counter-Reformation without information about popes and catholic powers, in France, Spain and elsewhere.

Moreover, by commencing with a look abroad we shall more easily obtain some certainty as to the beginning and the end of the movement, as to the objects it had in view, and as to its methods. Whereas if one follows a narrowly national line, these points are very likely indeed to be obscured, partly because of

the relative smallness of the Scottish scale, partly because of the conflicting testimonies which are characteristic of those controversial days.

The European Counter-Reformation then may be considered as a movement which continued and carried forward into catholic channels the vigorous driving forces germinated by the renaissance. Many of these forces were indeed absorbed by the wars of that combative age, or by the protestant Reformation. But much of the energy remained among the catholics, and so far as it entered the spiritual life, it gave birth to the Counter-Reformation. Its first beginnings may be traced to Italy and Spain more or less simultaneous with Luther's rebellion. As a world-power it came into view at the close of the Council of Trent in 1563, and it continued to flourish greatly during the reigns of the next three popes, all of whom were notable reformers, viz. St. Pius V, 1565-72, Gregory XIII, 1572-1585, and Sixtus V, 1585-1590. During this time there was great activity in education, especially among the

clergy, which was now not only begun at a younger age, but was also more systematic, disciplined and religious. There was also a notable increase of missionary zeal, which had led quite early to the wonderful successes of St. Francis Xavier in the far East, and to remarkable religious progress both in Europe and in America. Finally there was also much literary activity.

It must be our task to see whether and to what extent this wide movement influenced Scotland; or rather, as the time at our disposal is very short, we had better confine ourselves to some brief and characteristic part of that counter-movement. I propose therefore to reduce all preliminaries, and all consequences to such bare statements as cannot be dispensed with, and to make use of the historical method, that is to cite historical evidence, only in regard to the short period of catholic revival in Scotland between 1585 and 1589, when as is universally acknowledged the reaction reached its greatest height, and also, alas! received a fateful blow. Another advantage of this restriction will be that we shall thereby avail

ourselves of some of the most interesting sources available for the history of Scottish catholics.

As to these sources, one can tell instinctively that they are not likely to be found among the state-papers at a time when the state was hotly occupied in persecuting and maligning the luckless papists. When anti-catholic fanaticism burnt fiercely in kirk, parliament and law-court, their records are not likely to give a veridical description of catholic aims, spirit and teaching. The excellent Scottish Calendars therefore, and other materials of the same character will help of course for dates, and colourless details, but for the true, the inner history of the Counter-Reformation they must constantly be read in a sense contrary to the sound of their words.

Catholic records could not be preserved in Scotland between 1558 and 1758, and during that time we must look abroad for information concerning catholic Scots. Thus in a sense one may say that the Vatican Archives, the Castle of Simancas, or the *Archives des Affaires Etrangères* at Paris are more truly

the national catholic archives of Scotland than those of Edinburgh or London. In the seventeenth century, when Scottish seminaries for catholic Scots had been firmly established abroad the preservation of national catholic records by Scotsmen began again, and some of these records were carried back by the clergy to Scotland, when the flames of the French Revolution made them forsake their refuges on the continent. Immense losses, alas, accompanied this transfer; but the residue is now safe at Blairs College, Aberdeen.

The government collection of transcripts from the Vatican is now open to students in the London Record Office; and government Calendars are doing good work for the Spanish and Roman papers, though for those who seek finality, the original collections must still be visited. The French government are bringing out new catalogues of their papers, which should be of great advantage, but the French Revolution has worked dire destruction on the papers of the previous *régime*.

Of private archives those at Blairs have been already mentioned, and a report upon them

will be found in the *Historical MSS. Commission.* Those of the Jesuits are more ample still, and extend to a remoter past. But the revolutions of the last century have scattered them far and wide; they are not easy of access. On the other hand many useful publications have now been made from them, and a series of pieces, of especial value for Scotland, will be found in Father W. Forbes-Leith's *Narratives of Scottish Catholics,* Edinburgh, 1885. There are other original Scottish letters at Stonyhurst College, and I have described many sources of this class in my *Papal Negotiations with Queen Mary,* Edinburgh, 1901.

CHAPTER II

THE COMMENCEMENT

1533-1560

THOUGH Scotland owed her Reformation primarily to England, and yet received it *secundum modum recipientis* (as the schoolmen would have said) that is in the Scottish, not in the English manner, her preliminary resistance was strong and prolonged. It lasted for more than a quarter of a century, and was marked by many a gallant and victorious fight, though also, alas! by some sad defeats. The reason why her Church eventually fell so suddenly and so completely was unquestionably the irregular state of her higher clergy, both secular and regular. The crown and the temporal lords had succeeded in obtaining a

far greater influence over the appointments to benefices than was right, and they had gravely abused their opportunity. They had introduced their own friends and adherents, and even their illegitimate children, to the best and most influential posts, with scandalous frequency and to the great weakening of the Church. Nevertheless there were always plenty of good bishops and some of great capacity and merit, men like David Beaton, William Elphinstone and Robert Reid. Without the liberal and vigorous support of English gold and English arms, the enemies of the old Church would not have triumphed.

When, however, the fall did come, there were, alas!, few countries where the regular clergy disappeared so quickly, few episcopates which made such weak resistance. At the last moment indeed an excellent catechism had been issued by Archbishop Hamilton, and wise resolutions were framed by the last Synods of Edinburgh. These were worthy measures of counter-reform, but they should have been taken much earlier, the education of the poorer

class should have been improved, the printing press should have been established. As it was the strong measures which were taken occasionally, of burning some heretical teacher, or some loads of heretical books imported from England, produced violent reactions, which could not be dealt with by the out-of-date, primitive machinery then at hand.

Learned men might have been called in from abroad. There had been Jesuits (Fathers Broet and Salmeron) in Scotland as far back as 1542. They were on their way to Ireland, having been sent by Pope Paul III, to preach a revival, as we might say. But on arriving there they found by experience that Henry's fury was such as to make their plans quite impracticable, as they had already been told in Scotland. So they returned, though with difficulty. It took nearly three years from the time the invitation was sent from Ireland, for the Fathers to go and return on foot. How extraordinary the length of time which it took for countries like Ireland and Scotland to communicate with Rome, when the Tudors blocked all the direct roads, and

preyed freely with their sea-rovers on all shipping within reach! This circumstance must be kept in mind throughout all that follows. In thinking of the missionaries of those days it is necessary to remember that so far as time and difficulty in travelling were concerned, they were far more distant from their head-quarters at Rome than we are now from Japan or Australia.

From the mission of Fathers Broet and Salmeron we see one yet more important point. It was early realised that Scotland was as it were the pivot on which, humanly speaking, the fortunes of the Counter-Reformation must turn throughout these islands. For to the outward eye, Ireland seemed at first to have fallen away from the unity of the Church as completely as England had done. Nevertheless so little headway had the Counter-Reformation made in Rome before the conclusion of the Council of Trent, that no further harbingers of that reformation were sent to Scotland at the time when they might have effected most.

As the protestants depended at first entirely

on English aid, so it was natural that the defenders of hereditary Scottish liberty should call in the French to keep the balance against their hereditary foe. To use a very modern idiom, a coalition government between French and Scots was organised, which maintained Scotland's independence for a quarter of a century. Nevertheless English gold and English influence kept winning more and more among the factious and avaricious nobles, while the reformers were also aided by their English co-religionists. Indeed even the persecutions of Mary Tudor helped the reformers in Scotland by driving sympathisers from England into their arms. Mary of Guise's excessive zeal for France led her unwisely to draw Scotland into an unwilling war with England, just as Mary Tudor of England, in her extreme love for Philip of Spain, had drawn her country into war with France, when that country declared against Spain. In this war Scotland won no credit, and her coalition government went down greatly in popularity. Then the Lords of the Congregation rose in arms and the English

sent a strong army and navy to back them up. The coalition government failed, Mary of Guise died, the French, after a most gallant and honourable struggle, were forced to retire. The treaty of Edinburgh (6 July, 1560) in effect established protestantism in Scotland.

The fall of the ancient Church seemed complete and final throughout the towns and populous districts. There was a scramble for Church property and it was soon squandered. The bishops retired into private life, only the Archbishop of Glasgow succeeded in escaping to France. Though the country itself had not as yet abandoned its old allegiance, practically all the leading men of the ancient Faith had fallen off, and no catholic representatives asserted themselves in the parliament which was at once summoned to confirm the change of religion.

CHAPTER III

MARY STUART

1561-1587

In the midst of this turmoil, who should arrive from France but Queen Mary Stuart, on the 19th of August, 1561, before she had reached her nineteenth year. Young, handsome and unaided; trained in polite culture, open and affable to all, the impression which she made was immediate and most favourable, except upon the zealots for the new religion and on their English patrons, whose hostility never abated. She had come from a court which was on the one hand sincerely catholic, but on the other *politique* in the bad sense, and to a discreditable degree. It was the ally of German heretics, and sometimes even of Turkish invaders, and did not scruple to use Huguenot ministers and troops, even in

France. The Counter-Reformation had little hold there, and Mary Stuart was so far probably unacquainted with it; at all events she discovered no missionary proclivities at all, and took the presence of protestants about her quite as a matter of course. Her power lay in her gracious, womanly nature, receptive indeed and responsive, but also intelligent, cultured, quick, pure, and generous. She had the royal gift of appealing instinctively to the loyalty of her subjects, and hardly ever in vain. Her queenly statecraft lay in using and trusting the best men she could find, irrespective of their creed. In spite of Elizabeth and of Knox, she was warmly welcomed, and her proclamation, pledging herself not to disturb religion as she had found it, was accepted as satisfactory by both sides.

While she frequently, and (as the sequel showed) truly, declared herself ready rather to die than to forsake the Catholic Faith; the above pledge, which was also faithfully observed by her, shows that she did not consider herself a missionary. She was neither a cleric nor a preacher, but a catholic politician.

Pacification was the object for which she worked, and even from the point of view of a catholic missionary peace was a matter of prime necessity.

Even after her fall and imprisonment, when her power was so much restricted, her policy endured. It was only near the close of her life that she even in passing asked for priests to be sent to Scotland; a matter well within the terms of her pledges.

The result of this policy was that, though she was not understood to be a protagonist of the Counter-Reformation (except of course by the extremists) she did succeed in maintaining for Scotland that position towards catholicity which the kingdom had occupied before, as we have heard. Scotland was still the pivot, round which the fortunes of catholicism in these islands revolved. If freedom or even toleration could have been won there, it would have followed not only in England, but in Ireland and in Wales. To the outward eye Scottish catholicism seemed hopelessly destroyed, and in effect it never rose again. But in reality it was still far from dead, and to hopeful souls

it might yet seem that all could still be restored. The whole of Christendom then appeared to be in uncertainty. No catholic country seemed quite safe; but at the same time no protestant country seemed finally wedded to protestantism.

I may here illustrate these phases of Mary Stuart's religious position from two accounts written by representatives of the Counter-Reformation, both Jesuits sent by the Pope to visit her. The first of these, Father Nicholas de Gouda, Dutch by birth, was sent by Pope Pius IV, in 1562, to ask her to send an envoy and the bishops of her realm to the Council of Trent. His report, which is of value to all students of the period, has been printed several times. He had his interview on the 24th of July, 1562, but the need for semi-secrecy was so great that the meeting had to be timed for the protestant sermon-hour, when the frenzied enthusiasts would be occupied with their service. Mary received the papal message with the utmost respect, and renewed her resolution, rather to die than to forsake her faith. But for the moment her answer was

to point out her inability to execute the pope's wishes, or any of the good suggestions made by the envoy. De Gouda was deeply impressed by her goodness and defencelessness; but he also perceived her real danger.

In truth she was not so powerless as she seemed to be, for she had extraordinary gifts of courage and diplomatic skill, which might have enabled her to out-ride the worst storms. The really weak point was instability arising from her position, her advisers and her sex.

Every man at her court was either an apostate from her religion, or at best a time-server to such apostates. She reigned, but the protestant party ruled, with English arms and money behind them. They obsessed all avenues of information, they held all the means of communication, all outlets of administration. As queen she was bound by her position to trust them. What security under such circumstances could be based on a girl of twenty, with her marriage problems before her; mobile, affectionate, impressionable, and, as a Stuart, with the family weakness towards favouritism? De Gouda's very

reasonable conclusion was, " There is no mistaking the imminent peril of this good lady's position."

But if Mary in spite of the above misfortunes was still the pivot on which the fortunes of catholicism depended, it will be easy to imagine how gloomy the prospect was in other directions. Though de Gouda did not despair of the eventual resurrection of the Church, nor of the introduction of the full Counter-Reformation programme, a catholic king, good catholic bishops, councillors and colleges, and a Spanish alliance, his report on the bishops, to whom he had been specially sent, was very hopeless. So far from going to Trent, not one of them would at first answer his letters, or give him an interview. Henry Sinclair, Bishop of Ross, now become a judge in the temporal courts, was positively vexed at being asked. Eventually one bishop saw him in disguise, and three sent answers, but all declined the pope's invitation. No index can better point to the weak spot in the old Scottish Church, than this faint-hearted

answer of the episcopate to the summons to Trent.

The rest of de Gouda's picture is dark in every detail. Let one suffice. "One day, close to the place where I was then lodged, three priests publicly abjured the catholic faith. At another time while I was there, one of the superintendents, a leading man amongst them, a doctor of theology and a monk, then about seventy years of age, was openly married. This was done to enforce by example, as he had often done by word, their doctrine of the unlawfulness of the vow of chastity, which they are perpetually trumpeting from the pulpit. They also use wonderful cunning in their attempts to lead the poor people astray."

On the 3rd of October, 1562, de Gouda managed, though with difficulty, to leave Scotland, and with him went six young Scots, destined to be the future leaders of the Counter-Reformation in Scotland. The first of these was Edmund Hay, of the Megginch family, afterwards Earls of Kinnoul. He

and his cousin William Crichton, had been de Gouda's guides and assistants throughout, and they had now gathered kindred spirits, James Gordon, fifth son of the fourth Earl of Gordon, James Tyrie, Robert Abercromby, and William Murdoch. They were soon followed by others, until about a score of young men had become members of the Society of Jesus, and their young blood, courage and religious earnestness gave in time a new character to the old contest.

Edmund Hay was the first to complete his sacerdotal training and to return. He had already taken his Bachelorship in Arts, and after four years in the Roman college he returned, a priest, first to Innsbruck, then to Paris, where his influence at once began to be felt. A new pope was now on the throne, Saint Pius V, a great man and a great saint; yet not so good a diplomatist as his predecessor, Pius IV. Intensely thorough, he was ready to help Mary in every way he could, even by money, if she would rid herself of those protestant lords in her council who had so frequently been disloyal to her. The

envoy sent to treat with her of this matter, late in 1566, was William Chisholm II, who, having fled to France, had lately been made Bishop of Dunblane; and Edmund Hay was his companion.

Meantime much had happened in the four years since Hay's departure. The developments, which de Gouda had foreseen were far advanced, and would soon reach their climax. Mary had with victorious energy chosen and wedded a young catholic of the blood royal, Henry Stuart Lord Darnley. The protestants had rebelled, but she had driven them out of the country. She had shown how unexpectedly strong she was, but the instability of her position was soon to become even more evident.

The result of a new secret confederacy among the protestant nobles was, that her faithful servant Rizzio was suddenly torn from her side in the midst of her palace of Holyrood, and dirked by her nobles at her very door, while she was kept in restraint. Full of courage and initiative, she soon escaped from their hands, turned victoriously on the

rebel lords, and swept them once more from the country.

But these violent oscillations were her ruin. Lean upon some one she must; and having none about her who could advise her according to her conscience, her affectionate impulses went out more and more towards protestants of vigour, who were the reverse of trustworthy. This was, of course, the exact opposite to the policy which Pope Pius V wished her to espouse, which Chisholm and Hay had come to urge.

They had to await their interview until the baby James had been baptised, for Mary was too preoccupied about this to attend to anything else. The baptism was performed on the 17th of December, 1566, with all catholic rites and ceremonies, and (happy omen, as it seemed!) Elizabeth too had sent her representative to honour the occasion. It was the greatest and most significant catholic celebration of Mary's reign, the presage, she would fondly hope, of a felicitous issue to her conciliatory policy.

After this, on the 14th of January, 1567,

she had her interview with the papal messengers, and it would be deeply interesting to know how they discharged their commission and what the queen answered. But all that we learn is that she refused the pope's terms. That she was, broadly speaking, right in this, seems fairly clear. In her weak state his uncompromising proposals were impracticable, whatever their theoretical merits under more usual circumstances. No doubt there was a mean somewhere between the strong measures recommended by Rome, and the weak, unwise favouritism which was eventually Mary's undoing. Yet to hit that mean at a moment's notice was more than either Mary or the two envoys could achieve.

Having accomplished their mission they prepared to leave—when Edinburgh was shaken by a sudden explosion. Darnley had been assassinated, and ugly rumours soon began to be circulated by Mary's religious opponents, as to her precognizance of the crime. The envoys heard these stories as everyone else did, and they would have considered the evidence on the spot and from

both sides. The bishop's eventual judgment we do not know, nor the exact words of Father Hay; but on the whole he was adverse. Though this is very far indeed from confirming all that Buchanan has written against the queen, its force cannot be gainsaid. He seems to have thought that the calamitous conclusion of Mary's reign, the collapse of all her attempts at reform, were preceded by some serious transgression of hers at this point. Father Roche Mamerot, her chaplain, also gave an adverse verdict, but he expressly restricted it to her marriage with Bothwell (*Papal Negotiations*, p. 520).

Hardly had Hay returned to France than the catastrophe ensued. Mary was deposed, and condemned to imprisonment, which lasted till her death, except for one moment at Langside. All the advantages she had preserved or contrived for the ancient faith were lost, while the reformed kirk became stronger than ever, receiving in the following December a new and firmer legal establishment. The advantages which Mary had afforded to the Scottish catholics were on the one hand

neither striking nor numerous, but on the other distinctly effective. Her greatest benefaction was her royal good example, the force of which every one felt and noted, which animated many to greater courage and independence. She insisted on freedom of worship in her own chapel of Holyrood and this led to some striking results.

On the last Easter of her reign, 1567, the communicants at Holyrood had numbered no less than 12,606. Father Roche Mamerot, O.P., Mary's chaplain (from whom we learn this, after his enforced flight in July) had had their names registered, an indication that he then hoped for some security in his work of restoration. For the previous year, 1566, we have a letter of Father Edmund Hay, who says that the number was 9,000, "with many more in other parts of the kingdom." Thus there is quite convincing evidence that the fortunes of catholicism were progressively improving during Mary's reign, though her actual assistance was, not only within the letter of the new laws, but in its manner also peaceful and reassuring. Possibly she did

little more than protect here and there some priest or catholic from injury or death. She built no school, no chapel, she gave no letters of protection to missionaries, she patronised no disputations. Probably she was even sometimes carried by her fanatical ministers, whose informations and measures she had no means of controlling, into unjust acts, injurious to her co-religionists. The overwhelming and destruction of the Earl of Huntly, and of his feudal power seems to be a case in point. For despite his foibles he was the leader of the Scottish catholics, and the queen openly consented to his being crushed.

Still, all things considered, her policy was in general excellent. She fostered peace and patience, which were what Scotland most of all needed, to curb the fury of the religious zealots, and the quarrelsomeness of the nobles. It would be hard to say which of these two vices was the most injurious at this crisis. But though her policy was excellent in this one respect, yet it cannot be described as a policy of religious revival. Such a revival might have grown up under it, and we see that it

actually began, though Mary did not actively encourage it.

Even after her downfall, her influence continued, and when imprisoned in England (1568 to 1587) her power rather increased. The Conferences at York, though meant to defame her character, were in practice regarded as a public absolution from the guilt of any demonstrable crime. The longer, the more strictly she was imprisoned, the more clear it seemed that her suffering was due to her firmness in religion. Very little laxity of principle would have won for her freedom and power. Her years of constancy awoke the veneration, and enkindled the courage of catholics in England no less than in Scotland. Her position grew ever stronger, until Walsingham by his *agents* succeeded in entangling her in the Babington Plot, and so managed to take her life. Her magnificent courage, contrasted with the fanaticism of her opponents, convinced thousands that she had died the death of a martyr.

Thus her death cut two ways. On the one hand it encouraged her co-religionists to

constancy, and it strongly excited all loyal Scots to seek revenge on the vile and unworthy machinations of the English court. But on the other hand the only royal upholder of catholicism was gone. In those days of exaggerated loyalty, which verged upon king-worship, such a loss was most grave. After her execution there was a really strong rally in her favour, swords were drawn, English government troops were attacked. But this fervour was not lasting; no one took Mary's place, the fortunes of catholicism declined more and more.

CHAPTER IV

THE ADVENT OF THE COUNTER-REFORMATION

1580—1584

As the Reformation in Scotland owed more to the English Reformation than to any other influence, and yet developed after its own manner: so also in this section we see a close co-operation between the Counter-Reformation in England and that in Scotland, leading to a purely Scotch development.

In England the Counter-Reformation proper began with the return of the Seminary-priests in 1574, and reached maturity in 1580,-1581, with the preaching of two well-known Jesuit missionaries, Father Campion, who was ere long martyred, and Father Persons. The latter as head of the mission was naturally anxious to find out new

mission-fields, and also any possible shelter to which his men might retire during the barbarous persecution raised against them. So he sent first Mr. William Watts, a secular priest, and soon after Father William Holt, S.J., to inspect and report. Arriving at Seton (as it seems) they soon found friends, and scope for missionary activity. Moreover, the political outlook suddenly grew extraordinarily bright.

At the end of the year 1581, James was still only fifteen years of age. Though brought up in severe presbyterianism, his first instinct when he became his own master was to recede from its gloomy traditions, and to tend towards the creed of his imprisoned mother.

Though James never became a catholic, he was distinctly on the Romeward movement during the years 1579 to 1584. He confided in catholic favourites, he entertained an unfeigned admiration for his cousin, the Duke of Guise, the champion of French catholicism and bugbear of British protestants. He even wrote in friendly terms to the pope. This genuinely pro-Roman position of the king is

a principal cause of the catholic movements we have to study in this section from 1580 to 1584. Its influence can be traced for ten years later still.

The young king began by raising to power Esmé Stuart, a cousin educated in France, who was now made Duke of Lennox. More striking still, the king had James Douglas, Earl of Morton, the former regent and a champion of protestantism, condemned and executed, on the 2nd of June, 1581, for connivance at the murder of Darnley. This blow at the ascendancy of protestantism at once made its predominance uncertain, and all eyes were turned towards the new Duke of Lennox. Brought up as a catholic, he was no doubt desirous of reinstating the ancient faith; but he had at first weakly yielded to the kirk, and in effect he never really recovered from this apostasy. For the present, however, he had opportunities, more favourable than would ever occur again, for receiving foreign aid to throw off the presbyterian yoke, as James had given him the control of Dumbarton, and other important fortresses.

As it was of the greatest importance that Father Persons should be correctly informed about the tendencies of these significant transactions, and as letters were most insecure, Father Holt made the toilsome and dangerous journey to London, perhaps on foot. On arriving at the place from which he had started, he found that Father Persons had meanwhile retired abroad, and that his present host was none other than Don Bernardino de Mendoza, the Spanish Ambassador.

According to too many protestant writers Mendoza was a political mischief-maker, though in reality (while always of course earnest in his country's interests) more conservative and high-principled than the politicians of either England or Scotland, though this is not the same thing as saying that his tendencies always represented the highest inspirations of the Counter-Reformation. On this occasion his advice seems to have been both religious and moderate. His letters preserve various little details about religion, as for instance that Holt could only hear of six priests then at work in Scotland, also that he

had administered communion to no less than a hundred persons at Christmas. While it was an untoward circumstance that the persecution prevented Holt from meeting a religious or ecclesiastical adviser, Mendoza, not only sent on Holt's reports, but gave him such cautious, good advice as he could, and then speeded him back to Scotland. When however the missionary again reached Seton, he found that the whole situation had once more advanced with unexpected rapidity.

In the first place a Scottish Jesuit had arrived there from Rome. This was Father William Crichton, of whom we have already heard in connection with de Gouda. Since then he had come to the fore as an able superior of several colleges, and even as Provincial of Southern France. He had received his mission orders from the pope himself, who had warmly encouraged him. Then coming North he had conversed with other ardent spirits, indeed he had passed the years of early manhood in proximity to the Wars of Religion, and was much influenced by the enthusiasms then in vogue.

While what I have said affords abundant testimony to Crichton's warm generosity and energy, I have unfortunately to qualify this praise with a caution as to his prudence. *Perfervidum Scotorum genus*, said Buchanan about the Scots of his day. Though coolness is nowadays a national asset, when a Scot does grow warm, is he not still inclined to take fire? At all events Crichton was prone to do so, when the interests of his king or country were in question; and when he met the Duke of Lennox his enthusiasm passed all bounds.

Finding the duke burning with indignation against the Congregation and the English party, Crichton added flames to the fire by describing the pope's good will, the zeal of the Duke of Guise, and of the catholics on the continent. Lennox at once drew up a scheme for raising an army against the dominant faction, if sufficient foreign aid were forthcoming, and he pledged himself for the conversion of the boy-king, and for the re-establishment of catholicism in Scotland. At this moment Holt arrived, and, though he was

much less enthusiastic than Crichton, he too contributed to the ardour of Lennox by showing how his plans coincided with the wishes and intentions of Spain (7th March, 1582.)

Having obtained Lennox's plans, Crichton, alas, gave up the spiritual mission on which he had come, returned to Paris, where he found himself supported by the papal nuncio, the Archbishop of Glasgow, and Dr. Allen (20th May, 1582), and so he passed on to Rome. Here he laid the plans before Pope Gregory, who being, as we have said, of a sanguine temperament took up the idea with crusading fervour the first moment he heard of it (28th May), and entirely approved of Crichton's whole transaction (11th June). He recognized, however, that the enterprise was altogether beyond his strength.

Before any effective agreement could be made, or resolution taken, the home situation again changed completely. The boy-king was seized by the protestant lords at Ruthven Castle (23rd August, 1582); Lennox could only save himself by leaving the country, and

soon after died; so the whole plan fell to the ground before anything was settled, before the public learnt a word about it. It is only recent archive discoveries which have brought the details of the story to light. For the moment all that survived of the project was the idea of associating Mary with James on the throne of Scotland.

What are we to think about the design? The warm approval of the pope—and of the Catholic leaders in Paris is important for this reason, that it shows what catholic opinion was in catholic countries. It shows that, however wrong theoretically Crichton may have been in his acts, in his keenness to serve the catholic interests of his king and of his queen, and for his general view of the circumstances, he was excusable from the blame which should normally be his.

But according to our more complete and after-the-event knowledge, the final verdict must be adverse. It was a mere dream to think that forces could be gathered in France, Italy and Spain and converged upon Scotland, and this with sufficient secrecy to avoid

exciting to fury the very suspicious protestants in England, Scotland, France and Flanders. They would have assembled much superior forces on interior lines—and exterminated all catholics who resisted them. The blame for the momentary acceptance of that dream in Paris and Rome must rest primarily on Crichton, for it was through him, and relying on his prudence, that the matter was credited and negotiated. Philip of Spain and Mary Stuart were, more or less, sympathetic, but owing to their circumstances, and to the shortness of the time, gave no consent. Mendoza was opposed to it.

Bad dreams are not always easy to shake off. When in July, 1583, James recovered his liberty there was again a proposal to renew the "Enterprise," but Philip of Spain was now clear as to its impracticability, and it was not afterwards entertained seriously by the Holy See or by any catholic power. But still there were moments when the unwearying Scots returned to the idea in 1592 and 1594, about which we shall hear more later. Suffice it here to repeat, what has been said before,

that fighting fever was then abnormally strong among all parties in Scotland. Though that fever was most detrimental to the Counter-Reformation, we must not be astonished if catholic clerics were sometimes infatuated by a passion so widely prevalent, which public opinion condoned or even honoured in protestant ministers.

. . . . . .

But we have been anticipating, and must return to Father Holt whom we left alone or almost alone in Scotland in March, 1582. He appears to have been befriended by George Lord Seton, and his fourth son Alexander, the future Lord Dunfermline, wrote in November of that year that Holt had afforded them "the greatest consolation and satisfaction," and about the same time Dr. Allen says that Holt was "well fitted for his post, and a distinguished missionary."

In March, 1583, he was kidnapped by agents of the English ambassador, Bowes, who in the usual high-handed Tudor way declared he must send the Englishman to the English

tyrants in London. But if there was one thing which the Scots of that day resented, it was the infraction of the laws of hospitality to strangers and refugees. So James interfered energetically, and Holt was allowed to escape in July.

This imprisonment no doubt brought to Father Holt several advantages. His extant examinations testified to his sound missionary work, and also showed that he could keep the secrets which religion and honour demanded. King James granted him a letter of safe-conduct early in 1584. He won the acquaintance and the respect of those whom he would most of all wish to influence, and we soon find him intimate with the catholicising party at court. He wrote in March, 1584, that he knew no less than seven of the king's most favoured nobles to be catholics or near the Church. They were the Earls of Huntly, Crawford, Montrose and Morton (Lord Maxwell), with Lords Herries, Home and Gray, and as they were nearly all members of the Privy Council their power was considerable. In April he reported that, "the

king having quarrelled with the ministers, a great part of the country has abandoned them, and has begun to ask for Catholic Preachers."

. . . . . .

In consequence of these favourable reports, sent by Father Holt, new efforts were made by the Jesuits to assist the Scottish Catholics, and we stand at the very eve of the revival, but the circumstances are so abnormal, and so liable to misconception, the developments of the situation will be so unexpected that some further features of the situation must still be elucidated.

It would be a mistake then to think that Scotland in 1584 showed exteriorly any evident signs of the coming change, or that Father Holt's ministrations had produced any widespread impression. In appearance the revolution in religion was still in full strength; open opposition did not exist; if the anti-catholic fanatics had many an alarm and suspicion, one can see now that these were empty fears, the offspring of their own malevolence.

It was true, however, that the enemies of the extremists were more numerous than before, and the mislike of English dictation keener. The old nationalist ideas were reviving; there was more tendency towards the old French alliance; Mary's supporters were more united; the nobility were growing more friendly to the catholic side. Yet all these circumstances would not have given the Counter-Reformation its opportunity, if it had not been for a passing phase in King James's development during his youthful days.

James was a strange mixture of strength and weakness, his motives sometimes high, sometimes low; his words sometimes deceitful, sometimes wise. The sixteenth century allowed him, as it allowed to all rulers, almost unrestricted power; but his curious temperament and unready character often counteracted his own efficiency in the most inexplicable manner. Misguided favouritism repeatedly led him to give the reins to absolutely worthless creatures. If he did not submit to them, as he often did, with deceitful subservience, they might capture him and treat him like a

puppet, until he was freed by some rival faction. He much resented the power of the kirk; but, in order to curb the factious nobles, he was drawn at the end of our period to give to it more and more power. Yet all the time in his heart he wanted to set up an episcopacy of his own devising. In 1584 he took some measure to restore the revenues of the Sees of Glasgow, of Dunkeld and of Ross, still held by catholics, but the details of this are obscure.

Though brought up in presbyterianism, he undoubtedly seemed to be near the Church, before the protestant Lords seized him at Ruthven Castle, and forced him back into contrary professions and policy. When he regained liberty he still seemed concerned for catholicism and again took to catholic favourites, of whom George V, Earl of Huntly, was probably the most influential for the good of the Church, while Patrick, Master of Gray, was certainly the most powerful for evil, though there were others not far behind him. It will be worth while to say something of the circumstances which developed such a type as Gray.

Though Lord Gray, Patrick's father, as we have heard above, ranked as a catholic, the son attended the University of St. Andrews in its protestant days, but afterwards passing to France sided, and probably sincerely, with the advanced catholics of the Duke of Guise's party. On his return he soon won a firm hold on James's confidence in 1583; but by the middle of next year he seemed to have become the insidious foe of the catholics indoctrinating James with factious enmity against Archbishop Beaton and with false tales against the Jesuits. Later on, after Mary had been sentenced to death, James sent him to negotiate for her deliverance, and he then set the crown on his treacheries by making sure of her execution.

The Earl of Huntly was a friend of a far higher type, yet he also (as well as too many others of his class) had a sadly weak side. At heart he probably never swerved far from the dictates of the faith, but in act he was not above tergiversation, when the pressure was very strong. He is believed to have submitted to the kirk and foresworn his creed,

not less than four times. Alexander Seton, future chancellor and Earl of Dunfermline, was even worse, and he did not retrieve his lapses so effectively. Let us have much sympathy with these men, considering the grievous pressure to which they were subjected. King James, who had early accustomed himself to be unprincipled in the matter of tests, was later on relentless in forcing catholics to follow his bad example. But though the waverers might save their goods by submission, nothing could make their infidelity as though it had not been. We shall see that faithlessness of this sort proved the most lamentable of all the trials and misfortunes which the Counter-Reformation had to pass through.

Such then was the gloomy background against which we shall see the labours of the new missionaries. A king not altogether bad, but one from whom early promise of good was fast evaporating, who was soon to entertain no higher aim than the succession to the English crown at any cost. The nobles again had much to commend them,

but they had not been trained to stability in their faith, nor established by the long and full practice of their religion. They were also contaminated by handling church-spoils, and were a prey to quarrelsomeness and perpetual feuds. Of the people the majority still aspired to their ancient religion and its liberties, but for nearly a generation they had been victims of all the evils which assail a flock without shepherds, and they were confused and cowed by the fall of their former leaders.

CHAPTER V

THE COUNTER-REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND

1584-1589

We have heard Father Holt's stirring message in April, 1584, summoning fresh missionaries to Scotland. By May, a similar message had been sent on by Father Crichton, then at Rouen. Crichton trusted much to King James's decision in bringing Gowry to trial, and in breaking with the ministers. Many Scottish (exiles) he said were returning, also a priest from the Scottish College, then at Pont-á-Musson. He also advised that Scottish friars should be dispensed to go about without their religious habits, and that the pope should allow a small pension to maintain the poor priests. The poverty of the Scottish catholics at this time was

extreme, and for years to come it will be a matter of frequent comment.

The Archbishop of Glasgow wrote to the pope with the same objects as Crichton, 25th June, 1584, asking for four Jesuit missionaries, Fathers Hay, Gordon, Tyrie and Crichton. And while urging the pope to allow them some money support, he adds that the Scotch catholics were not so much in want of domestic chaplains as of missionaries. This indicates that a certain number of old priests must still have been exercising their functions; the archbishop further says that he has just sent in Dr. James Cheyne, a secular priest (presumably the person whom Father Crichton mentioned above, as connected with the Scottish college then at Pont-á-Musson). The archbishop concludes by assuring the pope, "there is hope that a harvest will quickly follow by the grace of God, to His Glory and to the consolation of your Holiness; a consummation for which we have laboured with prayers and tears for many years."

The outcome of these letters was that Fathers James Gordon and William Crichton

started for Scotland late in August, 1584. But a grave misfortune overtook their party, which had been joined by Patrick Adie, chaplain of the Bishop of Ross. They were detained on suspicion by the Dutch, then at Ostend, Gordon succeeded in evading their hands; but Crichton and Adie were unwarrantably handed over to Elizabeth, who, with the usual Tudor violence, kept them for over two years untried in the Tower, until at last the French Ambassador, as it seems, negotiated their release in 1587.

Father Gordon, however, made good his landing in Scotland about the beginning of October, 1584. But danger soon arose. The sailors, or some of the fanatical party interpreting the sailors' yarns, declared that there had been no less than thirteen Jesuits on board, with a large store of chalices and vestments for mass-mongering, but that all had been landed in England except Father Gordon. Gross exaggeration (especially about landing Jesuits and mass furniture) was one of the characteristics of anti-catholic rumours in those days, and in this case it may all have

developed out of Father Crichton's arrest. Father Gordon, however, escaped and took shelter at Fintray, whose laird, David Graham, was one of the staunchest catholic laymen of that day. He was a nephew of Archbishop Beaton, and Father Holt was already his guest. Father Edmund Hay, who wrote the above details from Paris on the 29th of October, 1584, continues:

"This story of the chalices so enraged the ministers, who quite believed it, that they did all they could in their sermons to induce the people to credit the story, adding that the king had already been subverted by our Fathers, and heard Mass every day. This was crafty as well as malicious, for their object was to bring James into detestation with the nobles and with the heretical populace, and once more to turn the united violence of the sect against the throne.

"The unfortunate prince was obliged to meet this trick with another, and published a proclamation forbidding any Jesuit to enter the kingdom in future, requiring also Father Gordon to quit Scotland within a month,

and meanwhile not to come within ten miles of the court. . . . Fintray writes that Father Gordon has nothing to fear, and will soon be set at liberty by the Earl [of Huntly's] influence" (Forbes-Leith, p. 200).

The sentence about James was of course written in the spirit of purest loyalty, and may have been absolutely true. But the king was changing as his favourites changed; and when in time he had altered his mind, then sentiments such as those given above might and would be considered as constructive treason. We see that the situation was full of subtle danger.

Father Gordon was soon practically at liberty, and his preaching and teaching, set off by the calumnies of his enemies, made his presence felt far and wide. As Fintray has just told us the influence of the Earl of Huntly, who was almost a king north of Aberdeen, naturally contributed much to his uncle the Jesuit's success, and the influence was then all the more effective because of King James's favour to the young nobleman.

Father Gordon, moreover, as a disputant, had no rival in Scotland.

About the close of 1585, he held a disputation with George Hay, who ranked as the intellectual champion of the presbyterian cause, and in 1588 he defended the catholic creed before King James himself. After these conflicts no one dared face the redoubtable Jesuit, though he made several elaborate challenges, the avoidance of which produced the fruits of victory on the Father's side.

At first the intention had been, that Fathers Hay and Tyrie should follow Father Gordon, as soon as the latter had settled down to work. But he himself, on his arrival, advised more delay, and thought it would embarrass James less, if instead of Scotch some English Fathers were sent. Eventually, however, he agreed, that Fathers Edmund Hay and John Dury should come.

These two Jesuits arrived at Aberdeen in the guise of servants to Robert Bruce of Binnie, an adherent of Archbishop Beaton. They landed about the 1st of August, 1585, and betook themselves to the Dowager Lady

Seton, Isabel, daughter of Sir William Hamilton of Sanquhar. Bruce made his way to court, for he was bearer of letters from the Duke of Guise, and there he met Peter Hay of Megginch, Father Edmund's elder brother, and grandfather of the future Earl of Kinnoul. Bruce informed Peter of his brother's arrival, and this led to their meeting for two days probably at Megginch, in Perthshire.

Meantime Elizabeth had already heard of the advent of the two Jesuits, and she wrote through Walsingham a still extant letter, demanding the banishment of the Fathers. Her envoy in Scotland, Edward Wotton, was also diligently plotting against them. Wotton's spy, the Irishman MacGeogan, however, could not locate them, though another called Collingwood declared they were at Kinneil with the unpopular Earl of Arran, a very improbable suggestion. King James, however, is said by Wotton to have charged the Master of Gray to arrest them, an indication how far the latter had forsaken his catholic friends. Indeed he had already in July, given to the English Ambassador a letter from Father

Persons to Father Holt which he had intercepted. It seems that a royal proclamation, similar to that issued against Father Gordon, was also issued against the new-comers.

These persecuting measures indicate clearly enough the jealousy and violence of the Tudor officials, and the immense need for prudence on the part of the missionaries. This time at least the latter made good their retirement to the northern parts, where catholicism was freer. Wotton reported unwillingly, on the 15th of September, that the Jesuits make a great stir in the North. They say mass openly, and lead great numbers of people to visit chapels and relics here and there, to the great scandal of all honest men [i.e. of all fanatics] in this realm; and nothing is done for their apprehension.

Meanwhile one of those violent struggles between favourites, which are so characteristic of King James's reign, took place at Stirling at the end of October, 1585, when the Earl of Arran and Colonel Stewart were violently deposed from power, giving way to a composite party which included many more ex-

treme protestants. But this did not materially affect the position of the Earl of Huntly, and, in spite of many threats, the Jesuit mission continued to prosper.

Father Edmund was apparently then at Megginch, and he there reconciled to the Church on her death-bed the wife of a nephew, who is not named; Father Holt, who was there too, assisted at the last rites. Whatever consolation Father Edmund may have felt at this conversion, his heart was at the same time stricken by finding that his youngest brother had by now gone over entirely to the dominant religion. His elder brother Peter was also in some danger from the hostility of the unscrupulous Master of Gray, and Father Edmund, urging counsels of peace, persuaded Peter to retire for a time to France. The father then went north to Fintray in Aberdeenshire to David Graham, that strong catholic of whom we have already heard. Here the Jesuit was able to minister the sacraments on a wider scale to the catholics of the neighbourhood, and he made so much impression on David's father, who

had lapsed into heresy, that before he died, which was four months later, he was reconciled to the Church. Thence the missionary went to Aberdeen itself, where Father James Gordon was to dispute with the quondam priest, George Hay, mentioned above.

Some details of this debate may be here added from Father Crichton's memoirs which, however, were written many years later:

"In the north of Scotland, at the request of a number of noblemen, a day was appointed for Father Gordon to hold a public dissertation on matters of faith with Mr. George Hay, the most learned of the ministers, a man of good birth, fairly versed in Greek and Latin literature, and holding the first place among their preachers. He admitted that the Fathers of the first five centuries held what was true, but when he proceeded to defend the opinions of his sect by garbled quotations contained in the writings of their doctors, Father Gordon protested that the ancient writers did not maintain such sentiments. The minister, sending to his own house, which was at some leagues distance, procured a whole horse-load

of books, and amongst them the writings of the ancient doctors. By means of these in the presence of a great concourse of nobles and ladies, Father Gordon vanquished the minister by bringing forward complete sentences, and not isolated phrases, from the ancient writers to whom the minister had appealed."

"This occurrence made a great noise and produced much effect, for a large number of persons returned in consequence to the religion of their fathers and others were encouraged to persevere therein. Among the former was Francis Hay, Earl of Errol, Master of the Horse."

About the same time as the dispute with Hay, Father James Tyrie sent to Rome on the 31st of September some news which had lately reached Paris:

"We have had a visit from an Irish Bishop, who has been some time in Scotland, and with Fathers Hay and Gordon. He was entrusted by them with letters, which he eventually threw into the sea when in peril from enemies. From letters by Robert

Bruce and others, I extract these particulars. Fathers Hay and Gordon are in the North of Scotland with the Earl of Huntly; Fathers Holt and Dury are in the West with the Earl of Morton i.e. [Lord Maxwell at Dumfries]. The number of Catholics increases rapidly every day, and the Irish Bishop assures me that during the short time he remained in Scotland, he administered the sacrament of confirmation to at least ten thousand persons."

"The Queen of England has written to King James, strongly urging him to take some measures against the Fathers of our Society; and the King, whose Ministers of State are all in favour of Elizabeth, has published a proclamation, requiring us all to leave the kingdom within one month, and forbidding any one, on pain of death, to receive us into their houses" (Forbes-Leith, p. 206).

This Irish Bishop was Edmund MacGauran, Bishop of Ardagh, and a martyr later on. His large figure for the number of catholics converted, or restored to the practice of their

religion, is confirmed not only by Wotton, as quoted above, but also by several catholic contemporaries.

On the last day of March, 1586, the Archbishop of Glasgow wrote to Queen Mary:

"The Earl of Morton, alias Maxwell, has been a prisoner in Edinburgh Castle for having had mass said openly at Dumfries, New Abbey, and Lincluden, for the feast of Christmas. A large number of people, and also of the nobility of England as well as of Scotland were present."

"Many of the nobles and others since the arrival of the Jesuit fathers in Scotland, have been reconciled to the Church, both in the North and in the West, and I feel sure that when Lord Claude Hamilton arrives, the number will increase. . . . There are four Jesuits of your nation, and some English. The two principals are Fathers Edmund Hay and James Gordon, uncle of the Earl of Huntly. I have given them as an alms one hundred crowns-of-the-sun, from the residue of your pension for your scholars. The said Earl of Huntly favours them as far as he can,

and is always the most affectionate subject and servant of your Majesty" (Record Office, *Scotland*, *M.Q.S.* 17. 31).

After March, 1586, we have fewer letters announcing progress from Scotland, though there are references to such letters for the next three years, that is till the beginning of 1589. The revival lasted all that time, and apparently grew stronger for a while after the execution of Queen Mary Stuart. Father Hay reported on the 2nd of February, 1587: "It cannot be expressed how great a change of mind has come over Scotland during the last half year," and in the following May similar news is repeated. But on both occasions the very great need of money among the catholics is emphasised. The fathers can hardly live, much less organise, the weakness of their party from this point of view is deplorable. Queen Mary's death has put an end to her pension, which was so often charitably employed for the support of priests and students.

Meantime the staff of Scottish missionaries was kept up. Fathers Robert Abercromby

and William Ogilvy were sent in 1586, and Father Holt was somewhat ostentatiously withdrawn, in order if possible to pacify the ever-suspicious ministers. Father Crichton, who had been freed from the Tower in the spring, came at the close of 1587, in company with Father Alexander MacQuhirrie. But then the very hard life began to tell. Father John Dury died (apparently 20 October, 1587), and Father William Ogilvy not very long after. Father William Murdoch and Father George Dury came probably in 1588, but Fathers Hay and Crichton had to be withdrawn, partly for health's sake, partly because of the jealousies which they had incurred in making converts to the Church and the like.

The success of the missionaries was mostly obtained in the North and West, in districts where the reformation had not yet taken deep root. It appears that they never obtained a footing in any of the larger towns, except perhaps at Dumfries, where Father John Dury is said to have made numerous converts, while Lord Maxwell was Baillie of the Western Marches. Many of the Border chiefs in this

neighbourhood were counted among the catholics. Father Crichton, for instance, enumerates the Earls of Angus and Cassilis, Lords Maxwell, Herries, Semple and Crichton. But in the North the Earls of Huntly and Errol, having Highland forces under their control, were stronger still.

From one point of view, therefore, the catholics still formed a strong party. In reality, however, when compared with the protestants, who had the English behind them, they were by far the weaker side. Their strength lay chiefly in the hold which the Church still had on the educated, and on the gentle class. According to papers perpared a little later by Lord Burghley and by Father Crichton, the proportion of the catholics to the protestants of the upper class was one-third according to the protestant, but two-thirds according to the catholic authority. In either case the catholic figure is very considerable.

Protestant authorities affirm this quite clearly. A relation of *The State of Scotland*, 1586, declares that "The religious [i.e. the

protestants] part follow England. The number seemeth not great, specially after so long preaching the gospel, and the use of discipline" (*Grampian Club*, 1873, Ap. p. 51). Archibald Douglas, James's ambassador in London, declared to Lord Burghley on the 14th of November, 1587, that Scotland was in the power of "a Prince grieved in mind, and a number of nobility almost equally divided anent their religion into protestants and papists, with a number of indifferent religion, that did sometime profess their obedience to the authority of the queen, the king's mother. They being now joined to the papists, make that party both greater in number of nobility, and stronger in force" (*Hatfield Calendar*, iii, 295). Archibald Douglas's reflections and suggestions for "the imprisoning of the bodies" of the catholics, and for exciting the protestants "to set apart their revenging mind" (i.e. to keep their fanaticism uncontaminated and unrelaxed), are important, but too long for insertion here.

CHAPTER VI

THE TERM OF THE REVIVAL
1589-1597

WE now come to the less grateful part of our task, the passing of the short revival period, and the renewal of bitter persecution. We begin with a brief indication of the underlying causes.

1. The first, as before, was the changing position of the king in regard to the catholics. If he had once been not far from accepting their religion, that mood was now past, and in the years now under consideration he was to ally himself with the kirk in order to master his unruly nobles. He was to sanction and to use the protestant hatred of catholics in order to obtain his political ends. This change was largely due to his favourites. As catholic or catholicising favourites had been one of the

chief reasons for the period of toleration, so the mischievous influence of *politiques* like the Master of Gray and of others now gave a constantly increasingly downward tendency to the king's relations with his catholic subjects. His unbalanced and often selfish craving to succeed to the English throne was also being constantly played upon for baser ends both by Elizabeth's diplomatists and by Scottish protestants and politicians. *Christianos ad leones* was the cry which enunciated the vile device of the pagan emperors, when they wished to placate or hoodwink the cruel mobs of Rome. James now learned the fatal lesson, that if he gave up the papists, and let the fanatics persecute them, the zealots would in return tolerate his episcopacy and support his aspirations to the English throne.

2. England itself was perhaps the worst enemy of the ancient faith; ever alert, ever active in suggesting and supporting measures to weaken and defeat the catholic party. Her diplomatists, her soldiers, and her money were strenuously employed in this task. Elizabeth, indeed, sometimes caused James acute annoy-

ance by restricting the moneys which had been promised, but a substantial supply was never quite cut off.

3. The revival period of three to four years had been far too short to establish among the catholics the firmness of principle required by their trying circumstances. Numbers had been converted from an attendance at the state church, which was against their consciences. But to ensure continuance in this abstention in the face of oppressive laws, and under heavy penalties, with examples of tergiversation all round them, and the consciousness of having yielded before — under such circumstances the breathing space was far too brief.

Turning from generalities to particular events we easily recognize the efforts made by England to meet the Spanish Armada in 1588, as preludes of misfortune for Catholic Scotland. What the Scots needed was peace, what Walsingham and Burghley most desired was an outburst of protestant fanaticism. After the Armada had passed, after the victory had been celebrated, a methodical attack was made

on the English catholics. London was drenched with blood, and a hecatomb of martyrs, the largest in our history, was butchered before the excited feelings were allowed to cool.

Long before the Armada sailed, flying reports had been circulated injurious to the catholics, not of England only but also of Scotland, and thereby caused the first important stroke against them. In April and May, 1588, James, supported by English money and English artillery, was induced to take violent measures against Lord Maxwell and the catholics of the Western Border. This was nominally because of unproved intentions to help Spain, but in reality because the borderers had recently shown readiness to rise in revenge for the execution of Mary Queen of Scots.

In July, 1588, Father Gordon held a pubilc disputation in the presence of the king, in which both sides claimed the victory, as so often happens in such cases. But if many catholics were encouraged by the debate, as has been affirmed by several contemporaries,

their cause soon suffered a very serious loss; for the Earl of Huntly, much pressed by King James, subscribed to the presbyterian kirk. The unworthy motives which actuated him, however, were confessed next year, when the earl declared to his catholic friends that he had only conformed in order to maintain himself, until he could more effectively win public liberty.

This miserable want of principle in Huntly, joined with other serious faults and deficiencies, was one of the principal causes of the arrest and close of the revival. It was not from their choice, but only out of necessity, that the catholics found themselves compelled to depend on royal favourites; and as things stood, the earl's fall inevitably opened wide the door for persecution. We have not the defence of the earl, and we must always remember that our information about him often comes from witnesses maddened by fanaticism, or influenced by base propaganda. Yet it seems probable that both Huntly and the nobles of his party were sometimes both imprudent and ill-informed. Especially do they

seem so in their attempted correspondence with Spain in 1589, and again in 1592-93, when Spain had really neither the mind, the means, nor the men to help. Still it is not improbable that on such points more excuses will be found when more documents are forthcoming. There is, however, very little chance of any revision of the strong condemnation which we must surely pass upon his forwardness in faction fighting, on his slaughter of the young Earl of Moray, and on other acts of war which darken Huntly's name at this period. Peace was what the Church most of all required; no sacrifice, save that of principle, was too great for its preservation.

The climax was reached in 1594, when Huntly, supported by the missionaries, and aided by a small subsidy from the pope, defeated the much stronger protestant army advancing to attack him, at Glenlivet (4th November, 1594). But no defeat could have been more disastrous than this victory, which as is now clear was fought, so far as the catholics were concerned, on quite mistaken grounds. It was worse than a defeat, because

without another blow being struck the victors had to flee in consternation at the sight of the forces which imediately arose to avenge that victory. The contest had also been undertaken on erroneous grounds. The catholics, strange though it sounds at first, believed in good faith that James was still on their side, still at heart, as he had been ten years earlier, not far from the catholic faith, and still preferring the fidelity of the catholic party. Father Crichton twice affirms this was the explanation of Father Gordon's journey to Rome, and obtaining the pope's assistance (Forbes-Leith, p. 281, and Crichton's MS. notes, in MS. *Scotia*, fol. 280).

One partial explanation of this state of mind may be found in the enigmatic behaviour the double voice of the king on the religious question. His preference for catholic favourites and alliances, his readiness to go as far as he dared in defying protestant opinion and English exhortations was obvious to all. The more fanatical members of the kirk had often declared the prince to be a papist in disguise; and it was an axiom of that contro-

versial time, that one might make the utmost of any hostile concession. There was also the old, ill-balanced loyalty to the king and to the tribal chief, always so powerful in regard to a Stuart and to a Gordon.

The surprising victory of Glenlivet was therefore in truth a still more memorable victory for the kirk, for King James now allied himself in arms with the zealots, and at their combination the catholics could do nothing but fly and abandon every fastness. The protestants destroyed every building where mass had been offered, but James would not allow them to exterminate the earls, who had in times past served him faithfully, and who even now had done no worse than men of the new faith had done before unchecked. Still the alliance between kirk and crown continued, though with loud and frequent grumbling on either side, and resulted in the ever-increasing impoverishment and degradation of the old faith. In 1595, the three earls were constrained to retire from Scotland, though Father Gordon is related to have done his best to dissuade this, in a sermon said to

have been delivered in the ruined cathedral of Elgin before day had dawned.

On the 25th of June, 1597, came the climax. The three catholic Earls of Huntly, of Angus, and of Errol, again submitted to the kirk, but now in public and with the most degrading solemnity; after which they were restored to their estates. Let us not be harsh towards these men. They were suffering under duress, which was intentionally greater than the average man could bear. Not only did all return to the Catholic Church before their deaths, but all lived long enough to do much in later years to compensate for their weakness at this crisis.

Still the evil results of their example in 1597 were deplorable. All over the country the religious tyrants became animated and confirmed in the use of violence. The catholics everywhere vacillated, and many fell. "Almost all have wavered," wrote Father Gordon, "most have trodden in the footsteps of the earls, and have now renounced their faith, or at least attended protestant service. Our few fathers (three in all) had to fly for

their lives; though up to this time they had found themselves secure in the North under the protection of the earls."

CHAPTER VII

THE SEQUEL

1597-1653

WITH this reverse the period of revival and expansion ceases, and the Counter-Reformation enters on a new phase. Its followers were no longer a party which aspired to heal the wounds of the kingdom; their corporate aim was now to preserve the good seed against a possible return of peace in the future. This, then, is a new, a subsequent period, no longer my proper object. Still a few remarks about it will be necessary, in order to indicate how the eventual way out was found:

1. Though the revival period here ceases, this does not mean that the Counter-Reformation was dead. It was indeed less sanguine, less missionary, less venturesome than before; but its object, that of healing the

wounds caused by the Reformation, was not given up; and until some regular form of governing the scattered flock could be achieved, the chief injury caused by the Reformation remained still unhealed. This injury was at last remedied in 1653, by the return to episcopal government in Scotland, which up to that time had had the Pope as its episcopal pastor, for he is not only Bishop of Rome, but also the Apostolic bishop of every land.

2. The year 1653, therefore, is the true term of the Counter-Reformation. The introduction of missionaries from the Jesuit order, who were followed by the Fransiscans and other regulars, was an important advance towards that term, and the regular supply of Seminary priests was possibly a measure of even greater importance. The Scottish clergy colleges on the continent had not risen to much efficiency during the years we have been considering. They had almost all originated in some tiny mediaeval hospice of the Scottish nation; but they were so small and so poor that they could so far train priests only by twos and threes at a

time. But in the seventeenth century some energetic Jesuits were put at the head of the colleges of Douai of Rome and of Madrid, while the Secular clergy directed that of Paris with excellent effect. The earnest begging and good management of their respective rectors developed all these houses into useful training grounds for the clergy, the Seminary at Madrid being in time wisely combined with Douai. Thus a succession of pastors was maintained, and the colleges may be considered to have taken the place of the nobles as the chief protectors of religion.

3. We have already mentioned the extreme violence to which the heads of noble catholic houses were subject, a violence deliberately graded so as to be unbearable by ordinary men, before which therefore many ordinary men would and did fail. Yet the noble house might, and not rarely did, remain catholic. How did that happen? Because the ladies in their less obtrusive spheres often remained catholic, and ensured the constancy of the rising generation, which must otherwise have failed. Unfortunately we hear too little of


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