
Castle-Come-Down

Faith and doubt in the sixteenth century

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“Then shall my enemies sink with shame, and
I depart out of the field with honor; and
whatsoever either malice hath unjustly built,
or a fool devised upon a false ground, must
play Castle-Come-Down, and
dissolve to nothing.”

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PREFACE

The general period of the action of this story, which occupies the decade 1577-1587, is the reign of Queen Elizabeth I of England, 1558 to 1603. The following background may be useful. Henry VIII, who had led England away from the church of Rome, was succeeded upon his death in 1547 by his son Edward VI, who ruled under the guidance first of his uncle the Protector Somerset, then (after Somerset's fall) of John Dudley, the duke of Northumberland. Upon the boy's death in 1553, and with the failure of Northumberland's attempt to divert the succession to his own daughter-in-law Lady Jane Grey, Edward's older sister Mary I ruled until 1558. Her death interrupted her attempt to restore the realm to the Roman Catholic faith.

Queen Elizabeth succeeded her sister and returned to an officially Protestant position. During her reign there were two particularly violent assaults upon her security, the Rebellion of the Northern Earls in 1569-70 and the attempted invasion of the great Spanish Armada in 1588. Upon Elizabeth's death, the crown came peacefully to the next in blood, King James VI of Scotland. The king's mother, the Catholic Mary, queen of Scots, had fled her rebellious subjects in 1568 and had lived as a political prisoner in England until her execution in 1587. James himself reigned in England until 1625 and was succeeded in turn by his son Charles I. This will supply a bare chronological context to the story.

There is a great deal in this tale that is embroidery and dramatization. Moreover, each of the events recounted is seen from the perspective of one or more interested parties in the narrative. But essentially the story behind this story is a true one, in the sense that nearly all of the major events did occur in something like the way I've tried to recreate them here, and that nearly all of the characters do survive in the records, if sometimes only in name. Thus in large part this is a fiction; in part also it is an attempt to understand the recoverable facts.

A few sections of dialogue, chiefly comprising anecdotes of the earls of Leicester's and Oxford's crimes, have been adapted from the book known as *Leicester's Commonwealth* (1584) and other documents and letters, most of them associated principally with the pen of Charles Arundell.

I. IN FLIGHT

(1583)

"I have lost the pole and know
not in what climate I am shaken."

-- Charles Arundell

Late afternoon sunlight broke through heavy clouds upon the blank white face of Beauchamp Tower. Above the outer walls of the Tower of London, above the broad ditch separating it from the Byward Street and Eastcheap, semi-circular Beauchamp rose into the sky. From a narrow pair of windows, high up near the parapet, a pale face gazed upon the city. Francis Throgmorton sat in the window bay. His fingers played nervously with the chinks between the stones.

A sharp clangor burst in from the corridor, and the door swung heavily back. The lieutenant of the Tower entered and made a gesture. Throgmorton's hands shook more violently; he tried to stammer something, then gave it over. He pretended to yawn, and shrugged. Climbing down across his bed, he dressed in his doublet and followed the lieutenant out of the cell.

Three yeoman warders stood waiting at the head of the staircase. In a file, the procession descended the tight spiral of stone steps, heads bowed beneath the low ceiling, and issued up onto the inner green. Here the prisoner, with an embarrassed smile all round, turned to the right, towards the council chambers in the Lieutenant's Lodgings. Lieutenant Hopton took his arm and marched him straight across the yard instead. Throgmorton began to tremble and resist.

In the center of the green stood the massive keep of the White Tower. A huge square, terminated at its corners by towers, it rose higher than all the ancient buildings surrounding it; from its parapets, when the day was fine, one could see well into the countryside across the Thames. Now the stones dripped sadly from intermittent rains. Pigeons and ravens trotted carelessly about the ground. The party marched round to the far side of the White Tower and ascended the staircase to the first story. When they entered, the gloom of the interior fell in upon them, and Throgmorton became daunted. The warders had to drag him down the stairs.

In the cellars they came through a corridor lit only by two iron cressets on the wall. Three men, Secretary Walsingham, his assistant Thomas Phelippes, and Mr. William Waad, were waiting by a small door. The warders' boots echoed on the stones and their sleeves brushed their doublets as they walked, but otherwise the place kept a hollow silence. Mr. Secretary nodded. As one of the guards held forward a lighted torch, Hopton unlocked the door and led the way into a tiny tomblike chamber.

In the center of the cell stood a long instrument made of heavy planks. At the head and foot of it, manacles and gyves were embedded in blocks of stained wood, and to one of the blocks a thick screw was bolted. The screw was attached to a winch with four great handles. The device was called a rack.

Throgmorton turned away from Walsingham and began to whimper into a warder's chest. His knees failed him, and he had to be supported. His lips formed words soundlessly. The

whites were visible as his eyes rolled frantically in all directions, except in the direction of the rack.



How horrible a sin against God and man sedition is cannot possibly be expressed according to the greatness thereof!

“For he that nameth treason nameth not a singular or one only sin, as is theft, robbery, murder, and such like, but he nameth the whole puddle and sink of all sins against God and man, against his prince, his country, his countrymen, his parents, his children, his kinsfolk, his friends, and against all men universally; all sins, I say, against God and all men heaped together nameth he that nameth treason.”

Light rain pattered on the leaden roof of Paul’s Cross. The preacher paused again for breath, reached up and turned his hourglass, began again. Raised above the crowd by a stone foundation, he stood snugly within his wooden pulpit, his voice rising higher still.

“Their doctrines are the doctrines of Antichrist, as contrary to the holy word of God as is darkness to light, and infidelity to faith in Christ Jesus. Namely with most foolish and beggarly Romish trash, as bulls, pardons, indulgences, holy grains, with such other childish inventions, wherein truly I marvel that the beggarliness and folly of their popish religion is not more espied and held in perpetual detestation.”

To the south and west, across the churchyard crowded with listeners, the walls of the transept of St. Paul’s Cathedral rose high into the dark sky. In galleries built against the walls, the greater citizens sat comfortably out of the drizzle, but the people in the yard were less fortunate. The great steepleless tower ran with cold rain.

“Now of this their deed particular, this plot or compact, which the Lord in his mercy has revealed to open day, this I say, that the manner is ungodly, the thing unsufferable, the cause wicked, the persons seditious, the purpose traitorous; and can they possibly by any honest defense of reason or any good conscience deny that this malicious and horrible fault is not only sinful afore God and traitorous to the queen, but also deadly and pestilent to the whole commonwealth of our country, and so not only overflow us with the misery, but also overwhelm them with the rage thereof!”

After two hours under the wet heavens, the auditory was sodden; the chill November breeze swept down Paternoster Row and set the healthiest to shaking. Still, as the preacher rose to his peroration, the flaps of his cloth cap flying about his head, they listened in sympathy now and with no little indignation.

“By Elizabeth, a woman,” the preacher bellowed, “the goats of Italy, the wolves of Spain, the cormorants of Rome shall every one be overcome. The Irish colts, and the foxes of England that hide in their dens in France and Flanders, and all her other enemies shall be brought to shame and ruin. Go tell them,” he screamed; “I require you; go tell them, that those goats, those wolves, those cormorants, those colts, those foxes, shall be so hunted and baited by an English grey, that not one of them--not one of them!--shall be left to piss against a wall!”



Seven men plunged double-file down the lane, urging their horses to more haste wherever the going seemed safer. The way was dark through the forest, and the rain, falling heavily since the evening first came on, had turned the road to mud.

At intervals they emerged from the wood and splashed up the empty street of some small town, paused at a crossing of roads, then spurred on again, unseen by the sleeping villagers, unheard in the clatter of the rain. Their black cloaks they wore drawn close about them, and great slouch hats were drawn down against the chill of the dying year.

Once, after midnight, the leader drew up at a turning and wheeled his horse about. His wet plumes fell across his face. "I can stand no more of this," he shouted.

Walklate nudged his horse forward and peered about through the darkness, then pointed over the meadow to the left and said, "Billingshurst." Turning back and pointing the way they'd come, he said, "Horsham Market." Pointing obliquely to the right, toward a stand of trees that loomed blackly on the brow of a hill, he called, "Petworth."

Another rider, in a streaming hat with a wide drooping brim, pushed forward and shook his head vigorously. "Onward," he shouted, and set his horse in motion.

Another followed him out of the pack, calling, "To the sea."

The leader shrugged, whirled about and, with the other men, set off down the muddy road almost at a gallop. The thick night opened before them as they passed over low hills, splashed down into shallow valleys, forded dashing streams or clattered over stone bridges when they came upon them.

Dawn, rising over the gray channel, lighting the tops of little waves with flickering points like shattered glass, found them on a hilltop overlooking the strand. The cold breeze that had whipped them all the way from London ceased now and left the air damp and chill and heavy. Away to the west lay Fering, one of the tiny villages clustered along the beach in a half-circle of shoreline between Shoreham and the Selsey Bill.

At midmorning, round the center table in the Porpoise Inn in Fering, Thomas Lord Paget and Mr. William Shelley discussed their arrangements in low voices. Charles Arundell stared into the cheerful hearth with little cheer in his heart. Paget's servingmen, Twinyho and Walklate, were still at their meal in the corner. John Deaws and Jamie Sharrock were on the docks searching out a certain shipmaster who had appointed to meet them.

Arundell reflected on the fate he had been led to. Three decades earlier, his father, Sir Thomas, had similarly fallen victim to a Dudley; then it had been to the earl of Leicester's father, the duke of Northumberland, and Sir Thomas had gone to the block. Charles, then only twelve, with his older brother and his two sisters, had not been forsaken, for his mother's family had been quick to take them in. And in those days, in those Catholic days of good Queen Mary, there were few houses in England better to be raised in than a house maintained by the Howards.

But gone now were those days of bright hopes and easy friendships. What Leicester's father had begun, Leicester himself had perfected--the house of Dudley and the house of Howard, Dudley and Howard, the small, aggressive tribe of upstarts and financiers and fancy-dress favorites who rose into power by sprightly dancing at the holiday balls and stabs in the back below stairs, against the great, widespread, easy-going, ancient clan of poets, scholars, priests, soldiers and sailors, lords of old-fashioned hospitality, protectors

of their tenants and maintainers of the old traditions in their country. But the world was in decay. Now all was war, and trade, and revolution, and the pure gospel, treaties made in order to be broken and statutes made to be ignored; the new men, the new preachers, the new merchants, the new courtiers with their quicksilver fashions and trappings, their doublets with collars so high and sharp in front as to cut one's throat by daylight; foreigners flooding into the realm and throwing honest English yeomen out of work, infecting the hearts of simple people with scores of new religious aberrations bred up a week past and never so much as dreamed of by the ancient heretics of the primitive church. The world was in collapse, like a house long undermined and falling now to ruin, and England was on the crumbling edge. And all Arundell could do, lest he collapse with it, was flee to safer floors, and flee again to safer floors when the old floors were unsafe, and keep a step ahead of Robert Dudley, the earl of Leicester, the devil in his earthly shape, and the demons that pursued his enemies into all the corners of Europe.

Paget was turning over to Shelley a wallet of money, left at the inn with his travelling trunk a few days earlier by his man Ensor, for the care of his young son in his absence. Shipmaster Clynsall came in behind Sharrock and Deaws and greeted his lordship deferentially. To the questions urgently put to him, he replied, "Oh sir, not today, it will not be today, sir. There is not a breeze upon the water today, sir; the fishermen rowed out this morning, sir, and thought no wind good to wait for today."

The little man stared at Lord Paget's purse and seemed reluctant to raise his eyes to his lordship's face. Paget turned to the great window and stood looking up at the sky, as if he would have known the signs of sailing weather were they to be seen.

The shipmaster coughed and murmured into his beard. "But sir, if it were known that a gentleman such as yerself, sir, and an old coaster such as I be, were up to Spanish tricks in these bad times. Perhaps another's boat, yer reverence, would serve yer turn as well as mine, if you take my meaning, sir."

Arundell stood and turned upon him. "We have struck a bargain with you, sirrah, and you will honor it accordingly. Now is not the hour for faint hearts. Let these thirty pound suffice, for it is more than any honest master may expect. As for danger, sirrah, your danger is great enough already."

Clynsall coughed again and seemed dejected.

Lord Paget turned from the window and said, "What my friend means, shipmaster, is that you have conveyed many gentlemen beyond the seas before this, and not all of them so free from suspicion as we are. Now if that were known in certain quarters, as it is surely infamous in others, your next voyage would be a long one, master, I warrant you that. Furthermore, your wife is a bawd, is she not, and keeps a house in Turnmill Street, and it is said, sirrah, it is commonly said that she keeps Jesuits there, and young boys bound for the seminaries beyond the seas, and that you gather them there to convey them thence. Now, sirrah, what think you? What would their lordships of the Council give to learn of this? Tomorrow we must depart; pray get you ready."

The captain's face had hardened as he listened. He still looked downward, as if loath to see the countenances of the men he dealt with, but seemed firmer now in his course.

"Aye, yer reverence, ye've a saracen way with words ye have. We will not stand upon terms now, sir. If ye be Jesuits yerselves I am sure ye'll both be paid for it. But not tomorrow,

there is no daylight voyages for me. Tonight we shall be off, God willing and the wind rising, and over in the dark like Pacolet's horse I'll fly thee."

The master touched his cap again and backed towards the door. Then he was gone, scuttling across the innyard towards the great gate. Arundell called to his man Sharrock, who left his chair and set off after the seaman towards the docks.

Will Shelley arose now and stretched himself. He began dressing himself in his doublet as he nodded to John Deaws and brought the man to his feet.

"Well, my friends," he said. "I am off to London again. And as I sleep in my warm bed I shall think of you out upon the stormy sea. I wish you both a safe crossing, with God's help."

"Many thanks, Will," said Paget. "And you won't come with us then. Your peril is very great, you know."

"But not so great as yours by half. We shall all fare well enough, my lord, you'll see. You must give the pope a fillip on the ear for me, you will remember, Charles."

Arundell shook Will's hand warmly. "Aye, my boy, that I will, and I'll inform the cardinal secretary whose fillip I bestow. Fare you well, Will."

"Do fare well, Will," said Paget, "and watch over my sisters, won't you, and my young William for me. Tell them we shall all be home soon enough."

"All your friends wish well for your lordship, and we'll await a word from you when you can write it. I'll take my leave of you then. Goodbye."

Shelley paused at the door and looked back at his companions sadly, while Deaws waited for him to go out. After a moment, Paget waved him on his way and said, "Aye, go on, Will, go on. We'll be home soon enough, we'll all be coming home again, you'll see."

Shelley shook his head solemnly, then turned and strode off with his servant across the yard to the stable.

By evening the fire had burned low and the host had come in to revive it. Walklate and his master had taken up the backgammon tables, and the sounds of their competition filled the room, cries of "Trilill" and "Liry up" from his lordship, grunts of satisfaction or disgust from his man.

Arundell stared still into the fire. Paget had the notion that in six months' time they would be home again safe and sure and possibly back at the court within the year. Arundell, still the saturnist, disagreed. These were not like the times that had gone before. The queen, in the good old days, could smile privately, storm publicly, and teach everyone a lesson in palace etiquette. In the good old days, she could terrify her suitors, admirers, and kinsmen, and forgive them with a scowl and a wink. Here was treason, and these were the days of the gibbet and the axe. This was the time of fear, when Mr. Secretary hounded his spies harder and harder for more and more detailed informations, seemingly certain that at any moment, in any part of the kingdom, foreign fleets would appear in the offing, foreign troops would gather on the coast or march across the Scottish frontier and carry on to London. In the old court game, the stakes were immeasurably higher now, and having lost this hand they were out of play for good and all.

Footsteps approached without, and Jamie Sharrock thrust his head in the door and made a sign. Within moments the men were gathered on the darkened quay, Paget's baggage about them, awaiting the shipmaster's signal. No sound came either from the shore or from the sleeping town. A few lights from the upper windows of the Porpoise shone with a dull rose glow above the shadows.

Presently Clynsall and his two boys appeared and began casting off the lines. Paget, Arundell, and Twinyho clambered aboard and huddled down into the cockpit, turning to wave godspeed to Walklate and Sharrock across the black waters as the tiny boat drifted out from the dockside. The inn's lights began dimming as the bark came under way, the light breeze swelling out the sails only just perceptibly; and as the eastward coast interposed itself between them and the Fering dockfront, the lights went out and the moonless darkness was nearly absolute. The water made a quiet rush beneath the bows. Clynsall knew his course by long experience, and turned the boat southeastward toward the black shore of France.

Lord Thomas Paget turned to Arundell in the darkness and murmured, "*Jacta est alea.*" Charles shrugged his shoulders and nodded.

The die had been thrown, he thought, many years before; the dark continent lay now a night's voyage ahead, awaiting the travellers with murder and treachery in its bosom.

Lord Paget, indeed all the others, spoke constantly of providence and trusted in God's goodness at every pass. It was a faith for which Arundell had profound sympathy in its theory but a practical distaste. He wanted only to go home, and to be warm. But he had no home at this time.

Arundell stared into the tenebrous depths of the sea beneath the boat, where nothing was to be seen. The water made a quiet rush beneath the bows.

Part 1. ENGLAND (1577-1583)

II. AT THE HORSEHEAD IN CHEAP

(1583)

(Narrative of Black Bear Sevenoaks)

"Pastime with good company
I love and shall, until I die.
Grudge who list, but none deny!
So God be pleased, thus live will I."
-- Henry VIII

Oh, Master Shelley, you are welcome. Make yourself at ease, sir.
These are terrible news, sir, yes they are. But you must not be overmuch in the dumps now, for, believe me sir, where there are bad times the good will come in soon again.

It is all ups and downs, Mr. Shelley. I can prove so much from my own cases. For I have not always been a drawer of ale, nor always lived in London. The gentlemen, they often ask me, "Where d'ye hail from, Black Bear? Y're not a city man, Bear, sure. Whence come ye, then?" And they're right as usual, the gentlemen are, I am none of your puny clarks and ostlers cityborn and huddled up very small and crooked with snaking in and out o'the lanes and alleyways. I am a countryman am I, sir, give me the open field and a good day's work and let me go.

My father was a Kentish man. He was no rich man, my old dad, no great lord, but he had his piece of land, a tiny corner that had come from his fathers before him, all the way back from the Great Wars, when his grandfather had taken up arms for the Red Rose and got his freehold for his pay.

My father was a simple man, a simple man, but a good one. But he was no warrior for those times. When Bob and me was only boys, the priests went off and the abbey fields were sold away to all the gentlemen in the county. Now, my father was a simple man, and he wondered where the priests had gone, but the gentlemen told him to give no more thought to it and come to church like any good Christian man. Then the duke of Northumberland rose up for war, and the gentlemen rode near to the house and told my dad to come a-flying and bring his sword, and they all marched off to Maidstone and made their camp.

When Queen Mary won the war, my father came home, and said to me, "Ned, we've won the war." Though he had never left the Maidstone camp, sir, but that was him. Then the priests came back, and my father was a happier man for the time.

But soon after that, the gentlemen came riding up again, Mr. Shelley, and they told my father that the traitors were forcing the queen to abominable acts with a Spanish dog. They told him the militia was called to defend the realm, to come a-flying and bring his sword.

"Ned, old fellow," my father said then, "I must go and save the queen. The traitors are forcing her to mate with a dog from the Spanish kingdoms." My father marched off to Maidstone, and to Rochester, believing, I tell you sir, the Spanish dog to be a dog in very truth. His band joined up with Wyatt's men and started off towards London. The poor old dad was as I said a simple man, and he fought to save the queen and pope from the equato-

rial sodomists. But he was no great fighter, though he kept his farm very well, and so did the other simple men who perished with him. The sight of the queen's troops before him must have seemed but greater Spanish devilry, whole companies of horse disguised by the queen's red banners; or maybe he had a doubt or two. Or it may be he had a doubt when he yielded up his arms in Fleet Street just without the gate that was barred against them to the city. The queen's officers hanged my father up for a sample to us all, and piked his head upon the bridge, and soon afterward the queen married her Spanish dog, King Philip that now is, and they all forgot my father's head, black and high upon the bridge.

So we got my father back, without his muddled head, my father the simple Christian farmer, my father the Protestant rebel, thirsting for blood, the evil hearted satanical monster of sedition who broke the laws of God and man and rose against his lawful queen. No, sir, those were evil times.

That is how I left the farm, Mr. Shelley. We had my father's body, in trade for his freehold which escheated to the crown. My mother took the fever and died right then. My brother Bob and me, sir, we found a stable to sleep in, and what with a day's wage here and another there, so we grew to age. I am not complaining, mind. Bob and me, we were at a little bit of everything. Those were good times, those long years.

Another, sir, hold out your cup.

Now sir, Bob was in the north in '69, for I'd sent him to my wife's people for a horse we meant to buy, but he grew ill and passed the autumn beneath their roof the most of it in a raging fever. But my wife's folks they saw him through it, and we waited every day to see him cantering over the hill and home to our farm in Norfolk. He never came. For when the rebel earls rose up and all the bells were ringing backwards, sir, and all the men were flocking out and yelling "For the queen and for the pope" and "Esperance!" – when the earls rose up, the gentlemen came round and hoisted old Bob from his bed and rounded all my wife's relations into the square, and gave them great staves to fight withal and marched them off to the south.

And when the earls and the gentlemen learned there was a horrible great army coming out to meet them, why then they rode away, far into the north, and Bob and the rest of them went home to await the troops. They were all hanged up as papist rebels. So my brother for the pope, my father for the gospel, both hanged up for traitors.

And then my wife died, do you see, and here I am. The farm was her own, not mine, worse luck, and all her brothers rode in one morning to see me on my way. So, with no land of my own, and the roads dangerous to be upon for masterless men, off I came to London.

Well, we lose a father to the bad times, and then a brother, but there are good times too, are there not? How do we go from good times to bad ones, and that so hastily? I don't know, damn me if I do. What her majesty is thinking is not for us to know; what the pope is scheming is not for us; what Monsieur Beza in Geneva is preaching out from his mighty pulpit is not for us to question.

But you must watch the gentlemen o'the court, sir, that is how we know what we must expect. They will become suspicious, and cholerick. They watch one another, they speak *en garde*, as they say. They are petulant and easily offended; occasionally they fall silent and will not say a word at all. They walk in the street with all their men about them. You will

know when the bad times are coming; watch the gentlemen as you would mark a cat before a thunderstorm.

These years past have been good years, and good years will come again.

Some gentlemen from the court were sitting here, not long since, just where you are sitting now. Master Cornwallis was sitting here, and, after some speech passed by gentlemen that were likewise present, of some men apprehended and some executed, and such like affairs, he brake forth into a great complaint of the present time.

"I do well remember," quoth he, as I recall him, "the first dozen years of her majesty's reign, how happy, pleasant, and quiet they were, with all manner of comfort and consolation. There was no mention then of factions in religion, neither was any man much noted or rejected for that cause, so otherwise his conversation were civil and courteous. No suspicion of treason, no talk of bloodshed, no complaint of troubles, miseries, or vexations. All was peace, all was love, all was joy, all was delight.

"But now," he says, "there are so many suspicions everywhere, for this thing and for that, as we cannot tell whom to trust. So many melancholic in the court that seem malcontented; so many complaining, or suing for their friends that are in trouble. Others slip over the sea, or retire themselves upon the sudden; so many tales brought us of this or that danger, of this man suspected, of that man sent for up, and such like unpleasant and unsavory stuff, as we can never almost be merry one whole day together."

Such was that gentleman's discourse to his friends, and thus they speak amongst themselves, and call for more wine, and sometimes sit and watch the door, sir, as if they expected grinning Death to come striding through it with his black bag. Howbeit not so long ago things were far otherwise.

Here will I illustrate my meaning. Not five or six years ago now--it was in '77, I think it was, in spring or early summer is my recollection--the gentlemen your friends were supping here and making merry. Mr. Arundell came in the afternoon and bespoke a room, and said, "Bear, you must serve us yourself, for we shall be many." The gentlemen trust me, you see, to be very prompt to their wishes.

I remember me the night as if it were yesterday. My lord of Oxford was here first, and he sat in the room with Meg our girl and fell to singing and having at his cup and Meg together for an hour before the others came in.

Then the others came in together, such a fine lot of gentlemen they were then, too, whatever has become of them severally now. Milord Harry Howard and Mr. Arundell brought with them my Lord Philip, the late duke's son, and young Lord Windsor came with them, and shortly after came Mr. Raleigh, and Mr. Francis Southwell and Harry Noel, and later the Lord Compton arrived with two of his friends. And then they fell to their dinner, and Meg and me were leaping with fetches and flings and friscoes to keep up with them, them eating and drinking and singing, and clapping shoulders and calling out "Drawer! Come, Black Bear, more wine here!"

At good length my lord of Oxford sat back against the wall with his boots up on our table, with Meg now seated next him and his cup in his hand, and began by calling out to the whole company there assembled, "Have I ever spoken to you, gentlemen, of my adventures"

At which words of his the other gentlemen fell to laughing and shouting him down. And milord waxed red in the face and shouted, "By my faith, gentlemen, I shall speak and you will listen."

You will recollect I am sure, sir, that milord had returned but the year before from his sojourn in Italy and Flanders, and his tales of his travels there had been common talk in the Horsehead since his landing on this shore. But here, awash in his cup--pardon my saying, sir--as he now found himself, he proposed to add new stories to the swelling saga, and Mr. Arundell, with his merry eyes crinkled up in good mirth, signalled round to the others for their advertence to the telling.

"My good friends," quod the earl, "I am to tell you of the furious actions in the Low Countries, wherein I showed myself to some advantage. For you must know, gentlemen, that at my being in Flanders, his grace the duke of Alva, as he will constantly affirm, grew so much to affect me for these rare parts he saw in me--marry, I know not why--as he made me, all unworthy, his Lieutenant General over all the army then in the Low Countries, and employed me forthwith in a notable piece of service, where according to my place I commanded and directed Mendoza, the ambassador of Spain that is now here, who was a brave captain in his time, and the rest of the captains of the Spanish nation. But all others, too," said he, "were most glad to be commanded by me, for so valiantly I behaved myself as I gained great love of all the soldiers, and no less admiration of my valor of all sorts of men."

Here my Lord Harry winked at me, and I smiled at him very faintly, for I would not have it thought I disbelieved the earl's adventuresome tale in whole or any part. But Mr. Arundell, who was hard by, leaned towards me and whispered, "Fear not, Bear, he has forgotten we are here."

Which indeed seemed to be very true, for his lordship was staring dreamily upwards to the ceiling and, whilst fondling Meg's bodice from over her shoulder with one hand and tipping his cup with the other, he continued.

"In this journey of mine," quoth he, "as I may have said before once or twice to some of my friends here gathered, in this journey I passed many straits and divers bridges kept by the enemy, which I beat them from with the loss of many a man's life, but still, you see, I forced them to retire till at the last I approached the place that I went to besiege. And using no delay the cannon was planted, and the battery continued the space of ten days, by which time we had made such a breach as by a general consent of all my captains I gave an assault; and to encourage my soldiers, I held them thereto and through the force of my murdering arm many were sore wounded, but more killed, notwithstanding, being not well followed by the reiters, I was repulsed.

"Thus, determining to give a fresh assault the next day, I had surely had that glorious victory, but Mr. Bedingfield, as the devil would have it, came in upon his post horse and called me from this service by her majesty's letters, which was I tell you, gentlemen, the greatest disgrace that ever any such a general received. Here, Black Bear, can't you see man I have gone dry!"

I leapt me up with my pitcher. Meg was staring up at his lordship rapt with admiration, as he belabored her breast now loosened of her bodice. My Lord Harry I could hear behind me, saying, "Do you see, Charles, all of this slaughtering of men is thirsty work."

"Not much unlike to this, gentlemen," my lord of Oxford said when I had sat again upon my bench, "not much unlike was another time, at my being in Italy, there fell discord and dissension in the city of Genoa between two families, whereupon it grew to wars, and great aid and assistance given to either party. Now at this time, for the fame that ran through Italy of my service done in the Low Countries, I was chosen and made general of thirty thousand that the pope sent to the aid of one party. In this action, I showed as I may say so great discretion and government as by my simple wisdom the matters were compounded, and an accord made, which is to be accounted more for my glory I think than if I had fought the battle."

This tale of the earl's, sir, is very rife with him, and in it he glories greatly; diversely has he told it, and when once he enters into it he can hardly out, which made such sport as Mr. Arundell and my Lord Harry were driven to rise from the table laughing.

"Oh my lord," says Mr. Noel then, "not Alexander could have held a field against you, not Caesar could escape your bloody arm."

"No," cries Mr. Raleigh, "neither Carneades for an ambassador could have argued for the Athenians but half so well as you."

Lord Compton here was beside himself with merriment and lay upon his bench holding in his guts.

"Go on, go on, old Ned," says my Lord Harry, "what else? What else? Your soldiering and diplomacy being both so well known, what follows next?"

"Well," his lordship pouted, "you are pleased to find me funny, and I approve, so indeed I do. We must take delight in what we can, when the world would have us weep."

Here he drained his cup and spanked it upon the table again, at which I hastened to refill him. Meg was then the only person sober, for she understood but little of what passed, and was perplexed by the general mirthfulness. But with the earl's tale and his earnest business about her front, the poor girl had much ado to keep her wits.

"But, gentlemen," says his lordship, "for all your merriment, into which I assure you I enter most heartily, but for all of it, gentlemen, I would not have you miss the moral of my tale, for which reason I felt called to recount it to you. Which is, you know, that the art of diplomacy is the nobler art to that of war, and the able statesman is the most glorious soldier though he never draw a sword."

"But is it true, milord, as I have heard it said," says my Lord Harry, very seriously, "is it true that your lordship durst rather eat your scabbard than draw your sword against any man?"

"By the mass, Harry, you will go too far!" cries out his lordship then, reddening in countenance and leaping to his feet of a sudden, which propels poor Meg sprawling upon the floor amid a torrent of the earl's wine.

"Here here, Ned, be calm," says Mr. Arundell, who comes forward to restrain him gently. "Here is all good fellowship, and conviviality. Harry, let apologies be heard, for good fellowship's sake now."

"Oh Ned, be not angry with me. Let me refill your cup. Here, Ned, let's refill your cup."

I passed my pitcher to Lord Howard, who commences to pour for the earl, and his lordship makes a face, and grins sheepishly, and weaves about for a moment before finding his seat again.

In the meantime, my young Lord Frederick, who was not then twenty years old I should not think, is helping our poor Meg from her knees, and cannot keep his gaze from her swaying teats, all bedewed with wine. Which she notices, and flushes ever so prettily and covers them with her hands. She is a pert girl is our Meg, with a full figure much commended and widely spoken of, and does no harm to our business here. It is a much prized thing in these fallen times for an ordinary to have such a girl as Meg, who will delight the customers and bring them back again. Most fortunate we are to have Meg at our tables, for though she lacks her upper teeth she has learned to smile the more sweetly with her mouth closed, with the innocence of a nobleman's virgin daughter.

But my lord of Oxford had noticed the young baron's captivity, and sought to win him from it by drawing Meg back to her seat beside him on the bench. Lord Windsor stood stock still and stared on, with his mouth open and hanging slack and his eyes bouging out of his forehead. Mr. Arundell was grinning apishly and began passing his hand before his lordship's eyes. My Lord Oxford scowled again and grew a little angry, as poor Meg much discomfited turned her back to the boy and crossed her arms before her.

"Here, Windsor, enough! You dishonor the woman, sir!" cries the earl.

"Oh daggers, why are you tarrying?" cries out Mr. Arundell. "Oh swords, why are you wasting time?"

Lord Frederick started, and moved towards his seat, but could not shift his doglike gaze. Mr. Arundell and Mr. Noel took up his arms and lifted him over the bench to his place and sat him down smartly, just next my Lord Compton, still sick with laughter supine upon the bench. My Lord Harry then takes up another pitcher and pours for the young lord, while Mr. Arundell whispers something into his ear which none of us hear, saving perhaps Lord Compton, whose laughter redoubled its vigor and brought him writhing to the floor.

Then Bob Tyler, who is keeper of the Horsehead, thrust in his head and summoned me to the common rooms, where the custom had grown that great that he had need of me there. So it was I missed what next ensued, but somehow his lordship was off again, for upon occasion I heard laughter and shouts from the Roe, which was the room in which the gentlemen supped, and when later I returned, there was his lordship flat upon the board, with his boots in a disused pannikin all smeared with sauce and meat, with sitting upright on the table next to him our Meg gazing down upon him, whom he little noticed, so enrapt was he in his telling of tales.

"I am to inform you further, gentlemen," quoth he, "of certain excellent orations I have made, as namely to the state of Venice, where his dogeship rewarded me very handsomely, and at Padua, at Bologna, and divers other places in Italy; and one which pleased me above the rest to my army as we marched towards Genoa. Which when I had pronounced it, I left nothing to reply, but everyone to wonder at my judgment, being reputed for my eloquence another Cicero and for my conduct a very Caesar--."

"And for your senseless tales both a fool and a knave," says Lord Harry, but Oxford hears him not, and went on, as if to himself.

"I tell you, sirs" (he said) "but what fame I might have had. Had Bedingfield not come, I had surprised Buemle with but my little force, and been master of that country. Had you, Harry," he said, shifting over onto his side to face my Lord Howard; "had you not called me away by letters in the queen's name, I had now been governor of Malines. Always prevented! Sirs, I was in the way to take Grave, with three thousand horse and ten thousand of foot, but the cardinal took up the matter, and thus I lost the glory of that action also."

Here a tear, as it seemed, passed down his face. Lord Harry looked at me as who should say, "We must have forbearance." The earl buried his face in poor Meg's bosom and now said nothing, and there was some discomfort in the others, perhaps.

Then Mr. Arundell raised his cup and said aloud, "Gentlemen, you must now hear how I pulled the beard from the Great Cham of Tartary, who commanded upon me his ten thousand janissaries whom I was forced to slay in my way to the court of Cathay."

"Damn me, Charles," cried milord Oxford, "I am not in jest! Do you hear, the pope and the king of Spain preferred me to ten thousand pounds by the year if I would but come over and serve the king henceforth! And I should have done, too, for all the grace I have been shown in England."

"No grace in England!" shouts Mr. Noel. "Oh your lordship, you must pardon me. No grace in England; you are the very darling of the court. Would the queen might show me half the grace she bestows upon your lordship."

And Mr. Raleigh too, saying, "Come now, milord, have you not to wife the daughter of the Lord Treasurer, and now to complain of any want of favor?"

"Oh Walter, believe me," answered the earl, removing his head from between Meg's breasts. "Believe me, man, had you to share a bed with that puritanical boyish stick of a girl; I tell you it is like bedding with the father. How she goes on. 'We must ask my father this,' 'we must learn what father says about that.' I will tell you plain, Raleigh, my Italian boy Aurachio would please me more in bed matters than that girl ever will."

The others fell silent again. They were good and open fellows all, you see, not sly and guarded as the gentlemen sometimes are, but many of them I think depended much upon the Lord Treasurer then, and they liked very little hearing such talk at this time.

Lord Harry answered in soft words, "Well, Ned, but you might return to her bed, you know, but for show, and make her father your friend again, as he always meant to be."

"Oh Harry, you don't know," he cried. "That I, who once received messages daily from the queen of Navarre desiring me to visit her in her chamber. I, to whom the countess of Mirandola came fifty miles to lie with me for love--"

And here all was mirth again, and Lord Harry stood above the prostrate earl to drink a toast to his amorous powers and great feats of love. "To the noble earl of Oxenford," he shouts, to general clamor of laughing and banging of cups upon the board; "to his venerous lordship, whose exploits in arms are become legendary, whose Aretinical battles show Sardanapalus for a very Puritan pulpiteer – to his lordship, the very god of Love!"

And so they pulled him from the table, and Meg with him, and lifting both upon their shoulders, out of the Roe with them and through to the common stairs, and up to the chambers above, where his lordship and his fair Guinevere were nestled in her bed and left to sort the matter out.

Do you see, sir, those were the good days, when the gentlemen were merry. When harmless bragging tales of soldiering for the king of Spain were not treason. When the gentlemen met alone and it was as friends not as conspirators, and every captain was not a Catiline. But there are good times and there are bad, and where there are good times, the bad will follow soon enough upon them. But then, Mr. Shelley, will come the good again. You may wager all on that, sir. The good will always come again.

III. THE MALCONTENT

(1577)

“When wert thou born, Desire?
In pride and pomp of May.
By whom, sweet boy, wert thou begot?
By Self Conceit, men say.”
-- The earl of Oxford

On a warm day in early spring 1577, the earl of Oxford strode up the Strand from Whitehall, past Charing Cross. He wore an easy smile, and beamed upon the city-folk, happy. Behind him came his men, Sanckie and Weeks together, then Curtis and the boy Rafe Hopton, all in their Reading tawny jackets emblazoned with the crest of the blue boar. The carters and housewives made way for them with deferential nods.

Oxford, still a young man of twenty-seven, was scarcely in himself a prepossessing sight. A bit lower than middle height and ungracefully solid, his claim to recognition showed itself chiefly in his clothes, which were extravagant. His face was normally petulant and cold, round and soft, with a weak chin but with a high-browed arrogant set that suggested intelligence uneasily conjoined with obstinacy. The bare trace of a moustache made him appear somewhat younger than he was, and his swaggering gait had much the same effect.

Oxford's life heretofore had been a vain kicking at velvet traces. Born to one of the noblest families in the realm, he had been left fatherless at the age of twelve, and had entered then-Mr. Secretary Cecil's household as a ward of the queen. There he had found a regimen strict enough, with his boyhood education, at which he excelled, and his exercises at dancing and the courtly arts, but his spirits grew expansive. At the age of seventeen he had taken umbrage at some discourtesy proffered him by one of the cooks at Cecil House, and goading the man into drawing upon him he had slain him with his dagger. Mr. Secretary had had all he could do to arrange a verdict of self defense.

In time, Oxford joined the life at court and devoted himself to demonstrating his new mastery of the courtier's skills. The queen was impressed by his dancing and musician-ship; in the tournaments at Westminster, even at the age of twenty-one, he bore away chief honors. In the same year, that is in 1571, he married the Secretary's daughter, Anne Cecil; if in heraldic terms it was not the most glorious match he could have made, nonetheless it served to make him son-in-law of the most powerful politician in England, the man soon to be created Lord Burghley, the Lord Treasurer of the realm.

But Oxford was unsatisfied. His cousin Thomas Howard, the duke of Norfolk, was imprisoned in the Tower, awaiting trial in the charge of treason for his conspiracies with the captive queen of Scots and her agents. All Europe was attending to the affair. Queen Mary's friends feared that the slightest move ill-considered might bring her to trial in the same charge, might provide the excuse her enemies sought to remove her as the center of discontent. Young Oxford sought out the duke's friends and demanded action. They demurred. The time for action had passed. So Oxford bribed some guards and hired a boat and waited below the Tower Wharf through two successive nights, ready to waft the duke over the seas in a daring escape directly out of the medieval romances; but the duke never came, and the guards walked stolidly across the battlements on their rounds.

Norfolk was executed in June of 1572; though the government feared the event, the duke received his death by the stroke of an axe with pious calm and an expression of love for his good queen. It was generally held among all the Howard clan that the earl of Leicester, Queen Elizabeth's favorite, had been chief architect of the duke's destruction; he had encouraged the duke in his hopes of marrying the queen of Scots, but, when Elizabeth had learned of the plan by ill chance, he had thrust it all upon Norfolk's head and melted away like snow in the sun on the Tower walks.

Following Norfolk's death, while the Howards wept and stayed at home, Oxford threw himself once more into life at court, determined to master the queen by his graces and charm and wit and to supersede Leicester as her favorite. Successes came quickly, but not quickly enough for Oxford. Seeking a place to demonstrate his martial skills as well, he found out the only war in progress, the rebellion against the Spanish in the Netherlands, and in 1574 he began plotting his escape to the front. He cast about for good fellows to accompany him; the good fellows brought word promptly to Lord Burghley, and between the motion and the act fell the Lord Treasurer.

Oxford's career at court, by his place and by his person, was assured. But he remained ill at ease, and he chafed at the quiet, even life marked out for him by birth and circumstances; every disappointment was cause for discontent, every check received at court was an offense he could not stomach. He sought chivalric glory, not to be found in dancing. So over the seas he went after all.

The earl accomplished little on the continent. The Catholics in exile hailed him as a hero at his coming, anxious as they were for every sign of disaffection at home, but this only made him nervous. Sir Henry Bedingfield was dispatched from court to fetch him home, and he let himself be fetched. Within days of his return, through the good offices of Lord Burghley and his friends, the queen smiled once more upon the wayward earl.

Despite the queen's forgiveness, Oxford was still restless and anxious to be busy. Finally, in January 1575, he won permission to make a sort of Grand Tour, and for a year and a half he roamed the continent, spending far more money than he had and posting angry letters to Lord Burghley, reproaching him for not sending more. Increasingly he rankled under Burghley's bit, and he succeeded in convincing himself while playing the grandee in European courts that he owed his allegiance to no man. When in April 1576 he finally came home, having delayed his return too many times, he would have no more to do with the Cecils, the father who kept his purse strings, the daughter who curtailed his absolute freedom. Burghley, bewildered at this disheartening display of aristocratic temperament, continued to press for reconciliation and never failed to speak for the earl in the queen's ear. But Oxford went his own way, and spent his time in the shadows of the court, wearing fine clothes, drinking with his friends, grumbling aloud about the injustices he was forced to suffer silently.

When the earl and his party, having passed Somerset House on the river side of them, came up to Arundel House nearby, Sanckie and Curtis passed through the great gate and beat upon the door. Fitzalan, the ancient earl of Arundel, was in the country, where almost exclusively he was passing his last years, but the house was frequented by any number of the Howard clan. In short space, Oxford's men re-emerged, and after them walked Lord Harry Howard and Mr. Charles Arundell, both appearing a little put out. Together the band crossed Temple Bar and turned northward into Chancery Lane, past the Office of the Rolls

on the right and, further on, Lincoln's Inn on the left. At the top of the road, they would be out of the clustered houses of the city and among the fields of Holborn, where rose the roofs and chimneys of Southampton House.

As they walked, Lord Oxford, affected by the bright day and bracing air, grew expansive, and chattered on about the bowls. He had just beaten soundly the master of the 'Chequers Inn, a giant of a man whose prowess on the green was fabled through seven counties. Charles should have seen his play; how he swung the ball with matchless grace, how his line went smoothly to the pins with every hurl. Harry should have seen the landlord's drooping countenance when he realized into what company he'd had the hard luck to fall. From the gentlemen roundabout he had taken eight or ten pounds in the queen's best coin.

"And now," proclaimed the earl, revelling in his victory; "now for a mass!"

His companions started, and glanced about the narrow street.

"Look now, look now," Lord Harry remonstrated.

The earl laughed aloud. "Never fear, my fathers, when you are with Oxford you must feel safer than a bishop's wife. No man will frighten me with hobgoblins or gibbets."

Howard and Arundell looked first at one another, then uncomfortably over their shoulders at Oxford's liveried men some paces behind.

Oxford fell to laughing again and said, "Gentlemen, please," in mock offended tone, "why, these good fellows are more loyal to their lord than we are to the queen. You have no cause to insult upon them with your suspicious minds."

"I tell you again, Ned," replied Howard, "this is serious business. For months you have been importuning us with this desire of yours, and we have long considered the danger of satisfying you. You must know that lives hang as it were in the balance in this, and the indiscretion which you use may be sufficient to sink them down where they will never see the light of day."

"Oh well, Harry," said the earl, "where there is risk, you know, there is adventure, and where not, not. You would have us all in our dark chambers telling over our beads and mumbling paternosters to our pillows, would you not? Is it not the risk which brings the glory?"

"If there is glory in this battle," said Arundell in a low voice, "it will come in heaven and not on the earth. This is none of your great tournaments, milord, with blue scarves tied upon your lances and kisses thrown you from the scaffolding." Behind them, Weeks and Curtis were talking of some business of their own, while young Rafe hopped along behind his master and tall, silent Sanckie strode evenly near at hand, his head down as if meditating to himself or listening to the bustle of the law students emerging from Lincoln's Inn. Oxford was not to be put out of humor by these too sober remarks.

"You may say what you like, Charles, but I say we are damned heroic. I say we have greater glory in this business of faiths than ever old Mortimer had who overthrew King Edward, or than had Henry of Richmond when he rose up against the hunchback king. For these were soldiers merely, who sought their own advantage, but we, Charles, we are men of principle and high aims, who will not be kept from the path of holiness and right."

Here even Howard had to smile. "I pray God," he said, "you know what you are about, Ned." Arundell stared straight ahead, evidently much displeased.

"But do you, Harry, speak to me of risks? It is you not I who writes to the queen in prison; and what of the risk in that? And when her false Scottish servants up and cry mercy, it is you not I who are dragged along in and examined and queried every way until you cannot tell your mother's name. You persist in this in despite of such near 'scapes, and do you speak to me of risks? Come, you are the scholar, show me your logic here."

Howard strode along with a wry grin of forbearance on his lips. "There was never, milord, the slightest question what my mother's name is."

"No one has the hardihood to say so to your face!" cried Oxford, clapping Lord Howard on the back.

They had reached the head of Chancery Lane. A small dark man slipped out from between the adjoining buildings and joined them at mid-street. He bowed to Oxford, as Lord Harry nodded curtly to him and walked on.

"Milord," said Arundell, "you have not met friend Paget."

Oxford shook the man's hand heartily, which gave the fellow evident pleasure. "This is Tom Paget's brother, is it? We meet at last, friend Paget, I'm very glad. How does your brother do, then?"

"He does very well, your lordship. Country matters keep him, he would be with you else, I'm sure he would."

"Country matters, is it? Very good; seeking for what he has lost in some wench's placket, I have no doubt. We were speaking even now of risks, Mr. Paget. You must beg Mr. Arundell now to tell you of his own risks in Ireland. For did you not, Charles, slip over to Ireland to hold conference with the discontented there, not six months past? Confess it now, it is a thing of honor, ha, it is in every mouth. Is that not a proper taking of risk?"

Arundell looked surprised. "Why hold there, Ned. I've not been in Ireland in my life."

"Come now, Charles, upon my soul you have; did you not cross over to Ireland in, say, this September last, there to hold conference with Baltinglass and his brothers? Come now, we know you did, and love you for it."

"I did not. I say again I have never been in Ireland."

"Oh Charles, we are all friends here. Here, Sanckie," Oxford said, beckoning to his man to come up with them. "Sanckie, did you not tell me that Mr. Arundell had been in Ireland some six months gone?"

"I did say what I heard said, milord," replied the servant.

"No, Ned, I was in Cornwall then," Arundell said, looking into Sanckie's blank, accipitrine face. "My brother and I were at Lanherne with our cousin's friends. I cannot guess where your man has heard otherwise. I have never been in Ireland, nor had I any conversation with Baltinglass, whom I know not."

"Well, you are pleased to be discreet. Very well; well, well," grinned Oxford. Sanckie dropped back to his fellows, his face as impassive as ever. "Oh, by the bye, Arundell, here is your book, for the which many thanks to you. Curtis, the gentleman's book. Thank you. It is

well penned, Charles, but I cannot say I like his matter. I would we might question further upon it."

"As you wish," said Arundell, tucking the article beneath his doublet with some haste.

Southampton House loomed before them, not a great house by aristocratic standards but humbling all the other buildings in the district. Two wings rose high on either side, flanking between them the main block with the great gate resting imposingly in the center.

As they approached the doors, Charles Paget hurried ahead and knocked upon the wood. The portals swung inward, and a small girl in black dress fled down the hall to summon up the household. Oxford dispatched his retainers and the gentlemen moved into the great hall, where a short, stocky man in steward's habit came forward to greet them.

"You are welcome, your lordships, very welcome truly. Your lordships are most welcome, most welcome," he was saying, dipping his brow to each of the visitors, backing before them into the hall.

"This is Tom Dymock, masters," said Paget, as the sallow little man grinned and touched his forehead.

"We wish to see your master, Dymock. Kindly tell him so." Howard spoke harshly to the man, who was disliked among Southampton's friends. The earl's dependence upon the slippery little servant seemed often almost eerie, and he was counted an unhealthy influence upon the family, from whom however the earl could not be weaned.

Dymock dipped again, still grinning, and said, "His lordship is unluckily indisposed, my masters, and cannot descend to you. Will you be so good? You are most welcome, sirs," backing quickly down the hall.

The great hall, two stories high within, was dominated by massive fireplaces at either side; at the far end rose twin staircases along the walls, turning at right angles halfway up and ascending to meet at a door on the level of the first floor. Up these stairs Dymock scurried, followed by Oxford, Howard, and Arundell, with Charles Paget hurrying behind. From the narrow corridor at the stairs' head, they passed into the long gallery, where they met the boy Henry, but four years old, rolling a ball in a vain attempt to knock over the pins his nurse had set for him. From a chair nearby, his older sister watched his play morosely.

At the end of the gallery, Dymock paused before a closed door and received a mumbled answer to his knock. Within, the earl of Southampton sat half in recline before a window, with a lap rug drawn up over his gown.

"Excuse me for not standing, gentlemen," he said, turning round to greet them. "Good morning, Oxford, we have not seen you in more than one season."

Dymock hurried over with a chair for Oxford, who seated himself opposite Southampton before the window. The earl of Southampton was plainly in ill health, for his thin frame was sunk spiritlessly back into the chair and his head inclined tiredly to one side or the other when he gazed upon his friends. Though only thirty-two, some five years younger than Howard and Arundell, he seemed prematurely to have grown old. Never a strong man, he had been debilitated by eighteen months' residence in the Tower at the time of Norfolk's troubles. Unkind spirits whispered that his reason might have been affected as well.

Howard asked politely after the welfare of the young countess. Dymock stood behind the earl as he swung his feet from the window seat and tried to sit up.

"Ah she's very well, Harry; she is very well indeed," he replied, with unwonted energy. "It may be she is too well, do you see; she is as healthy as a hot-blooded young mare!"

Howard and Arundell looked at one another in embarrassment. "Oh my lord--," began Lord Harry, but Southampton cut him off.

"No, Harry, I know what I say. She is in her chambers, and served there only, not to go out of doors. There is a certain young stallion of the baser sort--."

"Your lordship, do not agitate yourself," said Dymock, reaching down to settle the earl's rug upon him.

"Oh yes, quite, quite, Tom. You are right." The earl reclined his head upon his pillow. "Family matters, eh? But go then, go then, your visit, my friends, to what do I owe this pleasure?"

"A question in religion, milord," said Arundell. "Oxford would speak a little with our friend for his resolution in a point of religion."

"Oh would he?" asked the earl. "Well, Oxford, you must await your turn. Half of London--the better half, eh?--has been in this house these three weeks, all upon questions in religion."

"I intend to be reconciled to the church," said Oxford. "That is the point I wish to be resolved upon; I wish to hear the mass. I'll have none of your school points of doctrine. There is one only point I wish to be resolved upon."

"Well, my friend, it is well. You have given the matter much thought already, I see." The earl was gazing out over his gardens below with a hint of a smile playing across his features. "And what do you think would your father-in-law say, my dear fellow?" he asked, chuckling almost gleefully to himself.

"I have only one master, sir, and he is myself," Oxford blurted.

"And he is Christ!" corrected the earl. "Eh, Harry, he is Christ, eh?"

"Yes, my lord," said Lord Howard.

Some seconds passed as Southampton continued gazing upon the knot gardens carefully patterned out below them. Far out against the rear hedges, near a broad arcuate band of shrubbery that formed as it seemed a sort of altar before which he sat, a slight, delicately dressed young gentleman was reading quietly in the arbor. Beyond the hedge, the fields stretched silently to the horizon in rolling hillocks and deep green lines of wood.

"Well," said Southampton finally, nodding to himself, "*Fiat voluntas tua*. He must meet our friend, then, eh Harry?"

"I think he must," said Howard, rising.

"Good day then, gentlemen. I am sorry, truly--. God be with you, gentlemen." The earl's head lolled back upon the chair once more, his eyes closing into peaceful dozing.

One by one, the gentlemen filed out through the door, preceded by the oleaginous Dymock. Descending by a narrow stairwell in the rear of the house, they emerged directly upon the

terraces. The gardens into which they entered were laid out in an immense square, divided by four walks that radiated geometrically from the center, and reticulated further by smaller paths that ran among the knots of floral design. As they passed along the straightforward in the direction of the northern hedges, the young man in the arbor looked up and smiled amiably, discreetly closing his book and tucking it into his jacket.

Richard Stephens was a very handsome man in a delicate way, with a sensitive face and large almond-shaped eyes and long, thin fingers. His dress was that of a gentleman of substance, good material in a not unfashionable cut, but without any of the ostentations of the courtier. His lime-green jacket, without slashes or lace, he wore buttoned firmly under his chin, and his hose, a deeper green, ended in boots of old-fashioned style. Stephens was an educated man, and a modestly intelligent one, who might have passed for a visiting student from the nearby Inns of Court, but in fact he was a priest.

In 1577 it was not technically a criminal matter to be a priest in England. Not until four years later was the act of being reconciled to the church of Rome to be made an act of treason under law; the act of hearing mass to become punishable by a fine and a year's imprisonment; the refusal to attend the Protestant services to entail fines of twenty pounds a month. Not until eight years later was a Jesuit or seminary priest ordained after the first year of the queen's reign to be accounted *ipso facto* a traitor if taken on English soil, with no evidence required against him but his cloth. Notwithstanding the letter of the law, however, the priest who fell into government hands was in a very sorry case. He might be asked whether he believed the pope had the right to depose a queen as a heretic and to absolve her subjects from obedience: depending upon whether he answered for the queen or the pope, he endangered either soul or body. There might be found upon him a copy of the pope's bull of excommunication against the present monarch, and possession of the bull was indeed a hanging offense.

So far few priests had returned into England; the young men who fled to the seminaries overseas upon the instance of their consciences, many of them scholars or graduates of Oxford or the first born sons of the gentry, were placed elsewhere upon their ordination. But plans were afoot to change all that. Dr. William Allen, in Rheims, heartsick at the plight of pious Catholics who had no priests to comfort them, was even now beginning to send the young men educated in his school back into the realm for the edification of the faithful. There the first revenants lived a precarious existence, dependent upon the courage and good will of special patrons for their sustenance and protection. Fr. Stephens, newly sent from the seminary at Douai, had found his patron in the earl of Southampton.

The priest, rising to greet them as they approached, recognized the crest of the boar embroidered upon Oxford's doublet, and his eyebrows rose imperceptibly. In the small talk that followed, unobtrusively he peered closely at the earl. Arundell hastened to allay the man's doubts.

"His lordship requires some small spiritual guidance, Mr. Stephens," he said. "He asked that we conduct him to a man with some wisdom in these matters."

Stephens looked at Oxford again, murmuring that he would do his humble best, but the earl was impatient.

"Nay, I intend to join the holy church," he said. "You, sir, unless I am very far out, are a priest, so now likes me as much as any time to get the business done."

Lord Harry appeared ruffled by his companion's manner and laid a hand upon the earl's arm. Stephens, however, was undisturbed.

"Well, my lord, then we shall have our little speech. Shall we walk on?" And so, excusing himself from the others, Stephens led the earl back towards the house. Arundell could see Oxford talking animatedly to the listening priest, as they ascended to the terrace and entered the building through a small door in the west wing. Charles Paget turned to the others and prepared to take his leave as well.

"I give you good morrow, gentlemen, my business calls me," he said. "Pray you both, be less strange with us in the country. My brother expects you at Beaudesert, Charles. And my sister particularly wished me to convey her greetings to you."

"How fares the Lady Anne these days?"

"Tolerably well, I think. She is not so sprightly as once she was. She makes glum faces and sits long in the window. But she is well rid of that husband of hers."

"Dwells she still at Beaudesert then?"

"Aye, she is with my brother and our mother, at Beaudesert or else at Drayton most times. In a month or two you must ride up. We shall make a merry party. Good day then, sirs."

Paget left them at the arbor and hurried back towards the house. Howard and Arundell, with time upon their hands, reclined in the long grass of the yard and said nothing for some while. Overhead, the clouds were banking up, occluding the sun from time to time, but the day had come on warm and the flowers' scents about them made a pleasant setting for repose. Howard twitted Charles with teasing remarks about Anne Lee, Lord Paget's sister, but Arundell would not rise to the bait. He had seen Anne very seldom through the years. Had not Anne, while still a girl, been married off to Sir Henry Lee now twenty years ago, things might have been far otherwise than they were. Married in the Catholic reign of Mary, Sir Henry had been quicker to adapt to the ensuing Protestant regime than his wife had. Now that her husband had sent her home from the Court, where as the Queen's Champion he lived a life that needed no suspicion for religion, Charles intended to see her even less: in the eyes of the church she was still not free.

"What is your book, Charles?" Lord Howard inquired.

"Eh? Oh, the book of your brother Norfolk's death," said Arundell. "I had it of Shaw this three months past, and Oxford borrowed it of me a week or more since."

"May I look?"

"Aye, of course," said Arundell, drawing it forth from beneath his doublet. "You have seen it, I believe. It would seem it was printed beyond the seas. Much overstates the Lord Treasurer's villainy, I should think--see there in the opening leaves."

Lord Harry turned over the pages thoughtfully. "Yes, I have seen it once before. Y're quite right, Charles; old Burghley had no hand in this pie; I think our author is hardly well informed. I wonder to find Lord Robin of Leicester play no greater role in it than this author makes him do."

"Belike he had his tale from the bishop of Ross."

"Ah I ever distrusted the feckless Ross. And I ever admonished my brother to quit his company. It was one Hyde that penned the thing, I think?"

"So I have heard it said, Harry," Arundell replied.

Lord Howard snapped the volume shut and returned it.

"I should burn the foul thing if I were you, Charles. It would breed some ill were it to drop carelessly from you in the walks of Richmond Palace or some such."

"Yes, I will do it. I think you have heard that divers of your brother's old servants have been brought up at the sessions court in Norwich? For traducing Leicester in that unhappy business."

"Well, but if they proceeded against everyone who spoke frank words of my Lord Robin, the sheriff would have no sleep for many months to come." Lord Harry rose to the arbor seat and crossed his legs wearily. "But I thank God they are not my servants now, Charles."

"Well, they are yours now, actually."

"Oh. Worse luck."

Time passed pleasantly in this quiet spot. They spoke of the hunt, and then of the stars; Howard's studies had brought him deep into the lore of astrology, and patiently upon occasion he explained to Arundell the methods and signs of the scientist. Talk passed desultorily from one topic to the next, and eventually to Oxford and his new religious scruples.

Arundell once again doubted the wisdom of initiating the earl into the persecuted faith, but again Lord Howard insisted that the strength of their cause depended upon the commitment of such illustrious noble families as the house of de Vere. If Oxford himself were a weak reed, he was nonetheless more valuable for the cause than against it, and so mercurial was the young earl in his passions that if they could not bind him to the papists now, they might well find him ranged on the other side tomorrow.

Still Arundell demurred, though diffidently. Howard, with many of their friends, saw the old religion as the symbol of their interests, the declining state of the great old families that found themselves threatened and displaced on every side by the new men, who had no good conception of the traditional patterns of authority and place that held society together. Arundell inclined to consider the faith more or less a private matter, and tried persistently to believe that if they all went their ways dutifully and discreetly and made no threat to the worship of other men, no objection would be raised against them.

"Sometimes I think you are a child, Charles," Lord Harry laughed. "For so long as you worship otherwise than the queen's church would have you to worship, for so long do you lie open to your enemies. These busy men cannot let well alone, but must have their 'godly reformation' maugre the cost. We must continue to build, block upon block, timber upon beam, until we have built a house in which we may worship openly, and when we have done that, then shall we be masters of that house, and take our meals at the great table with the queen, not in the kitchens with the baser sort, or--and it may come to this, Charles--in the cellars with the rats."

"But it is a very big house, Harry, with room enough for all, it may be."

Howard grew serious and addressed his friend intently. "Look you, Charles, for why did my brother make combinations with the queen of Scots and all his friends, men of the greatest houses in the realm? Why, think you, did the late Northumberland that was, and my brother-in-law of Westmoreland, rise up in '69? Because only, Charles, they saw

themselves being thrust aside, like servingmen with unsweet breath. And they saw aright, Charles, however they may have comported themselves like noddies. By these damned fellows newly sprung up with their hypocritical neoteric creeds."

"Well, it may be, Harry, it may be," said Arundell, half convinced by these arguments every time he heard them.

"Say not may be: it is, Charles. Why, do you think, is not Southampton on the Council, nor Montague, nor Northumberland that now is, nay nor Worcester, nor Rutland, nor your good friend Oxford? and my old lord of Arundel humored merely. Nay, Charles, we must build our strength and resume our places, before everything is lost in the swirl of these times. And in the Scottish queen is our hope. She shall be free and recognized as heir to this throne, and then shall all England flock to us, for honors, for offices, for every suit, for friendship. We must think of the future, lad; if events continue as erst they have begun, we shall soon not find a corner to hide our heads in."

Arundell was staring into the grass, newly sprung up with the spring rains and growing thick upon the turf. "Well," quoth he, "you have your Oxford now. There's no finer fellow in his cups, Harry, with his merry cantrips and his whigmaleeries, but for religion, by God, you must excuse me."

"Ah you are a west country man, Charles, so you are." Arundell made a wry face at him. In due course, Oxford emerged upon the terrace and waved to them. Howard and Arundell arose and walked back up the path. In the great hall, Tom Dymock was sorting the gentlemen's cloaks, while Stephens strolled along the walls glossing the portraits upon them for the earl's benefit. As they parted at the main doors, the priest slipped the tiny volume he'd earlier been reading from beneath his jacket and pressed it into Oxford's hands.

"Peruse it well, your lordship," Stephens urged him, "but with care lest your meaning be mistaken. Less charitable heads than ours are abroad these days, we are told."

"Well, I'll read it. What a devil is it, some book of papistical prayers, is it?" he replied, chuckling at his effrontery.

Stephens smiled mildly. "Only a simple guide to the difficult road we have to walk, milord. Some small food for the starving soul."

"I'll read it, never fear for me. What this soul needs, however, gentlemen, I do not hesitate to tell you, is a cup of sack. Come, let us be off."

With Oxford's men, they struck off down Chancery Lane.

"So you are a papist now, Ned?" asked Lord Howard.

Oxford stopped in mid-career and looked at them both. "I am," he answered. "No barrel better herring!"

He collapsed in laughter at his jest. Arundell looked blankly at Lord Howard, who shrugged.

Just to the east of Chancery Lane lay a maze of crooked alleys and irregular roofs that had sprung up long ago for the convenience of the legal gentlemen during term times. Here, amid the hostelries and tiny inns, lay the town residences of a number of Catholic friends, such as Gage and Cornwallis and the Wisemans, and among the rest, the London house of William Shelley. As Sanckie and Weeks continued towards the city to their master's house

in Bread Street, the rest of the party turned into the narrow lane. Bustles of busy people made way for them, while children stared silently as they passed.

Shelley's house was indistinguishable from the others on the street. Its low ground floor abutted upon the curb, while above, the first story, with its shallow bay window, loomed out overhead, the second story and its bay projecting still further above that. Surmounting these jettied floors was a gable carved with monsters to frighten off intruders. Oxford's party ascended the narrow staircase past the kitchens to the hall on the first floor. Here Shelley sat in his coffer-seat chair near the bay, as the others ranged about on settles and stools, passing the time inconsequentially until luncheon was prepared. During the meal, they discussed with Shelley his schemes for improvements upon his commodious home at Michelgrove; he loved nothing better than planning additions to his country seat, few of which ever came to fact.

After lunch, Oxford fell to recounting the latest tales of the earl of Essex's suspicious death in Dublin the preceding September. "Not long since," he began, "it was my chance to come to the understanding of divers particulars concerning that noble gentleman's end. The matter was wrought," he said, "especially by Crompton, yeoman of his bottles, by the procurement of Lloyd, the earl's secretary, afterwards employed by the earl of Leicester for the better covering of the fact. And there was poisoned at the same time and with the same cup (as given of courtesy by the earl) one Mistress Alice Draycot, who departing thence towards her own house, began to fall sick very grievously upon the way and continued with increase of pains and excessive torments by vomiting until she died, her body swollen unto a monstrous bigness and deformity."

"These stories have been very common, milord," Arundell interjected. "If the earl died of an extreme flux, it is not for us to judge how he came by it in boggy Ireland."

"Nay, but there is more," said Oxford. "Young Robin Hunnis also, whose father is Master of the Children of her majesty's chapel, being at that time page to the said earl and accustomed to take the taste of his drink, by his taste that he then took of the compound cup, though in very small quantity, as you know the fashion is, yet was he like to have lost his life, but escaped in the end, being young, with the loss only of his hair. This young Hunnis reported openly, Charles, in divers places and before divers gentlemen of worship since his coming into England, and another at his passage this way towards France did most constantly report the same, where he might do it without the terror of my lord of Leicester's revenge. Now, I ask you, gentlemen, what nobleman within the realm may be safe if this is to be suffered?"

Oxford looked from one to the other with a kind of petulance, as if he'd been urging use of the cane upon unruly children.

"But soft, my lord, if these men be able witnesses, why do we have no trial of the truth?" said Shelley. "It would seem that his lordship must be called to justice in this cause."

Lord Howard smiled faintly. "Who is there who will stand up against the rushing torrent of his power? If he may but deceive the queen's good judgment, what need he trouble himself with the rest of us?"

"But, gentlemen," said Arundell, "I stand not here to defend the earl of Leicester wherein he has truly offended, yet I have heard reliably that the Lord Deputy of Ireland peered

closely into Essex's death and reports most earnestly that natural disease was wholly the cause of it."

"Pooh, Henry Sidney is my Lord Robin's brother-in-law! What other might he say?" exclaimed Lord Harry. "Do you call to mind the widow Lettice, who now goes all in black and weeps great crocodile's tears; did my lord not baggle her in the good earl's lifetime? Was not my lord of Essex determined even to revenge himself upon Leicester for his adultery, and on the point of coming home to put this into effect when he was prevented by this facinorous fact?"

"Some say that Leicester poisoned old Throgmorton, too," said Oxford, "belike to prevent his unfolding more of his lordship's treachery in Norfolk's case. Others will avouch religiously that the Cardinal Châtillon met a like fate in his way by Canterbury. And the horrible, flagitious murder of his own wife is too infamous to bear repeating."

"Well, it is a sad world," said Arundell.

"But it will be a merry world when once we have a little reformed it," Oxford cried. "Come now, Charles, you must see that, but for these bad men, the world should go on wheels."

Lord Harry, pacing the room behind him, observed that time would tell the tale, and that with God's help the time of justice would doubtless one day come.

"One day come," said Oxford. "One day come! Gentlemen, observe my meditation now. Suppose that there were many other gentlemen throughout the realm, in all its corners and bays and forests and valleys, who think aright as we do. Suppose too that there were friends beyond the seas who do perceive that sad case we are kept in, and do lament thereof. What do you think? Suppose further that these said friends and these said gentlemen were to join together in good faith and endeavor to do what can be done for remedy."

Shelley, perplexed by this oblique manner of speech, demanded to know what his meaning was.

"Well," said Oxford, "do you not think the Scottish queen might find better entertainment than now she has? Do you not think that Leicester and other her enemies might look well with their heads upon the Southwark gate of London Bridge?" "My lord. Enough!" shouted Shelley, his face gone purple with anger. "These are three too many supposings for this house, sir!"

"All right, Shelley. Peace, man; they were but supposings. But I must tell you, gentlemen, if matters continue as they are, before long the earl of Leicester shall be king himself, and there shall be Puritan basket-weavers enjoying our estates while we sit chin-upon-fist in Newgate jail. Mark me, gentlemen, I know them!"

"No doubt you do, Ned, but do keep your tongue in, won't you." Lord Harry was plainly weary of the earl's talk, which threatened to become his common theme.

"Well, I am in good earnest, Harry. We are kept down now, but I shall raise you up, will you or nill you." Oxford stared fiercely round the silent room. Abruptly, he stood up. "Call me my men, Shelley, I am off."

And so the earl departed. The others remained for some time more, speaking of other matters, but uncomfortably, as if Oxford's words were being heard again and again. He voiced the frustrations of them all, but his temperament and precipitous manner gave rise to many

misgivings. It was therefore in a sober mood that Arundell and Howard left the house towards evening, parting in the alley before the door. Howard turned west and rejoined Chancery Lane, walking on to Arundel House, past Leicester's house in the Strand. Arundell struck off in the opposite direction, through Shelley's gardens to Fetter Lane behind. As he emerged into the road and strode past Clifford's Inn on the right, he noticed a small man in dark clothes come out of the gates and hurry south behind him.

The day's warmth was seeping away, and a chill was entering the darkening air. Arundell drew his cloak about him as he passed into Fleet Street and made east along the row towards the city gate. As a Queen's Servant, he was allowed a chamber at court, residing presently at Whitehall, but though he made use of his rooms in the other palaces of the queen, when she was in Westminster he preferred to lodge in town. He kept chambers in one of Northumberland's houses, the Priory Mansion in Blackfriars within the gate, where he found more privacy than he could have hoped for among the serried courtiers in the palace.

As he approached Salisbury Court across the road, Arundell came upon his friend Cotton just entering his house at the bottom of Shoe Lane. Pausing to pay his respects to his kinsman, courteously he turned round and faced west lest Cotton should have to look into the setting sun above St. Dunstan's steeple. Over Cotton's shoulder he saw across the road, conversing with an old woman before the Hanging Sword, the same small man in black attire. He watched the fellow for a moment, until Cotton noticed his inattention and tasked him playfully for his manners. Then, with salutations, they parted, and Arundell continued on his way, past the conduit, down the hill, and over Fleet Ditch to Ludgate.

Turning south within the gate, he entered the dark labyrinth of the Blackfriars liberty, coming presently over Carter Lane and past the Wardrobe and St. Andrew's. Surreptitious glances over his shoulder confirmed what he had feared; the dark man was following him. Arundell slowed his pace in order to think.

London teemed with cutpurses and roaming thieves in the night season, but these graceless nips and foists surprised one from black alleyways, commonly, or jostled against one in the thoroughfares; they did not stalk their prey from ward to ward for over a half mile's length. Fresh from the hearing of Oxford's remarks, Arundell found himself abashed. The darkness drew close about him. Turning away from the Priory towards Baynard's Castle near Paul's Wharf, Arundell passed round towards the Thames, quickening his pace and lengthening his distance from the man until, as he observed, the man quickened his pace accordingly. Then, reaching a sharp corner just along the wharf, he ducked around it and receded into the shadows. Almost beneath him as he waited, he could hear the river lapping against the piles, and the boatmen passing one another far out upon the stream.

Over the roofs the sound of the Bow Bell rang out. Arundell shrank back against the black wall. The ward bellman began his evening rounds in the next street. "Remember the clocks," he called; "Look well to your locks." The town was closing up.

"God give you good night," came the lonely cry. "For now the bell ringeth."

Soft footsteps approached suddenly and the man swung round the corner. Arundell sprang forward and seized his cloak with both hands. He jerked the fellow up and hauled him round to face the open street. The bleached little face turned up to him like a snail's belly to the sun--a pasty nose irregularly sloping downward, a mean little mouth now snarling at him words that were unrecognizable. The dark man struggled to come free, one hand snatching at his belt for a weapon. Arundell held him firmly, but could do no more; he was

frozen in place by an awful astonishment. The man's one eye rolled crazily in anger; the other eye was absent; there was only a blank white stone, as it seemed, filmed over with a nacreous glaze that caught the moonlight. Arundell stepped back in disgust. The little man tore free with an oath and dashed across the road, disappearing into Knightrider Street in the direction of St. Paul's. When the sound of his running feet had died away, there was nothing but the lapping of the river, and the distant call of the bellman.

Arundell leant back against the wall. He tried to recollect ever having seen the brutal little man before. Doubtless, if ever he had, he should not easily have forgotten it.

He gathered himself and walked back towards the Priory Mansion. Perhaps, after all, it was merely the evil effect of the loathsome, eerie face that so filled him with foreboding. Quietly he unlatched the postern door at the rear of the buildings and entered the tiny hallway. Finding a candle on the shelf by the light of the lantern hanging without, he stooped low and started up the ancient monastic stairwell to his rooms above.

At the head of the stairs, he tapped on the chamber door. A soft voice inquired who was there, and he said, "Charles." The bolts were lifted and the door swung inward. Kate Mullen stood, a small iron pot in one hand, brushing her hair out of her eyes with the other. Arundell entered wearily, removing his things, and went to sit before the open fire, where he watched her preparing a light meal on the hearth.

Kate was a large woman of about thirty-five years, still much prettier than otherwise though her auburn hair was graying softly and her figure had lost some of its former definition. There cohabited within her both the toughened veteran of tavern society and the wistful and tender girl of many years ago. Mullen her husband was a rogue, whose habits were irregular, but he came to fetch her from time to time, and when he came she went with him. The rest of her time she spent in the tavern in which she worked, except when Arundell was in these rooms nearby, at which times she dwelt with him. Over some years their intermittent relationship had evolved into something like a thorough friendship.

And because of that, Kate recognized his present mood. But she did not inquire too closely into it. Rather she watched him silently as, after having eaten, he sat with brows knit gazing into the fire and as, when they had retired, he tossed for hours in uneasy sleep.

IV. THE EARL OF OXFORD'S PAVAN

(1577)

"Turn not, O Lord, thy face from me,
Although a wretched wight,
But let me joy in Thee all day,
Rejoice in Thee all night."
-- Francis Tregian

To his Most Christian Majesty, Henri, the
third of that name, king of France, etc., etc., give these.

Saving your majesty, after my hearty commendations. My letters of the 28 and 30 ultimo have informed your majesty of my talk past with this queen's officers for the seas. Since then, we have spoken thrice more, and I do verily think that the English captains are as careful to drive their pirates from those havens as we are to have them dispersed. I dare assure your majesty that by All Saints' Day next we shall have the relief we have looked for.

Other news have I none, but for one matter of some moment. Not long since I received a visit from a young nobleman of this realm who would seem to offer great service to your majesty. He is the earl of Oxford, who is a very brilliant youth, of a very noble house, and much beloved of the queen herself for his manifold charms. The earl told me upon his first entering my chamber that he is a Catholic, and that he has been sent to me by all the great Catholics of this country, who, he said, are almost all the nobility except this queen's own special favorites. When I asked whom he meant particularly, he named an exceedingly large number of great persons, some of whom I know to be Catholics indeed, others I think who might be very surprised to find their names upon his list. I asked him politely, as if idly curious, who in particular had sent him, to which he replied that the brother of the late duke of Norfolk, who died in the cause of your majesty's honorable cousin the Scottish queen, was one, and that there were many others he could name at a need.

After some complaints of the hard fate of Catholics in this realm, and many lamentations therefor, the earl fell into inveighing against some of the queen's special counsellors, to whom he lays the blame for their present misfortunes. And then, without looking upon me directly, he said it was thought your majesty might do much to help them if you would. I replied that your majesty was always careful to relieve the unfortunate godly where lawfully it might be done. He then professed to be devoted to your majesty's service, and said he thought that he and his friends, with your majesty's aid forthcoming, might do much for the aid of the Scottish queen their mistress in her durance, whose only good they desire more than anything else.

I told the earl that many men do profess great love for kings and queens who only wish advantage to themselves, and that it was your majesty's wont to require some signal piece of service in earnest of good faith before proceeding further with any man. To which he replied that it may be he could do such service. He said it was the common bruit in England that your majesty's rebel the prince of Condé was on the very point of fleeing into England for his safety, and said that he knew a captain who might undertake an enterprise against the said prince at his coming over. I told him that the peace was nearly concluded and the prince would not need to seek refuge anywhere, but that were this peace to hold no better

than the last and the prince should then be driven to this shore, your majesty might have no objection to the idea.

Whereupon he said that he had not known of a new peace and had meant further to have raised a squadron of five ships for service against the Huguenots at sea, and that he would do so if the peace were not to hold. I thanked him very earnestly and asked him what your majesty might do for him by way of recompense. He thought for a moment, looking like a man who has to go from one great rock to another and cannot bring himself to leap. Finally he said that he must consult with his friends, but that in the meantime I must consider him wholly at your majesty's commandment. I thanked him for his love and gave him a small jewel as a token of your majesty's esteem, and then he departed.

This morning the earl of Oxford has returned. He seemed very agitated and hastened to enter into his matter without any of the kind of idle speeches which commonly pass first between gentlemen. He told me he was ready to lead a rebellion of the Catholic part in England if he were assured of your majesty's support. I told him that rebellions are very serious affairs ordinarily, that there are many ways to enter into them, but the way is very narrow to come honorably out thereof, and they are dangerous for the soul and body. Still he persisted by saying that all this kingdom is awaiting the proper direction to rise up against the favorites of the queen and their Protestant minions, and would do so if given good hope of success. The queen's favorites, he insisted, would flee with no more ado than a few shots fired and a few bills broken.

I said he seemed assured of good success, but I did wonder what part your majesty might have in such an affair. I told him that as long as this queen did not support rebellions in your dominions, you might not lawfully do so in hers. The young earl replied that all the world did know that the English queen has many times aided your majesty's unruly subjects of the other religion, and that in any case your majesty was freed of that restraint by the holy bull of excommunication by which this queen is no queen in the eyes of God but a usurper. I pointed out to him that the term of that deposition was expired two years past, to which he answered most cannily that a new bull might easily be procured, since she was the same queen still. But then, very ill at ease, he went on to say, with some default of logic, that he meant only to remove the counsellors who were leading their queen astray, and to name the Scottish queen her heir, not to attempt anything against Elizabeth herself, which he said would be less grateful amongst the gentlemen his supporters.

Whereupon I asked again what role your majesty might have in such an adventure. The young earl fumbled again, but finally said you might dispatch ten thousand men to land upon the southern coast and thence proceed to the capital, whose presence there would assure a victory for the religion with the loss of no man's life, upon which they might return unto your majesty more glorious in the sight of God for their holy succor given. I professed to weigh seriously his proposal, telling him I would consult your majesty in the matter and let him know your will. In the meantime, I said, we would be grateful for any bit of news from the court that the earl or his friends might pass to us, only for the good of religion, and I think in this we will profit greatly from his aid, for his father-in-law is the great Lord Treasurer and other his friends do sit in very high places in this realm. In earnest whereof I gave him a small jewel to signify your majesty's great good will towards him. So, wishing me God speed, he departed.

In my judgment, your majesty would do well to humor the young earl and other his discontented friends, for we may gain much by their friendship. On the other side, however, your majesty must not take seriously his schemes, which in my opinion are chimerical, as also is his estimate of the might of the Catholic forces within this realm. I will do in this business as your majesty instructs me, as indeed in all other. With all loyalty professed, etc., I close, remaining your majesty's humble servant at his post, in his house in London this fifteenth of June, the year of our Lord 1577.

Mauvissière de Castelnau



Tom Phelippes, although a very young man, was Secretary Walsingham's chief documents handler. Already an expert linguist and decoder, his main task was to see to the translation of the letters in ciphers and foreign languages that were brought in by the Secretary's friends and agents from wherever they could be intercepted, found, bought, or stolen.

He completed his translations of the copies of various correspondences sent over by their man in the French embassy, setting most of them aside in a small pile for the Secretary's perusal at his convenience. The last one he had handled, however, seemed important enough to be treated separately. Papers in hand, he hurried off through the corridors of the court to find his master.



Similarly in June, Charles Arundell was away from town, at Golden Manor on the river Fal in Cornwall, two miles above Tregony. After some years in the queen's bodyguard, Arundell, while still a young man, had risen into modest favor by his service, and had been granted in return a few suits which made his living. In 1572 he had been appointed lieutenant of the Isle of Portland and captain of the castle, in county Dorset, with the power to maintain a master gunner, five other gunners, five soldiers, and two porters to man the installation. Having acquitted himself well in the post, in October 1574 he was made receiver of crown lands in several western counties, in which position he received one hundred pounds by the year, with commissions of a hundredth part of all moneys he collected for the queen. This, with the revenues of his little lands, made him a comfortable if unostentatious living.

He had ridden out by the Oxford road to the city of Gloucester, and thence to Bristol, where he conferred with his deputies, went over their books, and oversaw the progress of the work. He meant afterward to travel to Portland Castle for a few days' sojourn there; then to Pulham in Dorset where he held some land; finally to Salisbury and Southampton, where also he was receiver, and so to Greenwich where the court should be. In the meantime, he had turned aside from Bristol. Accompanied by his nephew, Sir Matthew Arundell's son Tom, he had ridden west into Devonshire and Cornwall, where his family's origins lay.

At Lanherne he met his cousin Sir John Arundell, one of the magnates in the district. Then, for the feast of Corpus Christi on the sixth of June, Charles and Tom made their way across to Golden Manor, where they reposed on holiday for several days more. Here was the home of Francis Tregian, Sir John Arundell's nephew, which had become, after Lanherne and Sir Matthew's family seat at Wardour Castle, one of the chief Catholic centers in the far west. Golden House was a pleasant, commodious establishment. Clustered behind on one side

were the kitchens and ancillary huts, on the other side the beginning of the gardens that extended down to the river Fal at Golden Mill.

Tregian himself was a small man of fewer than thirty years who had gone abroad for his conscience while still a youth. He had then reconsidered his scruples when the statute of 1571 had made him liable, if he remained out of the realm without license, to forfeiture of all his lands. Thereafter, following a brief career as a courtier, he had resided circumspectly in the country, as far as possible from a world increasingly disagreeable for adherents of the old faith. His wife Mary was if possible more devout than he was, and perhaps, with her brother Lord Stourton still in prison for religion, just as embittered.

Arundell sat in the gardens between his host and a man dressed in the attire of a steward. Nephew Tom had gone riding with a young servingman of his own age, and the women were within. The sun shone brightly upon the rough terrain, making objects a mile distant upon the hill stand out with astonishing clarity. Arundell was scarcely a country man himself; he had been too many years in town and in residence with the court. But he was glad now to retreat from his duties in the palaces, with their press of people and accelerated pace, and pass some days with his friends. The sunshine felt warm. In the afternoon, perhaps, they would fly hawks, and play at cards in the evening; last night it had been chess among the gentlemen and triumph among the ladies.

In the gardens by the nursery wall, a band of children from the neighborhood were playing noisily, their thin, high laughter seeming to enhance rather than disturb the effect of stillness. They were playing at Castle-Come-Down. Earnestly the strongest children set themselves upon hands and knees in the grass; the second rank climbed upon them and settled themselves in place, and the third rank scrambled up, to much shouting and swaying of the line, two small boys who in their bare feet stepped from back to back and with serious expressions readied themselves for the final assault.

The last boy, a small lad who looked thoroughly overwhelmed by the great role pricked out for him, swallowed hard and began his ascent. The line swayed under him; those upon whom he stepped called out childish oaths to him, others shouted encouragement and playful threats; his face grew red as he struggled up from layer to layer towards the bright sky. And finally, against his expectations, he made it to the top, where for the briefest second he relished his victory and spread his arms wide in triumph--when his cousin in the second layer buckled and nine boys beneath him dropped away and left him alone in the air; where he did not long remain, but plummeted to ruin amid a tangle of laughing and shouting and kicking youth. From the middle of the crowd of squirming bodies the top boy's face shone out, with a smile that said, despite all this, it had been worth it to sit upon the top, however briefly.

Arundell and Tregian were in undress, shirts thrown open and heads bare. The steward was more correctly made, with a light jacket buttoned closely under his smooth chin. He was a small man of not much more than thirty, rather coarse in build but refined in his demeanor. One of his eyes was turned outward, gazing always to the right of anyone with whom he spoke, as if something more interesting were going on elsewhere. His name was Cuthbert Mayne, and he was not a steward but a priest. Born in the west country, he had been the chaplain of St. John's College, Oxford, until at the age of twenty-nine he could carry on no longer in a Protestant post and retired to Douai to train for the priesthood. Two years later, in 1575, he had been ordained. In April 1576, he had entered London in

disguise. Having successfully found his way to Sir John Arundell's house in Clerkenwell, he was soon on his way back into the west, where thereafter he remained, serving all of the surrounding Catholic houses from his base at Golden Manor.

On the hillside to the west, towards Probus, a plume of dust appeared in the still air. The three men watched it idly as it entered the valley. Soon the sounds of many hoofbeats approached from far down the road, and came closer, and ceased in front of Golden Manor.

A servant appeared at the terrace door and called.

Tregian excused himself and hurried into the house. The great door was open and through it he could see a crowd of horsemen milling about in the bright courtyard. In the door of the ladies' parlor, his wife and her friend Mrs. Truro stood peering out in alarm.

Tregian stepped halfway out into the light. Before him, astride an enormous black mare, sat Sir Richard Grenville, his ferocious buccaneer's features bedecked with a full gray beard, his hand resting upon the hilt of his sword.

"Mr. Tregian, come forth of your house," Grenville shouted.

Tregian stepped down and gazed round at the courtyard filled with armed men. His face was ashen, and he failed at first to find his voice.

"We pursue a fugitive, Mr. Tregian, and we must search your house for him."

"What fugitive?" asked the master of the house. "We keep no fugitives here."

"One Bourne, who has escaped from St. Austell jail. Come, sir, we must search your house for him."

"We have no Bourne here, Sir Richard, and you will not search this house." Tregian was finding a courage to dispute the man that many Spanish seamen lacked.

Sir Richard motioned to his party and dismounted. As he approached the steps, his rough face drawn in contempt for the man who barred his way, Tregian shrank back but stood his ground in the door.

"You do forget yourself, Sir Richard. I must see your warrant ere you will search this house," he said.

"Warrant!" Grenville bellowed. "I am the sheriff, man, I need no warrant."

"You must excuse me, sir, sheriff or no I must see your warrant before you enter this house which is mine. So says the law, and so I say, too."

"Stand aside, Tregian," Sir Richard snarled, picking the man up and setting him out on the steps. He strode into the hall. Mary Tregian and Mrs. Truro ducked into their parlor and shut the door, the servants fled to the kitchens. Grenville's men trooped into the house after him, their boots thundering upon the boards.

"Search," he commanded them, and they fanned out to the wings, peeking into every doorway, some ascending to the floors above, banging on the panelling in hopes of finding a hiding place behind the walls.

Outside in the garden the commotion was easily heard. The priest stood up in some alarm and started towards the house, but Arundell detained him with a hand.

"Father Cuthbert," he said. "Something is amiss. Let us walk rather to the river."

"No, Charles, I may be needed. Let me go and see," the priest replied. He struck off trotting towards the terrace.

Arundell called after him, "Father! If you are discovered it shall go hard with all of us!"

The priest turned around to face him. "Dear Charles," he said; "when the wolf enters the fold, then of all times must the shepherd be with his flock." He resumed hurrying towards the house.

Charles stared wide-eyed after him. Quickly, then, he stepped back among the shrubberies.

As Cuthbert Mayne ascended to the flagstones, three men approached him through the terrace windows. One, bearing a sword, commanded him to stop and called in to Sheriff Grenville.

Sir Richard and several others burst out of the house, followed by its master at a distance.

"And what art thou?" the sheriff shouted.

From across the yard Arundell could barely hear the priest's reply, something to the effect that his attire might be thought a sufficient answer. The simple man refused to lie even to a scoundrel and pirate like Grenville.

The sheriff was not to be put off. Roughly he grabbed the man's jacket and tore it open at the breast. Then in triumph he ripped something from Cuthbert's chest, a cross perhaps, and held it aloft for his men to see.

Grenville gestured towards the priest and two men seized the fellow's arms. Others seized Tregian, as the sheriff strode violently back into the house.

"Search everywhere!" he roared. "Find everything!"

Arundell waited to hear no more. Bent low, he scrambled round the shrubbery to a low hedge nearby and ran behind it towards the river. After thirty meters he came to an open space between him and the next hedge leading to the rear of the gardens. Arundell peered round at the house. Five or six men had spread out into the gardens, and two of them were approaching him at thirty meters' distance.

Out of his belt behind him he drew his dirk and tossed it back into the bushes along the path he had just traversed. The men swung at the sound and darted to the place.

Arundell rose and bolted across the open ground. Though no longer a young man, he was agile and very quick, and he threw himself headlong over the hedge. On the other side, he rolled smoothly to his feet and sprinted behind the line of low bush. But he had been seen. From the terrace came a cry from Sir Richard Grenville himself.

The sheriff's men ran to the center of the yard. Following Grenville's upraised arm, they started through the hedge and caught a glimpse of Arundell as he gained the line of trees by the water's edge.

They dashed after him with swords drawn. He found the riverbank and ran along it to a point that jutted forth into the stream. Here he leapt to the overhanging rocks at a full run and threw himself out into the water, which closed over him with a cold shock. The men

behind him drew closer as his breaststroke brought him slowly to the center of the river, but thereafter as the current carried him down he moved away from their pursuit.

Some distance down the stream, Arundell drew himself out of the water and lay exhausted in the bushes a few meters up the bank. The sheriff's men were ranging out along the other side of the river just above, evidently waiting for Sir Richard to arrive with the horses. As stealthily as possible, he passed out of the long grass into the line of trees, then jogged at a good pace a half mile further down. There he found another stand of trees that led him up a hill away from the river. The business of climbing left him panting painfully. From the ridge along the top, he could see Sir Richard and his men crossing at a ford about a mile off, branching out in pairs in all directions as they reached the nearer bank.

Arundell passed over the brow of the hill and surveyed the countryside before him. There, far below in the bottom of the next valley, he saw a pair of horsemen riding leisurely along towards the north.

Quickly, he tore off his shirt and began waving it, running towards the riders at the best speed he could make. Soon they saw him and veered in his direction, pricking their horses to a gallop as they recognized his distress.

Still he ran, his stertorous breathing making him begin to feel faint, expecting at any moment to hear the sheriff's men behind him. Young Tom Arundell and the Tregian servant, Jamie Sharrock, met him halfway down the broad hill, pulled up and wheeled round him.

"Well, nuncle," shouted Tom. "Whither running?"

Charles grabbed Tom's arm and swung up behind him on the horse, very nearly tumbling off on the other side. Sharrock leant far over and held him up.

"Tom!" he cried. "Ride on, and spare not!"

The horses leapt away down the meadow towards the valley bottom. Moments later, as they started up the next hill, the three men looked back at the way they had come. At the top of the slope, watching them from too far off, sat the horsemen they had eluded.

Two days later, after they had returned eastward, Sir John Arundell was arrested at Lanherne, upon information wrung from Francis Tregian, and transported to London with several other harborers of the priest. Tregian himself, after brief habitations in several prisons, fetched up finally in the London Fleet. In November 1577, Cuthbert Mayne, in whose room Sir Richard had found some matter of treason, as it was thought, was hanged, cut down, beheaded, and hewn into four parts outside the Launceston jail.

Charles Arundell had not been recognized in fleeing, and no one had mentioned his name thereafter.



(The Narrative of Secretary du Foy)

I was watching forth of the windows in the first floor front.

Carefully, from behind the hangings, I surveyed the street towards the Fleet Bridge. Across the road, hard by the bridge, stood two youths, apprentices they should seem to be, holding conversation.

Almost directly across from us, half hidden by the conduit, an aged vagabond lay propped against the wall with his heels in the mud.

None of them had moved in three hours' time. Yesterday, the prentices had been talking near the conduit, and the old one had been propped against Fleet Bridge. Sometimes, behind us, in the gate of Sackville House, sat another, whose prospect comprised the rear of our house from St. Bride's to the Hanging Sword. Are we dim noddies to be gulled by this?

Even as I watched, a row of mercer's men filed out from the city pushing barrows laden with our stores for the fortnight. Idly, the prentices glanced towards them, then took up their discourses once again. Beneath me, the bearers turned into Salisbury Courtyard and passed round to the back of the house. I went down to meet them.

When I reached the kitchens, the girl had already opened the door, and the men were offloading their barrows and carrying in the sacks and casks. I pointed out for them the places they should be set. To each man as he left I gave a small coin of their English money; the last one, however, touched his cap several times and backed towards the door very slowly, until the others had gone out. Then he swung round quickly and closed the door.

"I must speak to milord ambassador," says he.

"Must you?" said I. "Why then, you may speak first to me."

"It is a matter of urgency," he replied.

"Well, you must tell me who you are, my man," I said, "and likewise what your business is."

"My name is Evans," he said freely; but went on, "my master's name is for my lord to hear."

"And your matter?"

"Is for my lord to hear, saving your honor," he replied.

I confess I was somewhat ruffled. I am the ambassador's chief secretary, and it is both my business and my right to bring visitors into my master's confidence. Nonetheless, I understood the fellow's plight, for I could guess at his matter right enough, and we knew ourselves that not every man in our house was altogether to be trusted. For everything he could know, I myself might be the Judas Iscariot among us.

I motioned the man to wait and ascended to the ambassador's rooms on the next floor. He called me in as I tapped on his chamber door. He sat half in recline upon the settle with his writing table tilted across his lap. He looked tired, and his hair and beard were still uncombed. His shirt was open down to the rug he had spread across himself.

"Someone to see you, milord," I told him. "A servingman, as he should seem, to one of the Catholic gentlemen, though he will tell neither his master nor his matter."

Seigneur Mauvissière's face fell at my words, which I would have spared him if I could; and he sighed and looked cross.

"Well," he said, "thank God they did not come themselves, du Foy."

"Yes, milord," I said.

He looked down at the page before him and sat silently for a moment.

"Give me five minutes, du Foy, and then show him up, if you please."

I returned to the kitchens to find the man Evans speaking amorously with our girl. All of our girls are more friendly with the ugliest carriers and servants of their fellow English than ever they are with me, who in France am reckoned as a gay knight among the ladies. But that is neither here nor there.

When I showed the man up to Seigneur's chambers, my lord was seated gravely behind his desk. He motioned the man to a stool across from him, and then signed for me to take another.

Seigneur Mauvissière inquired politely of the fellow's business and listened as the story bubbled forth. The man's name was John Evans, he said again, servant of Mr. Charles Arundell. My lord asked whether this was a kinsman of the earl of Arundel who is a member of the queen's Council. Evans replied that his master was a Queen's Servant and a member of the house of Howard, but distantly related to the old earl, as well as to the queen herself. My lord asked what service he required, whereupon the man said that my lord was acquainted with the earl of Oxford. Seigneur replied that he had the honor of meeting the earl from time to time at court. His face wore no expression.

This Mr. Arundell was a friend of the earl of Oxford, Evans said. Was he indeed? replied my lord. He was, said Evans, and now he and other the earl's friends instantly required a favor of my lord. Seigneur smiled very graciously and inquired what it might be. To remove a priest abroad, said this Evans, for he was in peril of arrest.

My lord, still smiling pleasantly, looked over to me, and I shook my head. I said in French that we must be wary of a trap of some description. You never know. My lord raised his hands and said, "My friend Evans, you must forgive me, but without further knowledge . . ."

Evans drew from his pocket a folded bit of paper and passed it to my lord. My lord glanced at it and smiled, then handed it to me. Upon it was written, in a strong, but careless and rapid hand, of the style they call "secretary," the words in English, "Please credit my man Evans as you would myself. Mr. J. Charles." Beneath that was written, in a tiny, beautiful italic, "We beg your aid and will requite it. Mr. J. Henry." This was sufficient warrant for my lord. Messrs. Charles and Henry had been recommended to us by the queen of Scots for the passage of her correspondence. For some months her letters, covertly removed by her servants, had been got to us through these two men and a few others, for inclusion in our diplomatic bags to her friends on the continent.

"Well," said the ambassador. "We know now who Master Charles is. Who, pray, is Mr. Henry?"

"My lord," replied the man, looking down at his boots.

"I understand," the seigneur said. "But you may tell me who my passenger is to be."

"His name is Richard Stephens, my lord."

Seigneur Mauvissière arose from his chair and gazed out of the windows into the courtyard below. Across the way a man appeared to be sleeping before the gate of Sackville House.

After a few moments of thought, my lord returned to his desk and solemnly addressed the man named Evans.

“Tell Mr. Charles that he must take a room for his priest in the Hanging Sword in the next house. Let that be done tonight. Tomorrow early we will meet him there in his room.”

Evans thanked my master for his courtesy. Then he told my lord that Messrs. Charles and Henry had bid him say that they understood the earl of Oxford had passed words of some importance with my lord, some of them in their names, as they guessed. They wished my lord to understand that the earl would not be troubling him further, and that it would be as well if now his speeches were forgotten and buried in the ocean. My lord thanked him for his message and said that he understood.

Evans then followed me down to the kitchens. There he hoisted a grocer’s basket to his shoulder and departed by the rear door, striding quickly across the yard towards Bridewell prison with the basket obscuring his face from the man in Sackville gates. The sentinel glanced up at him, then went back to sleep.

That afternoon, Seigneur sent me by barge down to the Pool below the bridge, where I found a French ship moored that had been bespoken to carry me across with our pouches two or three days hence. I informed the master of the vessel that my lord wished him to depart on the morrow. Seigneur spent the afternoon at the court, where he had audience with the queen and afterward dined, returning late from Greenwich.

That evening the guard without the house changed right as clockworks. I watched from the window, but marked no one entering the Hanging Sword whom I thought might have been a priest.

Early the following morning, we met in the front hall below. I donned my travelling clothes and swung the diplomatic pouches over my shoulder. Paul Bec, wearing a great cloak and a low-brimmed hat, lifted my light-trunk and opened the door. Jean, my valet, who wears a beard that is a prodigy, flowing out over the breast of his cloak, likewise topped by a slouched hat, took up my bags and followed us into the street. The three of us, laughing loudly at imaginary jests, strolled to the Hanging Sword and entered, sitting ourselves upon the benches in the rear with our burdens at our feet. One of the prentices from across the road entered behind us and took up a seat near the door.

As the host brought us stoups of ale, Jean stood up and stretched, then ambled into the rooms behind. We spoke loudly of our coming journey, until a few moments later he rejoined us, whereupon we drank off our ale and laughed at still more empty jests, feeling like asses as we did so. I was very distressed to see that the priest was rather smaller than middle size, but he had the good sense, as we departed past the spy, to draw himself to full height; little save hatbrim and great false beard were visible unto the man.

Once outside, it was an easy matter to reach the river and summon a waterman to the stairs. The prentice came down behind us to see us on our way, but gave no hint that he had tumbled to our little subterfuge. Moments later, we were shooting the bridge towards the Pool, where lay our ship and, beyond it, home.



Mary was a whore, and Joseph both a cuckold and a wittol.”

“Damn me, Oxford, you cup-shotten nullifidian! Enough, man, I say enough.”

Francis Southwell rose angrily from his cushion near the fire and helped himself from the jug on the sideboard, his back turned to the rest of the company. Young Lord Windsor sat staring at the earl with mouth agape.

"Ha, ha. No, I do protest, Frank, your glorious Trinity is but an old wives' tale," Oxford laughed. "A learned man can never believe in such arrant trumperies--such a God as deals well with those that deserve evil and evil with those that deserve well; foh!"

Raleigh reclined with his feet up and a broad grin spread across his face--whether a grin of approval or derision was impossible to tell. Against the wall sat Arundell, nursing his cup with no expression at all.

"And your scripture, Frank, oh these vile, foully penned pages; why I could write you a better and more orderly scripture on six days' warning. Confess it, Southwell, there is nothing so defensible by scripture as bawdry. Oh those old beasts with their thousand wives. In faith, man, it reads like the very Aretino. Why, for good religion, the Turk is only wise who wrote his own koran."

"Damn me, my lord! I tell you, enough!" Southwell's face was reddening as he stood before the earl.

"What a passion is this, Frank," said Oxford sharply. "Do sit down, you tiresome altar-boy."

"All right, Ned," interjected Harry Howard. "This really is excessive."

"What, you too, Howard? Come, come, you funny old thing. Well, I shall outface you all."

Oxford's arrogant smirk was maddening to Southwell, who stood spouting in the middle of the chamber; but now Raleigh was chortling to himself.

"Look you, Harry, I shall prove you, from your very scripture, mind, that after this life we shall be as if we had never been, and that the rest was devised by a subtle priest but to make us afraid like babes and children of our shadows."

"I doubt not you can, Ned," said Harry, "but now is neither time nor place apposite."

"Well, it may be you are right in that." Oxford lifted his cup aloft. "I drink to good fellowship, Southwell. *Salutem in Christo!*"

Raleigh snorted and laughed aloud. Southwell flashed angrily, then flung down his cup and bolted from the room. Arundell rose with a sigh and went after him.

"The devil comber him. Can he not bear a jest?" The earl refilled his cup and smiled round the room. Lord Windsor continued to stare at him. Half a minute passed in restless silence. Then Oxford felt the advent of a thought.

"But in good sadness, Harry, these splenitive religious so quick to rise upon a jest, why do they not rise in earnest when there is greater cause?"

"How rise, Ned?" asked Lord Howard.

Here Arundell and Southwell re-entered and resumed their seats. Francis looked troubled but somewhat embarrassed by his show of bad temper.

Below from the rear yards came the sounds of workmen busily engaged upon their labors. Christmastide was fast approaching, with its long round of puffpaste festivities, for which the palace at Richmond must be got ready. The weather continued foul; all along the Courtiers' Row the gentlemen were indoors, concentrating before their fires upon cards or other pastimes, while far away, past Maids of Honor Row, in the Council's chambers in the Privy Lodgings, the business of government went on. From Oxford's windows, one could have viewed the Richmond Green and old Shene beyond the park. The court had just removed from Hampton Court, descending the Thames in a navy of barges filled with nobility and servants, tapestries and spoons, Privy Councillors and hunting dogs, to pass the Christmas season in a fresh house.

Here it was that Oxford had been holding his friends in unseasonable conversation concerning the mortality of Christ. But his talk was passing to other matters.

"When I use to say rise, why rise is what I mean. Why, by my faith, these Catholics are good Ave Mary cockscombs who will not rebel against the queen and her minions. Harried upon every side like game of the chase, hunted down by baseborn spies and clapped up in dungeons, I say I know not why they bear it, except they are women in men's clothing!"

"Your lordship must remember that not every man is as full of blood as he is," said Raleigh.

"Marry, they are not," Oxford exclaimed. "I have said before, Harry, that my lord of Norfolk was worthy to lose his head for not following my counsel at Titchfield to take up arms."

"You did counsel well, milord," said Howard drily.

"I did that, believe as you list. Damn him for coming at the queen's commandment, when he might have set his lady upon the throne and supped on cakes and ale. This is no queen, I tell you, she is but a b-b-bastard and an heretic." He swigged hastily from his cup. "I do love my lord of Balternig-Baltinglass, you know--pardon--for his letter that he wrote to the earl of Ormonde, wherein are many things to please me. But this above the rest, how he could not but wonder by what claim or by what color her majesty only a woman could challenge that authority of supreme governor of the church which Christ never gave to his own mother! Urp, pardon."

"My lord, these are dangerous words," said Howard, "and Baltinglass of Ireland an open and known rebel. You are too hot. Do not say that arms may justly be taken up 'gainst princes which swerve from right."

"You cannot justify the contrary! Do we not see P-Protestants practice the same daily in Catholic nations, where they maintain arms? Whereas these simple Catholics are c-content to lay down their heads till they be taken off, and therefore for mine own part, I wish that for every one they lose, they may lose a thousand, till they learn to be wiser and take out another lesson."

"Ned, you speak in choler," said Arundell. "Do contain your manly feelings, and let us have good fellowship."

"Yes, yes of all, and let us sing. I shall sing you now a merry air. Southwell commends to us the queen's singing at Hampton Court, but by the blood of God! gentlemen, she has the worst voice and does everything with the worst grace that ever any woman did!"

Oxford's face was beetled up in drunken anger, and his hands shook before him on the board. Howard was nonplussed at these excessive speeches. He tried to placate the earl, but the man's resentment and frustration were too great any longer to be restrained. He stormed on as the others stared at one another, how the queen was a foolish whore who abused her body with the earl of Leicester, how Leicester was a fat roué gone broken in his belly from excess of venery, how old Burghley was a puritanical hypocrite who loved nothing more than to keep a good man down. He commended to them firebrand schemes to prove by suborned witness that Leicester had murdered his wife by throwing her down the stairs, had murdered Essex, had tried to poison his mistress Douglass Sheffield when she would not leave him gracefully as soon as he would have wished. He would have evidence that the queen had borne five children. He knew where Burghley kept the moneys stolen from the Court of Wards and from the lotteries. He knew gentlemen in the country who waited for his sign, when they would ride to London with the queen of Scots and proclaim her heir in Cheapside. He knew a certain cutter, he said, who would dare a desperate act if paid for it, whereby they might all live the freer. His man Sanckie, he cried out, he knew to have been a spy set on him, and Weeks that killed him, later executed for the deed, had done it at his bidding. Finally, all this given vent, his cup dry, abruptly he fell asleep.

The fire crackled merrily upon the grate, throwing brilliant sparks, some of which, however, fell out upon the floor and threatened danger.

V. A DISTURBANCE IN THE COUNTRY

(1578)

"Yet many ways to enter may be found,
But none to issue forth when one is in;
For discord harder is to end than to begin."
-- The House of Ate (*Faerie Queene*, 4)

Winter passed into spring, spring into summer, and the great talk was of marriage. Over many years, the queen had never married, and confined herself to proclaiming from time to time that her only husband was her people. Few observers hoped anymore for an heir of her own body, for as suitor after suitor appeared and disappeared in turn, the queen waxed older and, as many thought, past childbearing age.

In the early 1570s, someone had suggested the young duke of Alençon as a likely match, at that time a most unlikely one. Negotiations had been underway between Elizabeth and the attractive duke of Anjou, soon to be King Henri III of France, but Anjou's scruples in matters of faith had brought the project down. His brother François of Alençon had been thrust forward by way of an alternative, but he was still a boy, an ugly little boy at that, and the queen would not so compromise her dignity for the sake of any mere amity with the French. Since that time, however, tensions with the Spanish had been growing; alliance with France seemed more than ever desirable; the boy's papistry, never passionate in any case, might be got round. Someone revived the name of young François, now himself styled the duke of Anjou in succession to his brother the king and, it was pointed out, himself the heir to the French crown.

In May 1578, Lord Burghley sent an embassy into France to sound out the possibilities. His envoy was Edward Stafford, a bluff man, choleric but loyal, of exceedingly high lineage. Stafford, by family lines, could almost have been counted a Howard, for his mother, one of the queen's most trusted ladies of the chamber, came from Howard stock. He was not himself a practicing Catholic, but his sympathies, those generally of the old nobility opposed to the Protestant new men, were clear enough. He went to his mission enthusiastically, as visions of an England headed by a Catholic consort to the queen rose enticingly before him.

He arrived in Paris in late May. Travelling on to the French court, he underwent his audience with the queen mother, Catherine de Medicis, and acquitted his commission with unaccustomed tact. His party then returned, bearing to Queen Elizabeth a letter from Catherine that spoke most encouragingly for a marriage with her youngest son. In mid-summer de Bacqueville and Bussy d'Ambois arrived from the duke himself; the opening moves had been made in what would prove a long and complicated game.

Meanwhile, in Staffordshire, the sons of William Robinson, deceased, of the manor of Drayton Basset, had run themselves into financial difficulties. In 1575 the elder brother, Thomas, had foolishly mortgaged the manor for a small loan to Mr. Richard Paramore, a land speculator from London who had frequent dealings with the earl of Leicester. Repayment was slow in coming, and Paramore moved in promptly with his lawyers. Armed with an injunction from the Court of Exchequer, he rode out to the house and evicted the Robinsons with very little ceremony.

On the 21st of June, 1578, a man named William Harmon approached Drayton Basset and insisted upon entering. He maintained that he was to carry off the household valuables of Thomas and John Robinson, for their use and benefit as permitted under law. John Floyd, Paramore's agent, refused him and sent him on his way. The following Sunday, Harmon returned with Daniel Cary and several of the Robinsons' friends.

As they rode up the path to the manor house, Floyd appeared at the door with his hands behind his back. In the bay window above another man stood half concealed by the hangings. The horsemen drew up below.

"I am to claim certain household articles, sir," called Harmon, "and we will not this time be turned away."

"Sir, I may let no man enter here."

Harmon and Cary dismounted and advanced to the lowest step.

"We will come in, though you try to stop us."

"Then come ahead, sir, but you shall not pass."

Harmon thought for a moment.

"Sir, these said household articles are not in your warrant," he said. "Thus, you must let us have them, or their owners shall go in want, and you shall go to the magistrate."

"I know nothing of warrants," replied Floyd. "I must prevent you from entering this house."

"By God, you shall not," cried Harmon, and he and Cary bolted up the steps.

Mr. Floyd brought both arms out before him, each hand holding a cocked pistol. He discharged them with thundering detonations. Cary grasped his shoulder with a cry and was flung down upon the path. Harmon stopped in midcareer, stunned by the noise, then growled an oath and charged on. His right arm shot out and plunged a dagger into Mr. Floyd. Above him the heavy glass in the bay was shattered outward, and a man leaned out with a great musket. One of the mounted men called out, "Shoot him, Swithin." Swithin was unarmed, but the man took fright at the cry and ducked back into the window, whereupon Mr. Harmon darted out to Cary and helped him to his horse. The party whirled and beat off down the path, as Mr. Floyd stood up and surveyed the wound in his side, cursing his luck.

In September, Charles Arundell rode out to see his friend Lord Thomas Paget and take some needed rest. In mid-June, he had been pressed into service as part of the ornamental train of an embassy sent over to the Netherlands, ostensibly to mediate a peace between the Protestant-led rebels and their Spanish masters. While there, Arundell and some others had become angered by the manner in which Secretary Walsingham was conducting his mission, rather inciting the insurgents than mollifying them, and signs were appearing everywhere of English entanglement in the wars there. At length word reached Amsterdam that, prompted by Walsingham's reports, and by the Protestants' grandiose promises, the queen was about to send a force of twelve thousand men under Leicester to join the rebel cause.

Arundell would have no part of it. He slipped away from the English party and travelled to the Hook of Holland, whence he embarked for Harwich, riding finally to the court not more than a week since.

A brief audience with the queen assured him she thought no ill of his returning. But then he learned that, quite coincidentally, her majesty had reversed her courses with the Dutch once again; something, perhaps the ambassadors of marriage sent from Anjou, perhaps the state of her Exchequer, something had changed her mind, and she would not now send, set aside the men, even the pecuniary aid long promised to the rebels. This sorted well enough with Arundell, when he first heard of it. But when he found the earl of Sussex congratulating him cordially for his good effect upon the queen's mind, he became uneasy.

And then, not a day later, in the corridors of Greenwich Palace, he met the earl of Leicester and his followers on his way into the Gatehouse stairs, and the earl stood before him glowering long. Arundell smiled a trifle foolishly at the imposing man in front of him. He shuffled his feet. Then Leicester told him plainly that when the Spanish tyrants had devoured the Dutch and turned upon this island, he Leicester would study where to find him. Charles tried stammeringly to exculpate himself, to which the earl brusquely replied that when he had first heard Arundell's name on the rolls of this important embassy, he had told his friends to what purpose he did go; he swore that Arundell must savor his victory now, for perforce it would be brief.

Arundell had taken to his rooms, in the belief that the less seen the less he would be thought of. A short consideration then decided him upon his visit in the country. He departed the following dawn, before anyone had risen.

Leaving the river Thames at Oxford, Charles and his man Sharrock struck northwest to stop for a night at Stratford, and then up the valley of the Avon, past Warwick and then past Leicester's castle at Kenilworth. They rode on to Coventry, and then bent west through Tamworth in Staffordshire, through Lichfield to Beaudesert, where they arrived towards evening.

Paget's Beaudesert was one of Arundell's favorite houses. It comprised a great square with a fair green court within, with a well-appointed gallery, and two towers covered with lead; a commodious hall, parlor, and great chamber with a chapel; a fair green yard of two acres before the gate, and nearby, a pleasant fishpond. The furnitures within were old, but much the better for it. There was not a trace of Italian influence.

Beyond the gardens further down the lane could be seen a number of gentlemen coursing hawks. Arundell rode towards them, leaving Jamie to settle them into the main house. Lord Thomas strode out from the group, arms extended.

"Ah, the Jolly Peregrinus. You are very welcome, Charles! How go things at court?"

"In silk and silver, brother."

"I do not doubt it," Lord Thomas cried.

The other men crowded round to greet him: Sir Francis Willoughby whose sister was Sir Matthew Arundell's wife; Edward Arden of Park Hall nearby; John Gifford of Chillington near the Shropshire borders, and his brother-in-law Erasmus Wolsey, all noted gentlemen of the religion. Two other men, Mr. Henry Goodier and a little man named William Barler, he encountered now for the first time, and found them affable.

The falcons were recalled then, each landing upon an outstretched arm to receive its hood and chain. The gentlemen returned to the main house, conversing amiably. There they met a number of the ladies assembled in the front room.

Lady Nazareth Paget came forward to welcome her husband's friend. Not an unattractive woman, she seemed nonetheless very plain and settled in contrast to the ladies at court, but it was not for this that Arundell did not like her. He had known her since her marriage to Lord Thomas some thirteen years before, then a young girl of seventeen or thereabouts, and since that time she had scarcely changed. She was a simple, pious soul, to the point in Charles's view of superstition, and increasingly pious to the exclusion of everything else. Her conversation, which drove Lord Thomas silly, revolved chiefly about vacuous matters of this one's holiness, and that one's saintly life, and this one's base cowardice in yielding to attend the services--the occasion of some small marital strain, for Thomas himself had more than once yielded, in cowardice of a sort, to attend the Protestant church. She had often cause to remind him, for his gradual edification, wherein he departed from the hagiographical models of behavior.

And Lady Nazareth distrusted Arundell. She felt bound to treat him courteously, because he was known to be of the religion, but she suspected the court itself from the country tales of its license and show and extravagant life, and very likely she harbored some conception of Arundell as the serpent in her husband's garden. Whenever Lord Thomas visited in town, she was never quite sure that that wandering planet, whose orbit she had constantly to correct, would be coming back on schedule.

Behind her sat Paget's mother, now more than seventy years old, whose old-fashioned wit and robust piety Charles loved more than he loved anything modern and who in turn had always much affected Charles. The other ladies he greeted, too, Lady Dorothy Willoughby, Mistress Mary Arden and Mistress Joyce, old Gifford's wife. Behind them, still seated, was Lady Anne Lee.

Anne was still beautiful, he thought as he went to take her hand. But it was not the striking beauty of the sybaritic dames like Lettice Essex, who minced their way about the court as who should say, "This is the way they walk in paradise"; rather a quiet beauty of shyness and dignity and good faith. She was no longer young--she was slightly older than her brother Paget and, like Charles himself, not far off from forty--but her soft face, usually composed, could be quite gay. She was devout, but in a quiet way, unobtrusive yet unyielding, despite her husband's wheedlings, then commands. She had not been dissuaded, and finally Sir Henry Lee had cast her off. Here she lived at home, caring for her mother for the most part, and reading.

Wolsey, Goodier, and Barler departed shortly afterward. There were some whispered words in the courtyard, which Arundell did not quite hear, that seemed to forecast their return. Then the rest went in to dinner. Arundell, by deft manipulation of chairs, contrived to be seated next to Anne.

When afterward the ladies had retired, the gentlemen sought the fire, where stretched before it they shared good wine and spoke ramblingly upon diverse subjects. There ensued much talk of the earl of Leicester. The gentlemen in the country roundabout resented his growing influence there, where with benefit of the queen's favor he had been buying or inveigling away the lands of many families, held through many generations, in Staffordshire and the shires bordering on it. Lord Thomas told of the earl's activities near his great castle in Warwickshire, explaining in suspiciously thorough detail the methods by which Leicester had expanded the parks and chases of Kenilworth by force of ancient records, fortuitously discovered, giving him title to the pastures and woods of many honest men.

The others slapped knees and swore oaths and pretended to amazement. Then came tales of the earl's abuses of her majesty's generosity and good will, how he provoked rows with her that she must confer gifts upon him in reconciliation; how he changed lands with her, taking out the best titles in the crown in exchange for his worst lands got by extortionate means; how he importuned her in behalf of unworthy suitors, whom later he hounded energetically to find the limits of their gratitude.

"Thus," said Arden; "thus Robin playeth the broker in all his affairs, and maketh the uttermost penny of her majesty every way."

Murmurs of sullen indignation on every hand. The men grumbled their resentment of all these courses, and Lord Paget ventured to say that the case of Drayton Basset was not much unlike, at least in the point of the earl's excessive greed, to which the others nodded vigorously in agreement. Arundell had not heard that tale, but before he could inquire, the gentlemen began to stretch and yawn and, with unintelligible murmurs of farewell, departed to their beds.

The next morning brought a fine, quiet autumn day, and the company rose late. Following luncheon, when some of the other gentlemen went off to observe his lordship's stable, Charles found Lady Anne in the gardens, and together they strolled out. She wore a simple gown of light stuff, with a stiff embroidered front, open across the top, but with a shawl drawn across her shoulders against the coolness. Charles had his light doublet of mellow blue, with a matching cap, a silver badge depicting Apollo set above his forehead. Somehow the soothing climate made each of them look and feel quite youthful, and they were conscious of the curious sensation that time had leapt backward to similar walks of many years ago.

Circumambulating the court and building, they turned westward away from the house. The hills behind the manor were touched with brilliant sunlight, and the air seemed to shimmer above the meadow flowers. They talked intermittently of those early years of their acquaintance. Her father and his had been friends in Somerset's time, and they had played together as children in their earliest days. Their most poignant memories, however, came from the first years of the present reign, in the few years before her father's death, when her husband, much older than Anne, had gone off hunting with old Lord William and other men, and she and Charles, then in their early twenties, had strolled as now about the hills near Beaudesert. Then as now there had been no wicked purpose in their slipping away, though occasionally then, as now, they had clasped hands walking over the fields. The years had come and soon gone on. They wondered at the curious events that had kept them so much apart, and at the byways of circumstance that separated them even now. They both began to grow sad.

Anne loved her family deeply, even her time-serving brother Charles, who daily entered further and further into government suspicion. Most of all she had loved her sister Jane, whose husband, Sir Thomas Kitson, now remarried to her friend Elizabeth Cornwallis, had been called up and clapped in prison for his obstinacy in religion. She asked whether Charles could not arrange through his friends at court to have the gentleman set free. Charles replied that he believed he could do nothing, so little influence had any of his friends at present. But he would see what might be done.

Over the brow of a gently rolling yellow hill, they sat down beneath a solitary tree. The birds above fluttered about on the branches unseen, and whistled gaily. Arundell took Anne

in his arms and kissed her, then they reclined in the long grass with her head upon his chest. They reminisced idly about times long past. Anne smiled happily at the recollection of their early walks and talks together, and of dances and parties in the holiday seasons, but frowned and stiffened when once he mentioned her husband only in passing; thereafter Charles expunged Sir Henry Lee from their memories and recounted stories of their pleasure gatherings as if the man had not been present.

In a curious way, though separated irreparably by her marriage, they grew amorous in their speech, but chastely amorous, as if the business of love were a harmless game they might permit themselves, like a round of cards, without any expectations of one another beyond the same. In this spirit, Charles stretched his imagination for poetic metaphors for her charms and qualities, making her giggle at preposterous comparisons like eyes to twinkling stars, hair to finest wire. For a jest, he tried reciting one of Wyatt's love songs to her, one of his favorites, but neither of them could remember the lines straight through.

"I find no peace and all my war is done," he ventured, and then paused.

"I feed me in sorrow and laugh in all my pain," she replied.

"Ah. 'And my delight is causer of this strife,'" he said, laughing ruefully. "Anne," he said, "I'll tell you freely, I could wish we were in other case than we are."

She gazed up at him with a sad smile in her eyes.

"I could wish so, too, Charles," she answered, but so saying, she scrambled to her feet, with a very slight frown, and tugged at his hand to make him rise.

"Disdain me not without desert," he cried out, "nor leave me not so suddenly--."

Laughingly she took up the refrain: "Since well I wot that in your heart, you mean no thing but honesty"--

"So I disdain you not."

What tension there had been was broken, and together, in harmony, they walked back towards the manor house. By way of a solatium, she kissed him again outside the gates.

As they re-entered the courtyard, they found a body of men milling about in several groups, some standing beside their horses. Spying Arundell, Lord Thomas Paget detached himself from the nearest group and hurried towards him.

"Master Arundell," he called, "here are friends who must meet you."

Arundell turned to Anne and bowed stiffly from the waist, saying "Mistress." She half-curtisied in reply, with a faint smile, and walked on to the house.

"Gentlemen, I present our friend Mr. Arundell of the court," Paget called out. Behind him, Arden, Gifford, and Willoughby formed a backwall as if he were addressing an assembly. Grasping Arundell's arm, Lord Thomas led him round from man to man. "Charles, here is Mr. Walter Harcourt of Stanton Harcourt and of Ellenhall not far off from here. These his worthy brothers Mr. Edward and Mr. Thomas Harcourt of Tamworth, and his uncle Michael Harcourt."

Charles nodded to each of the gentlemen as they were introduced. Lord Thomas went on: "Here are Walter's brothers-in-law Mr. Thomas and Mr. John Robinson of Drayton Bassett. Their cousin Mr. Thomas Fitzherbert of Swynnerton. These gentlemen behind, William

Harmon, William Egerton; you have met Mr. Barler and Mr. Goodier; Thomas Combes, Roger Stamford, Mr. Charnelles of Suerson--gentlemen, all."

A chorus of grunts and greetings rose from those named and the rest behind, who were very many more. Arundell nodded affably, but was much perplexed at this unaccustomed display of country gregariousness. From the corner of his eye he caught sight of Twinyho, Paget's servingman, emerging from the store buildings with white sacks on his shoulder; behind him came another, Walklate, with an armload of muskets and calivers. Arundell started at the sight. He looked more closely round and saw that many of the men wore bows and wooden quivers across their backs; strapped across some of the horses were bundles of guns with pouches of shot and powder; the men carried from their belts everything from ancient broadswords to modern sabers to ugly serrulate dirks.

"Uh, Tom," he said. But Lord Thomas was speaking to Walter Harcourt; beside him John Robinson, a virile young man with short hair and a florid face, was interrupting at every juncture and being told peremptorily to be still.

Finally Mr. Harcourt raised his hand in the air and the men began mounting up. Lord Thomas turned to Arundell.

"We'll just see them on their way, shall we, Charles?" he said, smiling amiably. "Here is your nag, ready and waiting."

Paget swung into his saddle, and Arundell followed into his, partly out of curiosity, partly out of the want of a strong reason not to. But he had misgivings; these were not sportsmen he was joining. It was rather more like the beginning of a crusade, setting out in relief of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

The party, more than thirty men in all, rode out through the gates in a rattle of swords and stirrups with clouds of dust rolling high up behind. As the band strung out along the high-road, the men Charles had met, all Staffordshire gentlemen, moved naturally to the head of the column. Arundell would have preferred a place discreetly in the middle of the pack, but the common men, deferentially, kept dropping behind him, more and more slowly as he slowed, until soon there were two armed bands, with Arundell riding as captain of the second one. He kept looking round at the peasants and servingmen behind him and tried waving them ahead, but each time he did so they touched their brows or doffed their caps and grinned back at him happily. Finally he gave it up and spurred his horse ahead.

The party rode southward, west of Lichfield, past Maple Hayes and finally Shenstone, more than an hour now from having started out. Alongside him, Mr. Fitzherbert leaned from his saddle and addressed him in tones too low to be heard. Arundell cupped his hand behind his ear and leaned back. He liked the fellow's looks immediately, his large shoulders that looked like he could crush a man easily and his open, honest face that looked like he could do nothing of the sort. Fitzherbert raised his voice above the hooves.

"This is a bad business, Master Arundell," he called, frowning.

"What business is it?" Charles shouted back.

Mr. Fitzherbert looked at him quizzically, then shrugged his shoulders and rode on. His scowl showed that he thought it no less a bad business.

Just east of Shenstone, they topped a hill and descended into a shallow valley golden in the sunlight. Then Arundell noticed off to the south another band of some thirty horsemen riding roughly parallel but approaching them, as if in pursuit.

"Christ's body," muttered Arundell.

He spurred forward and pointed across Lord Thomas to the other party. Paget grinned back at him and nodded agreeably.

A mile farther on, the two bands had become one. The newcomers, mostly men of the common sort, were also armed to their teeth. They were now a small army, posting along at a considerable pace, raising a column of dust that might have frightened Pompey into leaving behind his tents.

At length they approached a pleasant knoll ascending out of a circle of woods, atop which knoll, nestled amongst small clumps of wood, rose a single block of a stone manor house, dwarfing all of the outer buildings save the nearby barn. The men reined up behind the trees.

Mr. Walter Harcourt reached over to shake Mr. Arden's hand. Addressing Lord Thomas, he signified that however things should fall out, their gratitude to his lordship was assured. Then John Robinson, impatient to begin his work, dug his blunt spurs into his horse's flanks, and the horse reared back, and both horse and Robinson, his sword raised high above his head, swung out round the men nearby, crashed through the stand of trees, and galloped forth onto the broad meadow stretching down from the house. Some fifty or sixty men spurred likewise and tore through the wood behind him, and up the yard rode a company at full charge.

Arundell stared in awe at the sight. It was something he had not seen since the siege of Newhaven in his youth. Lord Thomas still sat beside him, and Sir Francis, and Mr. Arden, but all the rest were dashing towards the manor house like a host of cavalry.

As the irregular lines of riders, flanked out along the whole front of the house, neared the top of the knoll, a few flashes appeared at upper windows, followed seconds later by the crackle of distant musketry. But the shooting stopped before the house had been gained. Moments later a figure rode a few meters out from the milling horsemen and waved his arm down the hill. Off to the north, a small group of men could be seen descending the slope at a full gallop. The attacking party had dismounted by the front doors and gone running through the house, throwing open the shutters, waving from the upper windows, cheering joyfully and making funny faces at the men holding their horses in the yard below.

Lord Thomas turned to his friends, grinning as if to say "I told you so," and the remnant band set off for home. Within little more than two hours' time, they arrived at Beaudesert. They dismounted in the courtyard, as Lord Paget's men ran out to grab the horses, and entered the house.

As they gathered in the long gallery to refresh themselves, Arundell said drily, "Well, my friends, God save the queen and the right! Another Agincourt for the English."

Sir Francis slapped his thigh and exclaimed, "It was; bless me, it was! Agincourt! Did you mark the miscreants turn up their tails and run away?" Arden was beaming at everyone.

"And was it the flower of French chivalry we put to flight today, gentlemen?" Arundell asked.

"The flower of, ha ha ha, French chivalry, ha ha," laughed Paget. "Oh damn me, the very flower, yes! Ha, ha, ha."

"Who did we put to flight?"

Whereupon the gentlemen at last told Arundell the story of how the earl of Leicester, under cover of Mr. Paramore's mortgages, wrongfully and cruelly had evicted the tenants of Drayton Basset, as he had already dispossessed them of Shuttington and other manors in the region. The Robinsons, thanks to their friends throughout the county, were now restored to their own.

Arundell groaned. "So we have been then in a rebellion."

"No, no, not a rebellion," Lord Thomas explained, speaking persuasively in a voice that might have soothed Capaneus in hell, finally beginning to suspect that perhaps he ought to have explained it all beforehand. He grinned like a shy schoolboy caught in some small solecism. "Merely the triumph of right over extortion and rapacity, my dear Charles. It is not justly called rebellion because they have no political purposes, nor mean harm to any but their enemies."

"What are your ends in this bad business?" Arundell asked.

"Merely the triumph of the right," Sir Francis replied. "All the gentlemen of this county have long marked Leicester's bold encroachments hereabouts, where he has no ancient right. We are pleased to provide what material help we may to our aggrieved neighbors."

"I see," said Charles, and turned away.

Even as he spoke, the men at Drayton Basset continued busy. A number of them were at work upon the trees just near the house, felling them and dragging them off with horses to create a free field of fire. They ditched the house all round, and barricaded the ground floor windows and doors with heavy furniture from within. Not long after nightfall, they had completed their preparations. They set a watch on the roads nearby, a mile or two out in each direction, each guardsman nestled snugly down into stacks of kindling wood. The rest of them retired for the night, sleeping with weapons in their arms.

At Beaudesert, the gentlemen and ladies played at primero by candlelight.

The four men who had fled the house arrived in Tamworth just before suppertime. They stopped at an inn, where lay Richard Paramore, who was using this pleasant rural town as a base from which to oversee his business in all the country roundabout. When he received the news, he began to splutter, which took up about ten minutes, and then he donned his jacket and hastened down the road to Mr. Ferrers's house in Tamworth Castle.

The robust Mr. Humphrey Ferrers was by far the most substantial citizen of Tamworth. His family had always been successful in the district, but Humphrey had outshone them all. Besides his ample commercial talents, he boasted still another great advantage: a powerful friend at court. In return for little favors which now and then he undertook to do for the earl of Leicester, he was assured of much success in his suits at court; he was likely to receive the benefit of any doubt when his cases came before the courts; he was seldom affronted by his neighbors. Mr. Humphrey Ferrers had been fortunate in his affairs.

Mr. Ferrers and his wife were sitting down to dinner as Paramore arrived. The children having already dined in the kitchen were tramping up the stairwell to their beds, ogling the

newcomer from the floor above. Paramore was ushered into the parlor to wait. When Ferrers had finished, he rejoined his London guest and heard the tale of Drayton Basset. Mr. Paramore was in a state of extreme excitement. He had an investment here of a sizable sort, and he loved very little the idea of losing it to a churlish mob. Mr. Ferrers strove to reassure him; in the morning he would ride over with a posse and burn the outlaws out. Mr. Paramore loved that idea even less. He grew more and more agitated until at last Mr. Ferrers required him to close his mouth and leave the business to him.

Paramore had not failed to observe that my lord of Leicester would be little pleased were anything to go agley. Ferrers, who took such things to heart, hastened to his servants' quarters and summoned up his men. Tristram Warde he dispatched southward to Coleshill in Warwickshire, where Sir George Digby was a special friend of the earl of Leicester's interest in that region. The others he sent up and down the streets of Tamworth with messages for all the householders.

The next morning Mr. Ferrers, accompanied by a posse of some forty-five men, was met about a mile from Drayton Basset by Sir George with about forty more. Ferrer's party carried with them a string of horses bearing straw. The day was fine, and the prospect from the house was all that could be wished, except that it included this company of men approaching down the highroad like Hannibal upon Rome.

The men inside the house scrambled up upon the alarum made. John Robinson darted from room to room positioning his friends at windows and doors, while Mr. Harcourt and his family took up posts directly above the hall door. Thomas Robinson, who was not a terribly bright man, wandered about touching the furniture and moaning softly. Many of the farmers and servingmen who'd been given guns looked at them doubtfully and turned them over in their hands, as if to assure themselves they had the right ends pointed outward.

The posse, nearly a hundred strong, ranged out along the bottom of the slope in a serried line. Mr. Ferrers took his pistol from Tristram Warde and rode forward up the slope, followed by Mr. Wirty, the justice of the peace. As they neared the house Mr. Ferrers stopped, and Mr. Wirty came on alone. Just before the ditch, he looked up at the windows bristling with guns and drawn bows and swallowed anxiously.

"Who. Ahem. Who speaks for those within this f-ouse, house?" he called. He had almost said "fort," recalling his youthful exploits at the siege of Leith.

"I speak for them. God save the queen!" called John Robinson in reply.

"If that is you, Mr. Robinson, I must order you to leave this house peacefully and to trouble no more the just possession of Master Richard Paramore of London."

"Carry thyself to hell!"

Mr. Wirty turned his horse's head about and started back. Ferrers waved him forward. He shrugged his shoulders and turned about again.

"Mr. Robinson," he called.

"What!" called the young master.

"Cease this contumacy."

"I will not."

Mr. Wirty tried again. "Mr. Ferrers, a former sheriff of this county, is come to possess this land by due order of law. He holds in his hand a letter of attorney, signed by Mr. Paramore whom you know, which letter authorizes Mr. Ferrers to enter upon this manor house and land to the earl of Leicester's own use, and to oppose with his might all who would prevent him."

Mr. Ferrers waved a piece of paper up towards the windows.

"He has no authority here," shouted Robinson.

"Nay, sir, he has his letter of attorney," said Mr. Wirty.

"Notwithstanding that, you may tell Mr. Ferrers," called John Robinson, "that if Mr. Ferrers comes upon this ground today, one of us will die for it."

Just then a discharge of musketry boomed forth of one of the upper windows. The sound rolled out and thinned to a crack as it descended the knoll. Mr. Wirty's horse jumped, but he succeeded in calming it, better than he calmed himself, as everybody looked skittishly about to see whether anyone was fallen.

One of the servingmen had just found where his trigger was. Mr. Wirty was silent for some seconds, looking nervously at the faces peering at him from above and from behind the sheds nearby.

"Mr. Robinson! Truly! Truly, I beg you to desist."

The house was silent. Ferrers called to him, and he swung about and cantered down the hill, followed by Ferrers himself.

The morning was still and brightly shining. The slopes of the knoll glistened with greens of various hues. It was a fine day to be dozing beneath a tree, or swimming.

Digby and Ferrers raised their swords aloft and the whole line dashed forward. The thundering sound of hooves carried up the hill. As the charge drew near the house, musket fire flashed from some of the windows and arrows wobbled across the sky between the hosts. Some of the posse dismounted and discharged their own guns, and chips of plaster flew off the building's front. One hardy man made the ditch at a leap, but a ball struck his horse and he tumbled to earth beneath it. Then others came across, and the men rode up and down the length of the house within the trenchwork, looking for an opening in the defense through which to enter. One of Digby's men cried out in pain as an arrow struck through his arm. Another went down with a wound in his thigh. The crackle of fire slowed as the first fusillade had been let off, but as weapons were reloaded, often inexpertly, more flashes poked out from the windows. Another man clutched at his arm and spun round cursing.

Digby swung his horse about and called to his men to return. Two of those within the ditch, with little room for their horses to gather speed, failed to make it back across, but they scrambled up the bank like jugglers and fled down the slope on foot. Halfway down the hill, Sir George and Mr. Ferrers regrouped their men and faced the house again. The cheering from within subsided.

Before the house lay two men wounded. They stood up slowly and shook themselves, and then walked down the hill clutching their injuries. Digby and Ferrers could be seen conferring earnestly before their men.

Inside the house, John Robinson strode from room to room congratulating the men on their victory. His brother sat in the corner of an inner room with his legs drawn up.

Suddenly, Tristram Warde led a small band of men out from the left of the line, galloping up the hill with a string of packhorses behind them. They approached the house from the corner; though the depressed muskets fired from all across the front, no one was hit, and only one packhorse failed to clear the ditch. Dismounting at the corner of the building, with their horses kept close about them for cover, the men hauled down bundles of straw and piled them along the wall. They fired them, then backed away towards the ditch with their mounts held between them and the house.

Smoke billowed up the wall and into the sky above. Barricades were torn away and defenders poured from windows and doors to extinguish the blaze before it could ignite the timber frame. Whereupon the whole line dashed forward again, and many more men, lest their friends be left exposed, ran yelling from the house to meet the charge. From upstairs, more shots rang out above the tumult and many more arrows fell. The two parties met about the ditch, which by its steep sides and unsure footing wrought more injury than did any feat of arms.

Now Whirl was king! Men swung their heavy weapons blindly, and if they missed their foe ahead they undid their friend behind. Confused cries filled the ground; sword clashed upon musketstock, musketstock crunched into knee or souged into guts; defenders poured out of one window to find assaulters pouring into the next. Fist caught jaw, bow broke upon head, stock thumped across shoulders, stout fellows were thrown bellowing into the ditch or pitched flailing out of a door. The men upstairs had long abandoned their firearms and joined the melee below. Here was where all demons came to court. The yard was paved with groaning fellows holding their heads and weaving to and fro, trod upon by knots of men hurling themselves against their antagonists. John Robinson ran through the parlor with his pistol newly primed. As he reached the hall, Tristram Warde came leaping through the great door brandishing a cudgel aloft, seeking prey. John extended his arm and discharged his piece into Tristram's face; the big man made no cry or gesture, but somersaulted out of doors and down the steps into the yard.

Next to him, someone left off pummelling shoulders and began to scream. All around, men rushed near and bent over the body without touching it. The reaction spread all along the house; those struggling far off at the corners could not see what had gone wrong, but rumors passed through the crowd like a powderflash.

The Tamworth men began backing towards the ditch, while the defenders edged towards the far sides of the house. Many swung listlessly at their near opponents as the armies disengaged, and there was some pushing at the edge of the ditch. At length, however, Mr. Ferrers's posse was massed once again halfway down the hill. The Robinson party stood in the yard and windows staring down at the wounded men who painfully claudicated their slow way down to their comrades.

A few minutes later, Sir George Digby rode back up with two of his personal retainers. He leapt the ditch and came up to the door. The defenders stepped out of his way. His men dismounted and, with a certain repugnance on their faces, hoisted the former Tristram Warde aloft and threw him across a saddle. Not a word was said by anyone. Sir George and Mr. Ferrers and their posse of nearly ninety men, many of whom would be sore for several days

or a week, one of whom need never fear soreness, rode silently away. Dust hung in the air behind them.

Mr. Ferrers departed the following day for the court. There, after hasty explanations to the earl of Leicester, he was shown before the Privy Council, where he related the tale of his legal process resisted by a seditious mob, one man slain. Lords Burghley and Sussex raised some question as to the true ownership of the land, but it was pointed out to them, quite properly, that the first problem at hand was a manslaughter and an armed and lawless band still abroad in the heart of England, and that matters of right could be disentangled later. So the Council promptly wrote out warrants to the sheriff of the county, and to the local noblemen known for loyalty, requiring them to quell the disturbances at once. Word of the assault on Drayton Basset had reached Beaudesert on the same day it occurred. Mr. Arden and his wife had already returned to Park Hall, and the Giffords had moved on to relations farther north. When he heard the news, Lord Thomas muttered a mild curse. He went round and told Arundell and Sir Francis Willoughby, who were playing at fencing in the gardens, that the manor house had been unlawfully set upon and one man killed.

Arundell grew quite angry. Sir Francis inquired upon which side the dead man had been fighting. Lord Thomas recounted the version he'd been given, that the deceased had been one Warde of Ferrers's party, but that "he had been slain by some of his own company that came with him."

Sir Francis suggested that perhaps the earl of Leicester had learned a lesson of the incident, and would hereafter cease meddling in country affairs. Arundell suggested that the defenders would soon learn a lesson in slaughter, when the government's warrants should arrive, and that if there were any survivors and those survivors were to say where they had got their weapons, certain good fellows now conversing merrily would learn a lesson of the Fleet prison. The situation had begun to look serious, even to Lord Thomas.

Arundell took his hurried leave of Anne, Lord Thomas took leave of his wife, and together they and Twinyho, Walklate, and Sharrock galloped northeastward into Derbyshire, to pursue the court on the queen's progress in Norfolk by circuitous ways, lest they come across a party of militia on the highway.

At the end of the week the Lords Dudley and Stafford arrived at Drayton Basset, Mr. Ferrers by their side repeating his version of the story in several recensions, with a party of three hundred men behind them. The manor house was encircled, and Thomas Johnson, the queen's Sergeant at Arms, rode forward to read the Privy Council warrants. After safe conducts given, the defenders, appearing somewhat abashed and overthrown, filed out unarmed. Mr. Johnson entered the house and returned with the Robinsons in tow, John looking rather surly, Thomas as if he were seeing camels in the clouds. Mr. Harcourt and his kinsmen, Charnelles, Goodier, Harmon and the rest of the substantial citizens were cut out of the herd and mounted for return to London; the servingmen and tenants were dispersed to their homes with a scolding heartily delivered. Lord Edward Dudley observed Mr. Fitzherbert among the men detained, and quietly sent him on his way with a meaningful look.

In the succeeding weeks, Arden and Sir Francis and his lady were examined for complicity, then released. The participants were interrogated in Star Chamber and remanded to the Fleet, whence two years later they were freed upon bonds of good conduct, all saving John Robinson, who went eventually to the gallows. Some suspicion attached itself to Lord

Paget, especially as he hovered about for a month or two pointing out to everyone that “more is made of the matter than needeth, and that the country hath been at great charges without profit” by investigating the matter so thoroughly.

My lord of Leicester had his manor after all; his widow died in residence there over fifty years later.

VI. LEICESTER FURIOSO

(1579)

(The Narrative of Francis Southwell)

"I see how plenty suffers oft,
And hasty climbers soon do fall;
I see that those which are aloft
Mishap doth threaten most of all."

We had, all of us, at the first, such great hopes.

When M. Simier first arrived, almost indeed until he left again, we had great hopes of him especially, so well he sped him with the queen. Now, as I write these, it is three years later; how incomparably we are the worse for those three years, I shudder to imagine it. Few think now we shall soon see the sun again, except, some say, by rough means. From such hardy sayers I do keep me free.

But we saw light in the east in the summer of '79.

Throughout the year of 1578, in the latter months of it especially, was all the talk of the marriage. The duke of Anjou's agents fluttered about the court like housemartins, and on her majesty's progress in the fall we saw progress being made indeed. At Long Melford Hall, M. de Bacqueville had long audience with the queen. He would not tell its issue, but grinned exceedingly. At my cousin's house at Kenninghall in Norfolk, he and M. Bussy d'Ambois spoke again with her highness, and thereafter he gave a jewel to my lord of Surrey (the earl of Arundel that now is), and another to Lord Harry. We passed on, stopping in September at Woodrising, where dwell my kinsmen the Southwells of that country, and so towards London again. At Mr. Stonor's house, Mr. Arundell rejoined us, and thence we came to Greenwich whilst her majesty stopped with my lord of Leicester at Wanstead. My lord did not tell her then that just before her coming he had been married of a secret to the widow of Essex. It was not a great while before the whole court knew of it, but none dared inform the queen, lest my lord's great paw should fall upon him. My lord well knew how black should be the queen's brows, were she ever to learn of a marriage among her special courtiers. My lord of Leicester and his friends did much notwithstanding to thwart the queen's marriage to Anjou, never ceasing to buzz in her majesty's ear what great perils lay with France. The earl of Sussex, on the other hand, did what he could to soften her mind to it, and before long many of the court were joining one side or the other. But all must needs wait to learn the queen's own will, which was not forthcoming.

In January during Christmastide, M. Simier came up to court from France. He was then (though afterwards they have come to jars) the duke of Anjou's greatest friend and the master of his wardrobe. He was a very handsome gentleman, tall and lean with his long doublet cut in the French style, his long face, both solemn and merry by turns, with a pickerdevant beard below his great feathered bonnet. A swasivious tongue he had, with perfect English in it, and he wore his lands upon his back; never had we seen such stuffs as he had made his clothing of. The queen loved him at once, and paranomastically called him her monkey, and from his uprising to his downlying he sat by her side and spoke matter of love in his master's behalf. My lord of Leicester, the Great Bear, waxed furious, and mooned and moped and made long faces at her majesty, which methinks she did enjoy surpassingly.

My Lord Harry was then in Dacre House residing, and I with him on a day, when who should come to us there but de Vray, the duke of Anjou's secretary, with M. Rochetaillé, another of his envoys to the queen.

"My lord," he says to Lord Harry; "Mr. Southwell," he says to me; "Mr. Arundell, Mr. Cornwallis," he says, before we were introduced. By this we were somewhat flattered, of course. He begs our ears for a piece of logic, as he calls it, and he unfolds to us the manifold benefits to this realm of this marriage that was toward.

My Lord Harry replies that this is well and very good, and he for one wishes godspeed to the duke in his suit.

M. de Vray goes on to assure us that M. Simier, after Mr. Ambassador's enlarging upon our multifarious virtues, such as wisdom, discretion, valor, courtesy, and what not, has conceived an inexhaustible love for us, and it will not do but he must tell us so himself. And so we are required to meet with him at the French ambassador's house, where he lies, as soon as conveniently may be.

Lord Harry then tells the secretary that we will accompany him there, which accordingly we do. And having arrived in Salisbury Court, the promise made is now made good. My Lord Mauvissière himself comes out to take our horses, and here is M. Simier, as jolly as when we have seen him with the queen, introducing himself and singing *placebo* and protesting all his love for us in handfuls. Our English are a noble race, he says, and he does affect them all as he does his own, but he must feel a special love for those who are of his own religion. My Lord Harry asks politely which religion he is speaking of (for the duke and his friends have no good name for constancy in faith, since at home they are one day on the king's side and the next day on the Huguenots' against him). But M. Simier congratulates him merrily for his witticism and assures us all that he has been traduced to us and that no one loves the mass so much as the duke and he do.

Follows then, there is nothing else but we must come up to the ambassador's privy chambers and sup good wine, and hear from M. Simier what he in good sadness expects shall occur when his master becomes the queen's bedfellow. Eternal amity with France, security from Spain, these only begin the list of commodities we may expect of that match, he says, but what pleases him most of all, in his own mind, is the vasty benefits it shall bring to his fellow Catholics. No longer shall priest go to gallows, nor gentleman to prison for harboring him, nor nobleman to confinement in house till he endanger his soul and compromise his name by going to the church. When "Monsieur" (as the duke of Anjou was called, because he was heir to his brother the king), I say, when Monsieur should become our king consort, his own chapel should be as an example to the realm. Who should say that Monsieur's coming in might not one day return our great nation *in toto* to the church? But in any case, we who were still of that church would find ourselves in very different case than now we did. Later, my Lord Harry enlarged upon this theme to us his friends at Dacre House. M. Simier and the ambassador, he avowed, had but confirmed that which all along had been his hope. Of general causes, he said, this match is both honorable, convenient, profitable, and needful.

Mr. Arundell was somewhat in the dumps, whereat Mr. Cornwallis remarked, to which Mr. Arundell said that for his part he could wish for nothing more than some little toleration as was promised, but his fear was that no sincerity lay in these approaches. He could see, he said, that the court was in a deadlock. On the one hand were the innumerable friends

of Leicester, who hated the French and hated no less all Catholics, and hated most of all a diplomatic ending of the Dutch rebellions, which would clean cut off all hope of an English army in aid of the rebels, with Leicester in plumes and silver spurs at its head. On the other hand were Sussex and Burghley and their friends at court, who pointed to the Spanish force in Ireland and maintained that the Spaniard could not be fought in Ireland and Flanders at once and the same time, and that therefore diplomacy must be tried to the uttermost--what better way than this bond to the Frenchman, to put the Spaniard in a terror of us. And in the middle, said he, sits the queen, whose true intent is known to nobody. What more like, then, said Charles, than that the French should wish to break this deadlock by recruiting new allies in the court, though they mean us otherwise no great good, and at their embarkation (so to speak) may leave us on the beach.

Lord Harry commenced to read a gloss upon this view, in which he agreed to all his friend had said but added what of that? If we enter the game as pawns, nonetheless we may emerge as kings, or rather (says he) as great knights alongside our new king. My Lords Sussex and Burghley already are our friends in this cause, he said, and worse enemies than Leicester and his fautors we can never have, and if by joining this game we might join in the fruits of victory, well, that was sauce upon the meat. Let us, says Harry, speak to all our friends, for the time is advantageous, and it may be when all is done we will have our little toleration and may come openly in the court in the colors of our faith. Then shall our lady the queen of Scots be assured in life and freedom, and then shall her friends find reward for the service we have done her at our risk.

Mr. Arundell then acquiesced in the wisdom of Lord Harry's courses, and so we were resolved. For a while, we were the planets ascendant, and no men for the times but us. My Lord Montague came up to stay in town, and at his house in St. Mary Overies the Catholic gentlemen and ladies congregated freely. My lord of Southampton, though he had put away his wife for certain causes and thereupon had little love for Montague, her father, did join us when he could, in ill health notwithstanding. My lord of Northumberland was now our constant friend, no longer watched at every turning for a sign of his brother's old disaffection. Lord Harry was never happier, and managed us all in our little efforts as a master of the hunt will point his hounds, and the lords and gentlemen were everywhere, speaking to this he, explaining to that she, how a new England was to land at Dover any day. Harry wrote a book to show how great a thing that marriage would be to the whole realm, and nothing would do but my lord of Sussex must write another, and up he calls my friend Arundell to his house in Bermondsey to help him in his task.

I rode with Charles from Greenwich, and the earl receives us with so much grace we thought ourselves were the queen's betrothed. He had always loved us well, he said, for the affection he had always borne to his kin of the house of Howard, but never so much as now, quoth he, when at last we made a common party and would, with God's direction, end my lord of Leicester's tyrannical rule forever. Charles must help him write his little book, he said, for he was but a soldier, and could not honey his words for the queen's ears without some of the poet's graces. Mr. Arundell protested his great willingness to help, but said that it was Lord Howard who might more fitly undertake the task. Oh Lord Harry is a scholar right enough, said the earl with merry eyes, but damn me, Charles, his asiatic prose is more than a good Christian Englishman can reach the end of. Whereupon they sat together and shuffled up a book of advantages for the queen's eyes.

And the gentlemen were sanguine. Nothing joyed me so much as their faces, which is poignant to me now, but then it was a pleasure to hear their free and happy speeches. My Lords Windsor and Compton were more to be seen than ever in recent times; my Lord Paget came up to town and dwelt among us; and so did Lord Harry's nephew to dwell with him, my cousin Philip, then styled still my lord of Surrey. My lord of Oxford, grown cold of late, was now our great companion, and the gentlemen began again to trust him, if not in his sobriety at least in his good will. And everywhere was M. Simier, bestowing gifts among us and leading us up and down the town. Mr. Arundell particularly he sought after, and they were often to be seen at court, even with the queen. Her majesty, for all her years, looked like a girl again, and nothing pleased her more than to stand in idle conversation with M. Simier, saying I know not what just to give free reins to his Frenchlike graces and amorous toys. No man for speech of love but M. Simier. I think had he been wooing for himself we had had our marriage that very spring.

Slowly, as time passed, Mr. Arundell and Mr. Tresham (who was my lord of Sussex's special friend) began to shed their misgivings and join in our more robust spirit. Mr. Arundell particularly I have always loved, for his gentle and manly ways and his dignified conversation and good will. I have always found him a true man to his friends, with that much good grace and wit as I always desire his company. But in the troubled times before, he had grown somewhat out of humor; he wished, he said, only his small corner in which to worship, but here were cries and exclamations, parties and factions, friendships of policy and betrayal of friends; here were good men called up and bad men speeding well, spies abroad and houses watched, suspicion everywhere, the queen's head turned from her true friends, the pulpits of England filled with execrations and blasphemy. I have watched as he paced his rooms in the Priory, never sounding a word aloud but rather brooding upon I know not what; and in special, when he returned from the country some months before this, where had been a riot or melee and some man killed and others as I believe condemned, how he sat before the fire and stared into it upon the hour, while his friend Kate did fret and worry over him for his taking no food and little sleep, saying to me, Mr. Francis, do speak with him, as you are his companion, for he will poison all his goodness with this foul melancholy. But he would then rise, and shake his head at some unspoken thought, and come to us with rueful smiles, and we would play at cards by the candlelight, where his mind was not upon his trumps. But now my friend was flourishing as the green bay tree. His saturnian humor he had put aside, as the marriage to Monsieur seemed more and more assured, and Kate; who was more lovely than his Kate was at that time?

But my lord of Leicester had not disappeared in smoke. He made his party strong. From the pulpits everywhere, the preciser sort of preachers exclaimed against the French, and damned the papistical traitors (meaning us!) to everlasting hellfire, who supported the Frenchman in his suit. And so great was my lord's authority that the most part of the Council stood with him, only my Lord Chamberlain and Lord Treasurer excepted. For they were all his kinsmen or near favorers, or else belike in terror of his disdain of them. In May of '79, when the Council met in Whitehall, they would not speak for marriage unless the queen herself commanded them. Monsieur must come to England were any progress to be made, but Leicester employed his evil devices to prevent a passport being made for him. M. Simier was beside himself, as June passed with no helps.

Then, in late June, the pot came to the boiling. M. Simier comes to us himself in Greenwich Park, where Raleigh and myself are helping Arundell to rewrite his books. Mr. Arundell

was then a receiver of lands, but he had little head for figures, poor man; but he would not have others do his work for him, very commendable in him I am sure, and was forced to play long hours in the accounting books, which Raleigh, who is a genius in mathematical matters, was his best savior in.

M. Simier finds us there, and says he has had word brought him that he must look for a stab in his guts. He requires of us a privy doublet which will turn away any blade. Mr. Arundell sends Sharrock his man to my lord of Oxford, who is possessed of a privy doublet of fine mesh and strong as a dungeon wall, impenetrable to cannon shot, he says. M. Simier thanks him heartily, but swears the affront does give him greater hurt than any Italian stabado in the darkness; for in the point of honor, he says, he is an ambassador of a great prince, whom no wife-murdering *luxurioso* must threaten with impunity. At which we understand he means the earl of Leicester. M. Simier begs our help in accomplishing his revenge. Mr. Raleigh says then that he must beg our pardon, it is not his part to seek revenge for another man's private hurts, however just, and so he leaves us.

Perpending this cause for several moments, Mr. Arundell says that for his part the matter were better left alone, and that he and others would gladly walk with M. Simier to save his life; but that if French honor did so require satisfaction, it were never good to challenge the earl to the field, for it was well known in England that the earl cared little for French honor.

Rather, Mr. Arundell says, if M. Simier is so hardy as to brave the bear in his den, he might inform the queen of the tale of my lord's wife. What? says M. Simier, has not all of Europe known the tale of my lord's wife these twenty years? I mean, sir, says Arundell, my lord's wife that now is.

M. Simier looks uncomfortable and ventures to say it appears we have been revenging ourselves upon different earls, for he had meant the earl of Leicester, who was his mortal enemy. No less do I mean the same man, says Arundell with a very big grin. For it is an open secret, M. Simier, and I wonder that you haven't heard it, that my lord of Leicester has been married these nine months to the earl of Essex his widow, whom aforetime he had known in the way of love, and she is already delivered of a babe.

M. Simier sat back open-mouthed. Then he began to laugh apace and slap himself upon the thigh and call out oaths in French. No English tongue in all these months had been bold enough to tell the queen that her old lover was now wedded, and to such a dame as Lettice of Essex was, whom her majesty hated anyway before Belial and the Turk. But Simier was cut of a different cloth, and he had now found powder for his gun.

It fell out thus. Finding occasion the following day to speak with the queen on the terrace walk at Greenwich, he asks her bluntly if it is only Leicester who dissuades her from marrying so worthy a prince as Monsieur. Her majesty (he told us) murmurs something about her people requiring time to accustom themselves to the idea. He persists and says he believes it is Leicester who dissuades her highness from marrying. She smiles coyly and observes that a certain amount of jealousy is only natural in the earl. He says he only wonders how rare a thing it is the earl should dissuade others from marriage while he himself enjoys that blessed state of matrimony. She stares at him queerly and begins to look bilious. He affects all innocence and remarks how he is quite sure that Leicester's wife the widow of Essex would speak more favorably of marriage, having newly had a year's experience of its joys. The queen turns greenish and leans against the balustrade; she struggles for breath and

weaves upon her feet; she hides her face; she brushes back a tear; she straightens up and looks him in the eye and says, "Damn me, my lord shall die for this."

This was our apogee, this our noon, here our midsummer's holiday. My lord of Leicester was ordered to the Tower; only Sussex (and ask not me why he did it) saved him that great peril by assuaging the queen's wrath somewhat, observing that in Christian countries marriage is not treason. Nonetheless, my lord is packed off to Humphrey's Tower on Greenwich Hill, and the next day her majesty signs the duke's passport, and M. Rochetaillé and Mr. Stafford are sent off to bring Monsieur over. But the tension now was unspeakable. Leicester goes off to seclusion at Wanstead, where he sulks, forbidden the court. Some mutter that he means to make a revolution. His brother Warwick said openly at his table that this matter of a marriage, if it went forward, should cost many broken heads by Michaelmas.

Then one evening, myself and Mr. Arundell are conveying M. Simier through the Blackfriars in Greenwich Park toward the water stairs, whence he meant to take barge back to the French house, where it was his use to lie. We were speaking of versifying, for both Simier and Mr. Arundell were wont sometimes to tickle the muse on sleepless nights. Here out of a doorway steps me a guardsman, one Robin Tider as we after learned, and we expect his *qui vive* right as clockworks, but instead, up comes his piece to level and sights me his barrel on my nose. Oh Lord, cries M. Simier, but Charles throws himself across him and both fly into the shrubberies, whilst my knees turn to water and down I go, and boom! a caliver touches off like the palace wall is coming down and up goes my new bonnet as if jerked from above by pranksters. The guardsman stands there staring, but Mr. Arundell and M. Simier whisk forth their rapiers and pose *en garde*, and then the miscreant drops his caliver and bolts across the lawn. To no avail, for he was taken soon after. When it was demanded of him why he had attempted so desperate an enterprise, and who had trained him to it, his constant answer was that the French did always much displease him for their effeminate ways. Such replies bring smiles to the wise; yet was he never urged towards the truth, nor did Mr. Secretary even show to him the rack. No man knows what happened to the fellow thereafter.

M. Simier was of sure opinion that my lord of Leicester had bespoken the assault, and once Mr. Vice-Chamberlain Hatton hinted in my hearing that that might not be far out. It is certain that someone wished the gentleman little good. In any case, the queen said publicly in the Presence Chamber that if a tiny hair of M. Simier's head should come to grief my lord of Leicester had best look to his paternosters. And Simier's lodgings were removed from the ambassador's house to rooms next the queen's in Greenwich Palace.

So M. Simier was safe now, and Mr. Arundell had his everlasting gratitude for the saving of his life, and I had to sell my new hangers to replace my bonnet.



M. Simier was forever with her majesty. They dined together; they played at cards; they danced, they exchanged love tokens and wrote verses. They rowed upon the Thames together. Where one day, also in July if I do not misremember, a foolish fellow shoots his piece from a boat nearby and knocks one of her watermen through his arms. M. Simier believed himself was the mark they drew upon, and complained it was the earl of Leicester's malice, but that God for his holy purpose would preserve his life unworthy until this sacred marriage were effected. Leicester's friends, likewise, said it was the papists who would rather kill the queen than have her overthrow this devilish match. In truth, it was

but a young fool rowing upon the water with a cargo of silly choirboys, who meant to show them how one cocks a gun and all unwitting shot the queen's rower off his bench. Afterward he received his pardon, even as, condemned for treason, he stood upon the gallows with head in noose, crying and puling and knocking his forehead with his hands and protesting afore God that he never meant no harm and finally bestinking the place where he stood, until, as the clergyman backs away and the audience sough in their breaths, at the instant of his turning off, him howling like the dervishes, Mr. Vice-Chamberlain Hatton rides up apace crying "Hold for the queen's sake"--and delivers to the crowd a marvelous oration of an hour's length on the subject of God's mercy shown to them and his careful providence and this miraculous sparing of the queen's life for their sakes--what jars and broils, what scrambles and maraudings, would come upon us were the queen to die untimely, who only stands between us and our ruin, praise the Lord heartily for his care of our good lady; and tells them that the queen in her celebrated clemency will have a care of her children, too, and young Appletree will have a pardon. Whereupon he steps upon his horse and rides away, amid God save the queen! from every throat, while the poor malefactor, all insensible, crying "Oh, oh, oh," is carried off to his freedom.

My lord of Northumberland is asked advice of. Oxford and Surrey must display our English dances for the French commissioners. Mr. Arundell is with the queen, who tells him she was never better friended than by the noble house of Howard. She asks Mr. Ambassador how fares the Scottish queen, and what does she require for her comfort? Bruits fly furious that Northumberland and Montague, and others of the conservative cast, are to be sworn to the Privy Council; Sir Francis Englefield and my lord of Westmoreland and other gentlemen in exile may be called for home and restored to their forfeit lands. Leicester is forbidden the court. Mr. Secretary complains of the earl's hard usage and her majesty treads upon his foot, and so Walsingham too is forbidden the court. Leicester's brother, my lord of Warwick, will not be seen; his father-in-law Knollys keeps his rooms; Hatton and Bromley lie low. Leicester's sister, Sir Henry Sidney's lady, leaves the court in a huff. And all is beer and skittles for us. Lord Harry pronounces us a victory.

Then, in August, the duke of Anjou arrived. His visit, at the queen's commandment, was kept a close secret, known only to everyone save the peasants of Cumbria. M. Simier had often shown to us his portrait, in discoursing of his ample virtues, and I had always thought him, God forgive me, the most ill-favored prince that ever I saw. On a day in August, Lord Harry Howard and I are beyond the scullery buildings at Greenwich, where my Lord Chamberlain had asked us in good friendship to oversee the stocking of the larder. Up rides a party of men to the kitchen door. Lord Harry and I are sitting on the steps wishing it were winter, as we often do in summer. (In winter we grow wistful and speak only of the summer.) On one horse sits de Bex, the duke of Anjou's secretary, with his plumed bonnet and glittering traps; on another sits du Bourg, M. Simier's man, resplendent in his clothes and weaponry. Between them sits, upon a saddle gilt-inlaid with enamelled studs, a hunch-backed peasant, stooped over, wrapped all about in a rag-tattery gray cloak and overhung with a drooping felt hat the size of a wagon wheel.

This peasant tosses Harry a new French crown and says, Here, my man, see to our horses. Harry looks at me in astonishment. Then says he, I am a slave to no man, sirrah, and least of all to a runagate and a vagabond. And he flings the crown back to the peasant. The peasant shakes with sudden fury, still with his hat pulled down over his shoulders. I tell you, you will see to our horses, cries he, or I will make it good upon your body! Bepiss yourself, you

foul son of a sow and a stallion, says Harry; your appearance makes me wish to spew. De Bex and du Bourg have their hands over their mouths to contain themselves. You wretched English noddie, cries the man, whisking off his hat so violently that his hair starts up on end, and stays there; I am no vagabond, cries he, I am the prince of France!

Oh my lord, says Harry in contrition, as he leaps to hold the duke's horse. The duke dismounts with prodigious show of dignity, and Harry leads his horse away, deftly retrieving the new crown from the duke's fingers as he passes him. I take the other gentlemen's horses, they winking at me as I do, and the three strangers enter the palace by the kitchen doors. As we marched the horses round to the stables, I remarked to my Lord Harry that he must surely have known whom he addressed. *Peccavi, confiteor*, he said with eyes adance.

This was then our first sight of the queen's great suitor. There can scarcely have been an uglier man in Europe. Lord Harry loved to call him Thersites, when he was out of our hearing. Mr. Arundell called him *Faveolus*, for his pitted, poxy face. He was twenty-four years old but could have passed for seventeen. What a villainous long, trenchy face he had, and a mincing walk, and pouty mouth. Oh, we did fear for ourselves then, for no woman above or below the orbit of the moon could ever marry such a man.

But *mirabile dictu*, the queen seemed never to notice, and fell in love with him at once. He was her gay Frog, she coyly said (though in truth he looked more like a toad), and nothing would do but he must see her famous dancing, so we have a great ball, and the duke, whose visit is of course a terrible close secret, peeks out at her from behind the arras and makes gothic faces, with broad winks, while she dances with all the gentlemen and lords of the court, and we pretend we do not see him there. Her majesty specially selected the ugliest maids of honor to attend her, and bade the fair ones keep their chambers.

Then was Leicester like a pagan god in his insurmountable wrath. It was thought most certainly throughout the realm that he would have taken arms soon after if the marriage had gone forward. My lord himself was reported to have given out as much at Wanstead house, and Warwick had said openly at his table in Greenwich that it was not to be suffered (I mean the marriage), which words of his once coming abroad, every servingman and common companion took them up in defense of his lordship's part against her majesty. And while the queen played on, how affrontable we grew at court. One example must suffice. On a day, my lord of Oxford knocks me up and offers to play at tennis for our exercise. The earl I ever found a difficult man to deny, however otherwise one might be engaged, and so off I go to let him pound at me for sport.

As we come into the court, with Mr. Cornwallis and Mr. Harry Noel, there we encounter upon the floor Mr. Philip Sidney, Leicester's nephew, at play before us with his friends. There be two men especially whom I have never loved. One of them is my lord of Oxford, for although he is a pleasant fellow and wears his plumes very well, yet is he a loose and faithless man, with no conviction to support or steady him withal. The other is Mr. Sidney, for though he is the darling of his uncle's friends and, it must be confessed, a proper gentleman in his rare parts, yet is he contrariwise too strict, for he is all conviction, without flesh and bone to temper him like ordinary men; in short (to my poor lights), he is a bigot. He does not always seem so, and I know many men do love him well. Yet I have seen it in his burning eyes. Secretly I call him Fire-Eater, and Mr. Arundell says he is Amadis of Gaul *redivivus*. For the treading on his toes without leave, he would give a man his last stabado

upon the point of honor. A poor papist he would burn in his fireplace, upon the point of conscience.

The earl of Oxford is an overbearing man at any time, but now, in our great days, he was unsurpassable. He strides onto the floor and waves Mr. Sidney peremptorily aside. Mr. Sidney stares at him with his jaw hung down from chains. My lord waves his racquet to and fro, and feigns surprise the court is still inhabited. I asked you, sir, to void this court, for we are now to play, he says. Mr. Sidney looks to the galleries, and I see to my unspeakable horror the French ambassadors assembled there, who have been watching the play, and I fear me, with an audience, we shall run with blood before this day is done.

Mr. Sidney's friends walk towards the door, but he stays them with a motion of his racquet. Oxford storms; he fumes; Leave this court at once, he shouts, for an English earl would play upon it. Mr. Sidney's face is like a blocked chimney, but he manages to stammer that if your lordship had been pleased to express your desire in milder words, perchance you might have led out those whom you shall now find will not be driven out with any scourge of fury. The Frenchmen crowd to the gallery's edge. Then my lord of Oxford says Mr. Sidney is a puppy. Mr. Sidney starts back, then asks my lord in a loud voice that which he heard clearly enough before. My lord says Puppy once again. Mr. Sidney then gives my lord the lie-impossible-to-be-retorted; for all the world knows, he says, that puppies are gotten by dogs and children by men.

Upon this invincible piece of lively wit, both men stand gaping. Finally Mr. Sidney leads his friends from the court. The Frenchmen then depart, all aflutter with these heroic preludes. It is understood that one of them will suffer with his body. For two hours after, my game was off most vilely.

A day passes, and Oxford frets and worries. At length he rises up and says this traitor Sidney will never send the challenge, for he is a pusillanimous boy. Mr. Raleigh smirks covertly and points out to his lordship that in these matters, where once the lie direct is given, it is custom for the one so fronted to make the necessary challenge. Just as he speaks, a messenger comes from Mr. Sidney, who tells my lord that Mr. Sidney wonders whether honor is not dead amongst the chivalry of England. Oxford says his antagonist would be a fool to meet him in open field. Directly satisfying himself of this, he employs Raleigh and Arundell with a message, to this effect, that the question might be honorably ended. Shortly they return. Mr. Sidney accepts gladly thereof, they tell us, and desires much it might not be deferred. Which when he hears, my lord tells us plainly he is not to hazard himself, having received such a base injury and from a common man at that, and therefore he has another course, and that is to have him murdered in his lodging. He then embarks upon the manner how it will be done, for honor's sake, and my Lord Harry and Raleigh, Arundell, and myself are beside our wits with laughter. Whereupon he angers and flings himself out of the room.

No more came of this, for Mr. Arundell and my Lord Harry informed the Lord Chamberlain of what was toward, and Sussex then informed the queen of it, who called the firebrands to her severally and bade them behave henceforward as brothers would. But this will suffice to tell what violent courses arose at that time when we thought our victory was come at last, how deeply ran our differences at court and in the land, which never would be so easily won for us, not then, not now, not ever.

Soon after, news arrives from France that Bussy d'Ambois is slain in a duel. Monsieur must leave his wooing off and hurry home to bury his friend in ground. Then Mr. Stubbs's vile treatise against the French appears, and he is deprived of his right hand in public execution, and the queen forbids by proclamation this exclaiming against her marrying. But the city is against her, and the outcry unabated, Mr. Stubbs the great only hero of the English nation, and, her lover now departed, her majesty begins to wander in her orbit. My lord of Leicester returns to court with surly glances; Leicestrian companions crawl up from the wainscots everywhere. Again the Council refuses to advise for the match unless she commands they do so. But her majesty will not stand alone against both Council and realm. In November she permits M. Simier to draft the articles out, but hems and haws upon them and will not stand by them and bids him display them to his king for considerations only.

M. Simier is in despair. He nearly weeps as we conduct him on his way to Dover, and long he clasps the hand of Mr. Arundell, his special friend, and says I fear my prince has let the iron grow cold, when it is too late now for striking. And so Mr. Stafford and Mr. Raleigh continue him on to Calais Roads, and we return to a court which has now grown, in November time, too much colder.

We had seen our sun rising in the eastern sky, and it has now set in the east again. And the only thing miraculous in this is that, in our great hope, we like babies mistook it for the dawn. It was but the beginning of long, Stygian night.

VII. SUMMER IDYLL

(1580)

"For this be sure, the flower once plucked away,
Farewell the rest, thy happy days decay."

-- Walter Raleigh

Some few held out hope. Captain du Bourg returned in March, de Vray joined him shortly afterward; letters passed back and forth across the channel. M. Simier kept in contact with his friends--but Mauvissière, the French ambassador, did not. When Lord Harry called at the French house, he was engaged; when accosted in the galleries at court, he was hurrying to the queen; when passed on the water in his boat, he was busily reading or observing the flights of various birds. The matrimonial ball had taken on a theme, which was the papist combination. The counsellors warned of it, the townsmen grumbled at it, the preachers thundered it out like Boanerges--and so perhaps, Mauvissière would now suggest, Monsieur was not really the papist he had been thought to be; perhaps he was on the point of conversion to the pure gospel; perhaps he needed but a nudge, or an inducement. Anjou himself wrote to the earl of Leicester, solicitous of his health, grateful for his friendship, assuring his friendship in the future when he as king-consort and the earl as his prime minister should make this island a fortress of the pure faith. Leicester passed these notes about like the latest corantos. From the French point of view, the Catholic courtiers had become an embarrassment.

At first the gentlemen were puzzled. The queen still looked to be in love. She still wrote lovingly to Simier, who assured them that one day all would be right again. Sussex bid them keep heart and be patient, for one day another opportunity would present itself and they should have Leicester over the hip at last.

And so, through the early months of 1580, they clung to their small hope. The strain told upon them. Quarrels arose among them. Petty differences magnified to a monstrous bigness brought occasionally the hotter blooded young men to blows. The Catholics in the country were coming in for a new scrutiny. Many were detained, in jails or bishops' houses, for ecclesiastical retraining, and once again the prisons were becoming the best places to go for Catholic companionship.

In late spring of 1580, a new Maid of Honor was preferred at court. Her name was Anne Vavasour, the daughter of Henry Vavasour of Yorkshire. She found her place through the agency of her kinsfolk, to whom she was entrusted, and her aunt Catherine Paget in particular watched over her and introduced her to the ways of court life, while Thomas Lord Paget, Catherine's brother-in-law, and Catherine's brothers the Knyvets took a special interest in her welfare. Then Mistress Vavasour caught my lord of Oxford's eye. He was seen with her in the galleries. He danced with her at the balls. Occasionally he wore her favor, and spoke dreamily of her beauties as the gentlemen played at cards. Her friends began to fear for her.

Nan was a tall girl, fully Oxford's height, with a stern, forbidding face, long and sharp with an aquiline nose and a tiny, bitter mouth. In other dress than the fineries she wore, she might have made a good preacher's wife, in appearance. Her attractions for an amorous dilettante like Oxford were not obvious. Her friends in the Howard clan admonished her

of the perils of the earl's attentions. Matters progressed, and the flirtations became openly known at court.

The Lord Treasurer sent to Lord Harry and Mr. Arundell and earnestly asked their counsel. They had no counsel for him. But something must be done, Burghley persisted, for his daughter was becoming the laughingstock of the court, with her husband leering after every drab in the palace. Lord Harry promised that they would try their uttermost to restrain the venerous earl.

That evening they met in Oxford's house in Bread Street. Mr. Cornwallis was there as well, with Mr. Noel and Mr. Swift. After some talk passed of the meal and the wine, the earl fell to inveighing against French perfidy, and insulted upon Monsieur as the greatest villain in Europe at that time.

History stood as his witness, he said, that the French had a tradition of crowning none but jackanapes and cockscombs, and had Monsieur ever come to marry the queen they would all have lived to sorrow for that day, for he was but a faithless Frenchman and therefore naught. Mr. Arundell objected that if Anjou himself were but a temporizer, yet M. Simier, throughout his sojourn here, had been constant in his faith and meaning. But Oxford would admit of no exceptions and denounced the race of Frenchmen categorically. It was an empty conversation, listlessly pursued, for the matter seemed devoid of interest after all these months. Too near the surface lay recriminations for efforts untried, advantages unfollowed, words unsaid and deeds undone, all the thousand reasons offered why success had not been theirs.

When the other gentlemen had left, Lord Howard sat in the window paging through a book of prophetic pictures that Oxford had acquired in some obscure corner of the realm. Arundell was speaking solemnly to Oxford, instructing him in the duties of clan, which precluded the lascivious dalliance with young kinswomen newly come up from the country. The earl grinned impudently. Arundell was growing angry, as he began listing off the gentlemen who considered themselves her protectors, all of whom would take in very ill part any alteration of her feminine state. Oxford hinted that he might outface them all, and that in any case he was not the man to be threatened like a boy by the Howards, who were already deeply suspected and were besides an ineffectual brood whom he might please or displease as his fancy took him.

Arundell waved aside this fanfaronading and pressed on; he cited the Lord Treasurer's concern, but received from the earl only his accustomed 'father-in-law' speech of blustering obloquy. Finally Arundell endeavored to convince the earl that he was making a laughingstock of himself as well. He spoke of a conversation he had overheard, in which two gay companions had twitted the earl for his having to descend to the cradle for his amorous triumphs, for his seeking out young virgins fresh from the country to overawe with his old-fashioned sonnets and powder-blue bonnets, whilst the real prizes of the court smirked behind their fans at his apish gracelessness. Oxford began seeing red, his choler inflamed by a goodly deal of sack.

Arundell pursued his advantage by describing Raleigh's new poem, a witty courtly exercise which had now been read by everyone but Oxford, the butt of its conceit. The earl, who disliked Raleigh anyway, insisted upon hearing the verses. Charles called down to Lord Harry, who was dozing by the window, and Harry withdrew from his bosom a folded sheet of paper with Raleigh's poem neatly written out upon it.

"Here it is, Ned; let us see, let us see," Arundell said, unfolding the paper with a needless flourish and peering closely at the lines. "'Mr. Raleigh's advice to Mistress Nan,' we read; a pleasant title, Ned, a pleasant beginning."

And he read aloud:

Many desire, but few or none deserve
To win the fort of thy most constant will.
Therefore take heed, let fancy never swerve
But unto him that will defend thee still.
For this be sure, the fort of fame once won,
Farewell the rest, thy happy days are done.

"There is more, Ned, can you bear to hear it?" smiled Charles unkindly. Oxford glowered at him in a slow rage.

Many desire, but few or none deserve
To pluck the flowers and let the leaves to fall.
Therefore take heed, let fancy never swerve,
But unto him that will take leaves and all.
For this be sure, the flower once plucked away,
Farewell the rest, thy happy days decay.

"God's blood!" cried Oxford, snatching the paper to see for himself that so much insolence could be written with pen. "I shall kill him! Not deserve! No man more deserving. And having killed Raleigh, so much more desert!"

"Who means to kill Raleigh?" asked the somnolent Lord Harry. "If so, Ned, haste were needful, for Raleigh departs for the Irish wars in less than a week's time."

"There, you see, Ned," said Arundell. "He'll never meet your challenge now, for he is on the queen's service."

Oxford's face worked in drunken thought.

"Well, then, if I cannot kill him honorably, I shall have him slaughtered."

"But look you, Ned, he expresses in these numbers what every man would tell her to her face. You have not a friend so long as you persist in this. Will you slaughter every decent man at court then?"

Oxford stood up and steadied himself.

"I will kill Mr. Raleigh--I will baggle that false maid in her lap--and I will kill every man at court who says me nay. Especially the house of Howard!"

And he flew out of the room, shivering his shoulder as he lurched into the jamb of the door.

Arundell and Lord Harry Howard poured themselves a bit more of the earl's hospitality. Howard wondered whether his friend had not proceeded too far with the man. Charles replied that he feared he had done, and that Raleigh must be warned and cousin Vavasour looked to more straitly.

Lord Harry said in jest that perhaps this book of painted pictures should tell them what will come of it at the last. And with that, they departed.

In June the news was all of Jesuits. At court, the Principal Secretary, Sir Francis Walsingham, had learned of their dispatch from Rome, and rumors floated everywhere that ten had landed at Portsmouth; thirty had come ashore at Flamborough Head and escaped into the countryside; fifty were awaiting the winds at Calais, and the ports were laid for their coming over. Walsingham had captured some priests, but the assignment of the Society of Jesus here was an escalation in the international war for hearts. The Secretary, in his zeal, never doubted the Jesuits were coming in to counsel the traitorous papists to insurrection--that they were in the van of the pope's army, which even now being expunged from Ireland would soon throw itself against the homeland.

The word was rife among the Catholics, too, and reactions were divided. Many pious souls, having heard that the renowned Campion was among those travelling hither, dreamed of meeting that great man, who (when Protestant) had charmed the queen at Oxford no less thoroughly than later he had charmed the pope at St. Peter's, and they planned ways to hear him preach if only once. Many lonely priests, harried from house to barn throughout the realm and at nerves' ends with the continuous fear of arrest, the rack, and the gallows, looked to the Jesuits for encouragement and renewal of their ebbing confidence. But on the other side were many papist gentry, already hard pressed by searches and fines and sometimes arrests, who feared that the Jesuits' coming in would only excite the government to greater severity against them. Occasionally they expressed the doubt that these professional zealots, as it were, would come armed with large demands, requiring more sacrifice of them than they were able to give. These men, strong as they could be in simple faith, had oftentimes no taste for heroic deeds and martyrs' deaths, for they were ordinary men like their neighbors and kinsfolk; and though many resisted the queen's laws in the matter of conscience, they little desired to be called in conscience to take up arms against her.

In the middle of June, the first Jesuit arrived, a man named Parsons, highly thought of in Rome but little known in England. Coming over alone, disguised as a demobbed captain from the wars in Flanders, he reached London at midnight and searched all the next day for lodging. Suspicion of travellers ran high in the capital, and no innkeeper would trust him for a room. So he entered the Marshalsea prison in Southwark as a visitor, and through the Catholics interned there he made his contacts with the papist gentry in the country.

Another Jesuit, "Mr. Edmunds" the jewel merchant, came over two weeks later. He was the second and the last for some time; the thirty at Flamborough Head returned to the smoke of fearful or overly hopeful brains. When the word went round that Edmund Campion had come at last, excitement ran through the Catholics from family to family across the land. A band of young gentlemen, organized by Parsons in advance, met him and brought him up the river to London, where he was lodged secretly in Mr. Gilbert's house in Chancery Lane. The feast of Peter and Paul was approaching, and everyone wished to hear him preach. The Catholic houses could never accommodate the crowd that would be flocking to him; the Bear Garden on the Bankside might never have held them all. Accordingly, Lord Paget hired a very large house in Smithfield especially for the occasion, and there on the 29th of June Father Campion preached his sermon. Trusted servingmen were posted round the house, and during the assembly they met in the street nearby one Sledd, a low man and an informer, whom they wrestled into an alley and held there till everyone had safely departed. Sledd made his report, however, and though Campion and everyone else went their ways unharmed, the investigations turned up Paget's name on the lease and he

fetches up in the house of the Dean of Winchester, until some fourteen weeks later he consented to go to the Protestant services.

The Jesuits met later with many of the gentlemen and older priests in Southwark, near Lord Montague's house in St. Mary Overies by the bridge. There they gave assurances that they came with no political intentions and would thrust their presence upon no family uninvited. This put many an uneasy heart at peace.

But at this meeting, Arundell and Lord Howard were not in attendance, for they had ridden south for a meeting of their own, a holiday meeting in the country with friends. At Northumberland's house, Petworth in Sussex, they encountered Francis Southwell, who had come down separately, Sir John Arundell of Lanherne, Mr. William Shelley of nearby Michelgrove, his cousin Richard Shelley, and the earl of Northumberland himself.

Henry Percy, the eighth earl, was eight or ten years older than Arundell, yet Arundell still thought of him as a younger man. He was a great, bluff man, moody and excitable, given to bursts of energy punctuating long periods of uneasy lassitude. Years ago he had been a carefree soul, but his brother's rebellion in 1569 and execution a few years later had brought him up quite short. Since then, on best behavior, he had gradually rejoined the country society in the south—he was forbidden to reside in his ancestral territories in Northumberland—and to some extent he had made his way at court. Eventually he was restored in blood to his brother's titles, but his great fear was that he was being kept in convenient storage for a scapegoat at any future need.

In the evening, the talk gravitated towards issues of concern. The first matter was the advent of the Jesuits, but there was little to be said of that; only time would instruct them in the fathers' intentions and the government's response. Someone asked Lord Harry to report on the queen of Scots's affairs. Her correspondence continued to be channelled by himself and others through the French embassy, for conveyance abroad to her agents on the continent. What the agents did there in their negotiations with the French king, with her cousin the duke of Guise, with Philip II of Spain, her wellwisher, he could not say. Her spirit continued hopeful; her friends among the English spoke constantly for her greater liberty, so far to no avail.

As Lord Harry spoke, Northumberland's man Pudsey came in to announce the arrival of a latecomer, the earl's new famulus Charles Paget. He sat with the rest and listened impatiently, then interrupted to ask Lord Harry when Queen Mary would be free at last.

Lord Harry was taken aback. "Only God knows such a thing at that, who shares his counsel with no man," he replied.

"Hannh!" Paget snorted, with a sneer writhing across his thick features and a gleam of some queer triumph shining in his eye.

The men stared at him in perplexity. Paget, ogling them one after another, bounced on the edge of his chair like a man awaiting a signal to be off and running.

"Nor will she ever be free if she depends upon the Englishmen her good friends, as they maintain."

Richard Shelley shifted uncomfortably on his bench.

"And so we are her friends. What would you have of us, my dear Paget?" he inquired, to whom Paget was not dear at all.

"This only will I say," quoth Paget with great asseveration. "The queen my lady is in durance and has been these twelve years or more, and one of these days this cunning beast Leicester will contrive to chop off her head. Daily our friends are similarly put in ward, and now it is his lordship my brother, tomorrow it shall doubtless be ourselves. The Lord helps those who first help themselves--I say no more."

Northumberland listened carefully, his rather dull eyes following Paget's gestures, nodding his head slowly as belatedly he recognized the man's meaning.

"Mr. Paget, it is my experience that hasty and precipitous actions do ever come to grief in the end, and unrestrained speeches find unwelcome hearers. Pray you, guard your tongue." Lord Harry was speaking slowly, as if to prevent exciting the man unnecessarily.

"Aye, milord, I know of your guarded tongues and your cautious circumspections, all the whiles our lady pines in durance," said Paget. "Let us guard our tongues for five years more, till not a man of us is free to speak her name among friends, nor she alive to be spoken of."

"What would you have, Charles?" asked Northumberland. "There is no man here who does not like you lament of this case, but we must learn to suffer what we cannot learn to change, is that not so?"

"I do not agree," cried Paget.

"Then say your mind," said Arundell, staring at him intently.

"Nay, say your mind if you will," said William Shelley, "but it is for other ears than mine to hear."

He rose and started for the door.

"Stay, stay," said the earl placatingly. "We are all friends here, Will, we speak here to only walls and friends."

"I am sorry, my good fellows, but I have not that lion's heart to speak of changes and enlarging from durance and other matters fit for this time. I will leave you to your confabulations and badinage now, and seek my bed in good season. With all good will, gentlemen, I take my leave."

Sir John Arundell and the other Shelley similarly arose and made their farewells, and rode off with Will to Michelgrove. The rump parliament then resumed its debates. Paget's solution to their present ills was simple: He, adventurous, would lead a band of dedicated men to free the queen of Scots, Northumberland would rally the Catholics in the south and then rendezvous on the coast with an army sent out of France from her cousin, the duke of Guise. The duke had already been in touch with certain special friends in England, he said, and his grace's willingness to undertake the enterprise was understood.

The idea of the duke of Guise's invasion was not entirely a new one. The Spanish ambassador Mendoza was said to have brought it up in selected company, in whispers. Guise was nothing if not Catholic, Catholic enough to seem more Spanish than French, and his alliance in this cause with Philip of Spain, if the terms should be advantageous to him, was not a preposterous notion.

Five years ago Arundell would have found such boyish plans merely laughable. Things had changed since then. The marriage talks had failed, the courtiers were far worse off

than before them. Now he was afraid. Afraid for Queen Mary, afraid for Lord Paget, for all Catholics, for all old friends, for himself and Lord Harry, exposed as it were upon a rocky head facing out to the winter sea, Leicester watching his moment to engulf them, the French withdrawn and with them the cause which had been their chief stay and only foundation; Sussex himself beleaguered, wary of them, Burghley standing off high up the coast, murmurings in court of a mass said or an unkind word of great councillors: one wave, one breaking wave from the right quarter, striking upon just the proper angle, one wave only, would suffice. Arundell would be swept from his desolate promontory, into boiling waters, reefs and skerries, wards and keepers, oaths, charges and what proofs, a little true and much more feigned, and finally, to what end? Constraint? A dagger? A gallows? Where did Catholics end, when caught straggling friendless, beyond the help of great protectors? Where did Leicester's enemies end, when once the Bear fell sedulously upon them with his claws that rend and tear? They end wherever he would have them end.

Paget droned on, rehearsing again to Northumberland's labored questioning the details of his vapid, hysterical schemes. Arundell heard him only a little, and permitted himself to dream foolishly of an heroic day of conquest, Leicester defeated and led in gyves through Traitor's Gate, Arundell astride a charger parading in Cheapside, his gleaming helm drawing gasps from the women, his avenging sword the admiration of all the men; eulogies read above Ludgate by solemn scholars, in Latin, to the gallant captain who had led God's hosts against the heretics, who had with a handful of loyal English and the aid of some pious Frenchmen delivered this realm from atheism, from Machiavellian policy, from Aretinical license, who had liberated both the English queen from those base minds which ruled her and the Scottish queen to become her cousin, and sister, and trusted heir, as she always should have been. Captain Arundell, even as nets were spread to ensnare him, traps were laid to catch him up, arises and smites the pagan champions, routs the pagan hosts, saves his country on the brink of her ruin. *Exsurgat Deus, et dissipentur inimici eius!* Let God rise up! Let Leicester take to his heels or turn them up.

The debates were continuing without him. Lord Harry was demonstrating with unappreciated thoroughness that the ancient fathers were unanimous in condemning insurrection against God's viceroys in the secular seat, while Paget was interrupting him by noting that such good doctrine did never apply to heretics. Harry, citing Augustine, was proclaiming the irrefragable conclusion of passive disobedience as the uttermost allowable, but Northumberland, having lost him in this patristic fog some ten or twelve *sic probos* earlier, was plainly rapt by this notion of action, this ill-thought plan for action, this vague and thrasonical promise of action, this call for action, some action, which Paget now posed against their waiting, as he phrased it, like chickens for the blow of the axe. Paget's plans were like Arundell's daydreams, full of glorious, gore-smeared entries into towns hard-won, with caps thrown high for the liberators, the queen of England grateful and the queen of Scots delivered, their oppressors chained neck to neck, marched in columns before their chariots. And to this music Northumberland must dance; Lord Harry's donnish quiddities must give room to action, only action.

Southwell and Arundell felt some of this as well, and so, in fact, did Harry, whose dissuasions arose from habits begun in gentler years. Then it had been the hotheads who listened to such words of war, the fanatic or crazy man who uttered them. Now the hotheads spoke, and sober gentlemen listened. Half in the spirit of the thing, Arundell began to press this midlands Ajax with more pointed questions. He asked how the Scottish queen could infal-

libly be ensured. In '69, the first measure taken against the Northern Earls had been her prompt removal from their path. With no mark left to shoot at, their bows had never been drawn. The earls had reversed their headlong march and dispersed northwards, to their several fates, half into exile, the other half to heaven or hell. How to prevent a recurrence of this peremptory dealing?

Timing was all, was Paget's reply, timing and communications. The Scottish queen is enlarged and scurried into hiding--a small force, with surprise, will suffice--then post is ridden to lather towards the coast, where the duke of Guise's men and the English forces watch their opportunity. The signal given, the duke lands at Portsmouth, whence on to London. A two days' war, *ad majorem gloriam Dei*, and victory.

"Well enough," said Arundell, somewhat pensively. "But now this. Put case the duke of Guise is now come to London, and all evildoers are shut away. What is to be done if the duke himself will not retire?"

"But that is an impossibility," cried Paget. "His grace wishes but one issue of this cause, to free his good cousin and all his Catholic brethren. Which accomplished, he must needs by goodness and reason then retire to his home beyond the seas."

Lord Harry snorted at this witless logic, and muttered that for his part he would rather suffer the kicks of an English tyrant than the slaps of a French one, and such a French one who could kick with any tyrant in Europe. He had no doubt that Paget's play, however it was written down before, when it came to the acting out, would end with King Henry the Ninth, the duke of Guise in the present queen's crown, upon the battered throne of England.

Paget was suffused with wrath, and he spluttered.

"That he will not do; I pledge me, he will not!" he cried intemperately. "Why, my lord, you must forgive me. Our Lady Mary is his very cousin, whom he has always loved before himself. He will find her crown for her wherever this schismatical whore may seek to hide it, and he will place it square upon her sacred head and kneel before her!"

The others, save Northumberland who had missed his implication, were dumbfounded.

"This whore!" cried Arundell. "Damn me, Paget, you say this whore?!"

Paget realized his admission and chose to face it through.

"What a God's name is our travail to win?" Paget pleaded. "Our lady must be freed, and she must have her crown, not in ten years, nor twenty, but even now as right is."

Arundell growled and lashed out across the benches at him, striking him full in the face with his main strength. Paget dragged him backward as he fell; the two men grappled at one another's throats across the boards, kicking out against the wainscots and striving for the upper hand in fury. Southwell, closest to them, shouting "Now, gentlemen!" leapt upon them and endeavored to stay their hands, but Paget had his dagger out, wagging it at arm's length as he sought an opening for his thrust.

Lord Harry propelled the earl violently out of the way and trod upon Paget's forearm. The man screamed out an oath and flung his weapon from him, and Southwell, lying across them both, smothered their attacks. Both men came only gradually to their senses.

Arundell arose and adjusted his clothing.

"She must have her crown, indeed, but upon my life, she must wait her turn."

Paget glared at the floor.

"These are treasonous speeches, and I will have none of them," said Arundell. "We will have no talk of new queens here."

"You draw your treasons very nicely, Charles," said Howard. "We must take arms against the queen, but take no arms against her."

"There you are right! These are misted matters; the queen is our mistress with all obedience after God."

"In matters lawful," said Southwell.

"In matters lawful," said Arundell. "To rise against the earl of Leicester may be good or ill, I stand not upon terms in that question now; but to rise against the earl for the queen's own sake, and to have our Lady Mary declared successor in despite of the earl and his minions, these are on the one side--to rise against the queen herself is clean on the other, and I will hear no more of it."

"Then it is finished," said Lord Howard, "and we remain all friends."

And so, apologies said all round, albeit grudgingly, the gentlemen retired to their beds, where, lying taut in his like the bow lines of a galley in rough anchorage, Arundell dreamed fancifully of overthrowing the Leicestrian Bear before those great bloody claws came down upon them all.



In the morning, rain fell and the sky was gray, and the gentlemen's moods matched the day. The others proposed to reside with the earl until the weather turned more merciful, so Arundell took horse, said his farewells, and set off for London. He found himself reluctant to be too long away from the court. In their absence, anything might be said by malicious tongues; anything might be begun, traps set, actions started, rumors invented and sent flying and taken universally for sober truth before he had returned to scotch them. In the great circles, they had few favorers to protect their interest in their place. Sussex continued their friend and bade them continue his; the old earl was a good man, but still larger stakes lay in the pot, and to him a gaggle of suspected Catholics must always be expendable.

Who else might help them at a need? The French had left them stranded. Burghley sympathized with some of their hopes, but loved them little personally. Vice-Chamberlain Hatton did them kindnesses, but Arundell, though he liked Hatton for his wit and many parts, would trust him very little if push should ever unhappily come to shove.

Oxford they had little use for; his tergiversating spirit would one day cause them woe. He had once been in their bosom, but that only made him the more dangerous now, for his behavior since those days had been a kind of blackmail, in which he presumed upon his acquaintance with their secret faith, and ever stood, in the fullness of his pride, apart from them even in their closest camaraderie.

There remained no one else worth reflecting upon. Many of the younger gentlemen had grown away from them since the failure of the marriage plans. To live at court was a kind of profession, which brought its own responsibilities, not least among which was the duty to

press one's suits and seek after favor wherever it could be had; the aspiring young men, like Walter Raleigh in fact, were not to be blamed for finding their friends elsewhere, as many of them now began to do, in places where suits planted might grow fruit. And, increasingly since the routing of Monsieur, the blessings of patronage at court seemed all Leicester's to bestow.

Of the gentlemen who still looked to the Howards for their aid at court, one kind was predominant--the Catholics. Not Arundell's sort of Catholics, though, those who felt a little better after a mass, who distrusted the intellectual chaos of these burgeoning new sects; who simply felt a deep aversion, almost an aesthetic aversion, from these hard-headed, loudmouthed professors of the new gospel; who loved the old ways, the old hospitality, the old abbeys with their gorgeous vestments and their devotional arts painstakingly pursued. Rather many of these were the new Catholics, as zealous often for the pope as the wildest preacher was against him, a kind of puritanical papists who embarrassed Arundell's sensibilities almost as much as the hot gospellers did. Would that men, he thought, would put aside these interpretations and inquiries and return a little to simple fellowship and common feeling, so that Englishmen might think and drink together with never a quarrel of creeds.

All this talk of violent redresses would come to no happy end. Arundell knew that, and yet he was tempted to think of them himself. To win England back to the faith were doubtless a noble and a godly deed, but Arundell's ambitions were nothing so high as that. For him, it was his sense, in part only of a simpler age passing away, to be hauled back (it sometimes seemed) by any means at all, but more than that, his sense of impending doom, his shapeless sense that if he did not act now for himself, others would act against him, to his ruin. But violent means, and desperate talk of jars, were repugnant to his good nature, and he put such thoughts away from him. He would cross no swords, conspire in no alleyways or dark corners ever, murder no men, imprison none, bring no rabid Frenchmen in to win him any grace. He would strive to keep himself out of harm's way, and await a better day, a better day which, he persevered in believing, must one day come.

Just past Epsom, Arundell came upon a party of farmers addressing themselves to the road's decay. They worked despite the misting drizzle that had continued through the morning, and Charles wondered what threats some ferocious justice of the peace must have uttered to bring about such display of industry.

Otherwise the track was deserted. The climate sufficed to keep folk in at doors. Thus deprived of one of the few small pleasures of travelling, musing upon the travellers one sometimes passed, Charles was grateful for the sight of a single rider behind him, and slowed his pace in hope of company. But when he looked back again, the rider was gone from view, and he resumed his way.

Again, before Sutton, another traveller was visible behind him, and again he relaxed his pace, but once again, upon peering back through the mist, he found the man had stopped or gone off another path and was nowhere to be seen. He rode on. Near Mitcham, another rider behind, and Arundell halted and watched for his approach; far off, dimly perceived through the fog and falling rain, the black-draped man also halted, then turned about and receded towards the south again.

A chill came into Arundell's bones. Three riders, or the same one? A vision rose before him of a hideous, wicked little rodent's face, with one nacreous eye blind to the world of

light, the other glowing supernaturally, peering everywhere, watching him through walls, through doors, through rainy mists on the highroads of Surrey, turning, following him, peering suspiciously, knowingly; accusing him, threatening him, understanding every secret he held--two eyes, one blind to his good, the other unnaturally alert to his sins, the spy, the informer, the demon sent to carry him into hell. Soiled with his recent talk of treasons, again he was being watched, or so, excitedly, he was convinced.

Arundell shuddered and tried to dismiss his nervous thoughts. He stirred his horse and made on for London. But it had been him, the loathsome one-eyed footpad, he was sure of it, his bad angel, this accursed thing sent out to haunt him even in his sleep. Arundell's mind worked feverishly. Here was your new age, he thought, here was your godly reformation--one milked-over eye, blind to the good in men, another peering everywhere in their secret souls.



Arundell arrived at Greenwich Palace late in the evening. He paused atop Black Heath near Greenwich Hill and stowed himself among the trees once more to await his following nemesis. No one appeared, and after a time he continued down the slope towards the Thames.

Striding a little later across the Privy Gardens, below the palace gatehouse, he came upon Tom Knyvet sprinting furiously towards the stables. The fellow dashed out of the darkness and nearly ran him down, but grabbed at his arm and tried to bear him along with him.

"My God, Charles," cried Knyvet. "We are too late. Come, man, run."

Arundell let himself be hurried into the stables he had just left. He saddled his second horse himself. Knyvet explained in breathless fragments that word had just been brought him: Oxford had been seen furtively departing upstream from the water stairs, some time since, in company with a cloaked and shrouded lady.

There was, to be sure, a futile humor in the situation, and Arundell considered leaving the earl to enjoy his venerous triumph, but Knyvet was spluttering with family honor and not to be called off. Certainly a violent scandal would turn unwelcome attention upon the entire clan. Together they clattered out of the stables and rode at a full dash through the palace yard onto the highway, through Bermondsey to the bridge. Up to the bridge they came at a gallop, the late passersby scattering before them, beneath the Great Gate, under the shops and tenement dwellings that arched above them overhanging the black race of water, past old St. Thomas chapel at mid-stream, clattering three hundred meters to the northern bank. Into Gracious Street on the other side they flung themselves, then westward up East Cheap and Cannon Street in the direction of Paul's.

Approaching Walbrook, Knyvet cut off towards London Stone, where one of Oxford's houses lay. Arundell, following Knyvet's sign, bore on towards the other house, in Bread Street, behind St. Paul's School, where he rode in through the side gate and dashed up into the hall. Rafe Hopton scurried over, looking quizzically up at his master's friend, but Arundell brushed him aside and started up the great stairs.

"Please, sir," called the boy, "his lordship has retired."

"When I have done, Rafe, his lordship will have need of you."

At the top of the staircase, the earl's man Curtis appeared like a sentry from a tiny room on the left.

"Pray you, sir," said Curtis, putting his hands up to restrain the intruder. But Arundell flung off the man's arm and struck him in the chest, and Curtis fell away groaning.

Arundell ran down the narrow corridor to Oxford's room and burst through the door. To his surprise, the chamber was empty.

From somewhere above, he heard a squeal of laughter, followed by the unmistakable sound of a horse whinnying.

"God's nails," Charles muttered. He ran along the hall towards the next stairs, a sense of the ludicrousness of his task swelling up within him. The delighted squeals and improbable equine bellowing continued as he ducked his head and raced up the steps. Arundell reached the stairs' head and threw open the door.

Two figures turned in surprise. Oxford, grinning foolishly, stood stark naked in the middle of the chamber. His erection cavorted gaily before him, and he bore a curtains-cord tied about his loins for reins. These were held behind him by Nan Vavasour, just as naked but still in her bonnet and slippers, her breast heaving in excitement, her eyes dancing and lit from within.

They stared at Arundell with broad grins across their drunken faces. Then Oxford whinnied again, lurched forward, and resumed prancing in a circle round the chamber, Nan following him, snapping the reins upon his arse and squealing again with pure happiness, her pendulous breasts and buttocks jouncing and swaying with each high-spirited step.

They came full round the room again and stopped before him.

"My dear Charles," said Oxford. "You've met my lady?"

Arundell stared at them. Here was Nan's attraction, he thought, not in her pinched look (deceptively stern, as it turned out) and her long Howard nose, but in these big, saltatory breasts and the full, black patch between her thighs. Oxford seemed rather to be pitied than condemned.

"I came to save you," Arundell said drily, "from my lord's lecherous intent."

She snapped her reins again upon the earl's arse and murmured, "Thank you, cousin Charles."

Charles grinned back at them and said, a little sheepishly, "And now I must leave you, friends. I am called away on the queen's business."

And Oxford whinnied again as Arundell shut the door upon their sport and descended the stairs. As he left the house, he found Curtis looking pallid and withdrawn, and tipped him generously.

Another of life's little jokes, thought Charles, as he rode home towards the Priory. But life could be amusing, these little jests upon one's heavy seriousness sparkling up out of the general gloom. He found he thought more kindly of both of them now than he had before. They could still laugh, at any rate. To be young again, he thought. He would describe the scene, with appropriate neighs, to Kate when he reached his rooms. They would laugh a little, too, and be young again, if only for a little while.



Matters for Catholics, already bad, steadily became worse, suspicions of them deepened, as summer passed into autumn and the court returned to Whitehall. Rumors ran throughout the realm of a Holy League compacted on the continent, of Guise and King Philip and other Romish princes, for the reduction of England to the faith. Another papal force had landed in Ireland, and their reinforcements were expected daily. Accordingly, the government tightened its control upon the known English Catholics, and set about ferreting from their nests all the unknown ones. The conforming gentlemen were caught in an intensified dilemma, for just when official pressure to attend the queen's service was increasing, so were the Jesuits promulgating the pope's strict insistence upon their refusal. More rumors told of a Parliament forthcoming, in which new woes would be enacted. From France, there came still more bad news; Monsieur had been turned against Simier, had sworn him as an enemy, and the Howards' last friend in the Anjou camp could be of no more help to them. Any progress Monsieur made in England now would only come at Leicester's hands.

Oxford continued his inhabiting of Anne; their liaison had become a *secret de polichinelle* at court, but he was reckless, his courses became increasingly erratic; he grew more and more a stranger to his erstwhile friends, and when he joined their company as often as not it was to taunt them with rude and childish jests. At other times, he grew lugubrious, and sentimentally sincere, and complained to Arundell in maudlin tones of the happier years long lost, the shifting, treacherous sands upon which now they stood. Usually, he avoided his former companions as if they were embarrassments to him, or threats to him when Anne's name came to mind, and they in turn eschewed his company, for his unpredictability.

In autumn, Arundell went down to Bristol to tend to his affairs. He alone of all the gentlemen preferred to stay by Oxford's side, for whereas they thought safest to be away from his sight, Arundell was possessed of other doubts. The earl had always been unstable, to be feared for the damage he might do them in any little fit of pique; but additionally he had always been ambitious, and Arundell, wondering to see him so long in the shade, expected momentarily some new break from Oxford, some headlong, ill-thought jump into what he feebly might conceive to be glory or fame, or merely somewhat better odds. Like the others, Charles feared Oxford's violence against them; what he feared, however, was not the puerile, aimless tantrums of which the man was sometimes capable, but the calculated betrayal, in which art he was no less competent.

It was thus with many misgivings that Arundell rode out from court, for whilst he was in the country on the queen's business, his nightmares might be taking shape at home.

VIII. LEICESTER TRIUMPHANS

(1581)

"More faithful than fortunate."

-- Arundell

Declaration of Charles Arundell,
31 December 1580

My lords, with protestation of all loyalty and well meaning. My lords, on Sunday last, being Christmas day, the earl of Oxford desired secret conference with me, whereunto I assenting, we met in the evening at the Maids' Chamber door, and after long speeches in secret between him and my cousin Vavasour, we departed thence to have gone to the garden, but the door being double locked we could not get in. Then we returned to the terrace, and there in the farthest part of the low gallery, the said earl used this speech unto me:

"Charles, I have ever loved thee, and as you have already given your word to my mistress, so now I crave it to myself."

And after some assurance of secrecy given, he unfolded to me all his treachery, using many cunning persuasions to make me an instrument of dishonest practice against my Lord Harry and Francis Southwell, with the proffer of one thousand pounds to affirm that they were reconciled to Rome by one Stephens, a priest. I so much misliked this motion as I persuaded the said earl from so dishonorable a purpose, protesting before God I neither knew nor ever heard of any such thing.

"Well, Charles," said the earl, "Stephens is taken and racked and hath confessed, and therefore I wish you as a friend to depart the realm if you have faulted as far as others."

Whereunto I answered that God I took to witness, I myself am free of such offense, and so I am persuaded of others.

"You are deceived," said the earl. "Southwell hath betrayed all; therefore if you will be gone, which I wish for your safety, Litchfield my man shall shift you away, where you shall remain for a time at a house of mine in Norfolk or Suffolk"--I do not well remember which--"and then but over the sea. You shall have a thousand pounds either with you or bills for so much, and when you are gone I will find the means to send unto you, and if the sale of a hundred pound land by the year will do you good it shall be sold, rather than you shall want."

I liked so ill of this unsound counsel as I utterly refused it. The end was then my lord fell to a plainness and told me that he had confessed to the queen that he was reconciled and that he had his pardon, and if I would be ruled by him he would save me. I thanked him much but refused his counsel. His drift, as I could find it, was to this end, that by my flight he might be freed of his monstrous dealing, and others brought to more suspicion.

Thus much for his dealing with me then. Touching Stephens, as I did confess unto your honors, the earl, being grieved in conscience about some point, about a few years since, desired conference with some learned man, whereupon I brought him unto Stephens.

My good lords, I have most plainly unfolded before your honors my knowledge in all points, not concealing anything to excuse myself, nor adding more than truth to harm oth-

ers. I therefore humbly crave your favor in this my perplexed estate. My restraint of liberty troubles me nothing, but the disfavor of her majesty grieveth me much. God I take to witness I never faulted against her majesty's person. And as no man hath more cause to honor and serve her than I, so hath no man held her virtues more in admiration, nor defended them further, when some others have not been so forward to perform that towards her highness which in duty they ought to have done. As this is true, so God deal with me, and dispose your minds to do me good, who resteth more in your charity than I am able to express. Your lordships' wholly to command, more faithful than fortunate,

C. Arundell.



(The Narrative of Lord Henry Howard)

There was in very ancient time, in the kingdom of Agrigentum, a craftsman of exceeding skill and cunning in his art, whose works were known and sought after from Persia to the Pillars of Hercules. Perillus was his name, and such was his excellency in the curious working of metal as he could fashion birds which sang and fish that swam and brazen horses which cantered down the road. Then, on a day, his king gave him summons, Phalaris the tyrant, worse than a beast in his murderous cruelty. Perillus, said the king unto him, you are the surpassing artist of this age, and I am the cruellest tyrant living, and so we must join together in a paragon work full worthy of our fame and greatness. Do you your part, and I shall do mine, and beside the reputation we shall have, you shall be so largely rewarded as never after shall you and yours have cause to think yourselves ill used.

Taking this commission in the same part as wicked Nero's men did his, when he said to them, *Scitis quid velim, et quibus opus habeo* (You know what I would have, and what I have need of), this man returned unto his workshop, imagining with himself what special wonder of his science he might now conceive and execute, esteeming himself (having heard this tyrant's flattering words) the greatest in his art since the world first began.

For many days together he sits and thinks, calling continually upon his pagan demons to inspire him, possess him I should have said, until at length, up he leaps and incontinently he sets to work, measuring and sketching, sawing and building, alloying his brasses and pouring his molds, and fashions him a brazen bull of full size as in life, with outside so like a very bull as might befuddle the agrarian onlooker, and hollow within, containing room for a supine man or woman in its bowels, where his face might just be seen at its open mouth, and his bellowing mistaken for the bull's. And all hidden in the hide of this metallic beast are conduits of fire, fed from below in a furnace in its belly; whereby a man might be inserted, and the great bull heated as was Moloch, the idol of the pagans, into whose arms tiny babes were laid in unchristianly, nay unhuman, sacrifice.

And so returns Perillus to his king, sitting with all his court, and says, Lo your majesty, see the fruit of my travail, and in is wheeled the brazen bull, which he then explains in its nature and operation unto Phalaris, who says to him, Without all question, Perillus, you bear the bell in matters of the metallic arts, and are truly worthy of your fame.

And as I promised you, says the tyrant then, I who am no less worthy of my fame too, shall join with you in a work of consummate cruelty, that together we each shall rival other in adepted superiority in our kinds.

And the perfect act of cruelty, he announced to his court assembled there, is not to thrust a tiny babe within this fiery bull, nor a great-bellied dame with the half-formed fruit in her womb, for they are works of very great cruelty, but not of a cruelty worthy of the art of my companion in perfection. The perfect act of cruelty which I propose to offer to my friend, equal to his preparations here, is to thrust himself within this bull.

Which he doing, soon the court is filled with the screams and lamentings of this overcrafty Perillus, whose painful creation, so cunningly and arduously over long time worked, returned upon himself its special pain.

The allegory of this tale is as the following. This Oxford was a foolish, worthless boy when first we took him up, fit to swell a lace shirt or cross a lance at the barriers or pen a verse to make the ladies weep, but never a man to hear affairs of state. But I so worked upon him to make him one of ours that soon he was so far in as he must learn to swim or sink. Though never any traitor myself, I did school him up in petty treason, complaining to him of the present times and of this redress and that strained course, until like my bull all brazen I had me a faithless monster fit for any perfidious deed. Then enters our English Phalaris, whose perfect cruelty is to stuff my hapless carcass in my own invention, and roast me up to heaven with my own devices.

Well, it may be I am overly hateful to myself. Mr. Arundell tells me that I flatter me in thinking this monster one of my own doing, for he says that Leicester has trained to him stronger men than Oxford, and that this graceless boy was fated from his birth to be the ruin of his friends. However that may be, here we are in our brazen bull, and there sits Phalaris laughing apace from his throne of great estate.

Here is the tale as it fell out. This foul beast, sometime our companion, had drawn away from us through his own waywardness and obstinate malignancy (not by any words or deeds of ours), the more quickly when the hope was lost of the queen's marriage which might have altered our condition. At that time, the shadow had crept over us. I have, I warrant you, lain under shadow before. At the time of my brother's fault, I came very near being touched to the quick, through no misdeed of mine. Some while after, one Cockyn, the queen of Scots's man, came braying into court, and I was somewhat looked to for a matter of too much sympathy for her plight. So I have been under shadow before, and come out into the sun again, and will do again on this occasion now.

But when Monsieur's cause was given up by the wiser heads of the realm, though we were touched with no particulars save friendliness to that match, and no more friendliness than the queen's, yet were there certain great personages at court who were pleased to vaunt upon us there, for that we no longer seemed destined, perhaps, to sit beside a king, dispensing justice and preferring suits and other the perquisites of victory; so that it was but a little shadow then, of less favor than a little while before. Notwithstanding this, this Blue Boar of Oxford perceiving, he becomes a little distant, and he beards us with his insolent quips, and some unfriendliness accrues among us.

Here Arundell said we must forbear to trouble the earl, for it was plain he bore us no more love, but I disagreeing, we sometimes thought to steady him by chastising his worse faults and deprecating his great vices; which he conceiving ill, he sets his lecherous aim upon our little kinswoman, a chaste virgin but newly come from the country, and pursues her with the only intent of dishonoring all her tribe who loved her. Well, he wins the silly girl, I know not how, and what should we hear, not four months later, but that her belly grows.

Here the turd is in the porridge; when the queen learns of this, not many of Nan's friends but will enjoy some unkind looks. All is whusht; the silly girl pukes away her days in the Maids' Chamber, and all the while my lord of Oxford strides through the court as proud as Solomon having begot ten thousand brats.

Upon a day, when many gentlemen are gathered in the Presence Chamber, Sir Henry Knyvet, whose sister was the child's good mother, can bear the Boar no longer, and he turns from us standing near and dashes the earl in his face with a glove and calls him by the name of whoremaster. Oxford steps back much agrised, to be named so before all these worthies present, and then he tries to good-fellow it away with bending near Sir Henry with a friendly clap upon the shoulder and says, "Oh, my Henry, I did but do what love calls all men to."

But Henry, all trembling with his fury, scowls and hisses at him, "And now you shall do what fatherhood calls you to," and stalks away.

My lord stands much abashed. By this we see that he himself knew nothing of her state. I look around--then I see what chills me--standing some way apart with other lords, my lord of Leicester smiling towards the doltish earl as conversation flies about him. When you have seen Leicester smiling, you know what hell holds for us in waiting. Fearful lest Phalaris may have heard, I hurry from the chamber in a sweat. There is nothing now to do but wait.

Not a week later, I am riding through the King's Street Gate in Whitehall, where I have come from dining in Westminster with Mr. Stafford and my cousin his new wife, and whom do I see, riding towards me past the Tiltyard Gallery, but Oxford and Leicester together, with Pembroke and some other of that faction, and as they pass me Leicester tips me his bonnet and smiles in great courtesy, whilst Oxford stares stonily ahead, as though I had been a one-legged veteran seeking alms. This frights me so that I gallop straight to bed and spend the night in saying prayers.

The next week, being Christmas, or not but a day or so after, Mr. Arundell sends his man round to Arundel House and especially desires that I come at once to his lodgings in Blackfriars, where he must tell me news that no man else must know. Again, a premonition seizes me, an awful sense of never finding any rest, of dangers still to haunt me ever; as if I had been a viking sailor of old time, weary of traversing endless seas, who having come finally to land, and desiring much to make his home at last, throws over the board his high-seat pillars to follow them to his destined landing, and finds them borne away again, far from land, out to trackless wastes of seas, where fate will have him follow them to the edge of the world. I am sometimes given to such conceits, fetched sometimes from very far off.

I take my man Gardener and run down along Thames, past the Middle Temple, to the Bridewell stairs, then across the ditch into the Blackfriars, by these little used ways, to the Priory Mansion where dwells my friend. There I find me by the fire Mr. Arundell and also Mr. Southwell there, and Mr. Arundell's friend, a tavern lady of the baser sort whom he loves to have about him. In this room, by this good fire and cheered in vain by this good wine, I hear such a tale of wretched double dealing as I have not heard since Leicester had my brother to the block.

"My Lord Harry," he begins; "this very night our friend has called me out, and tells me we are lost, and offers me huge sums if I will join with him against you."

The whole event were needless to rehearse, but in sum it comes to this: Oxford would have Charles to confirm a tale told to the queen, that Southwell and myself were reconciled to the pope. That taking none effect, he tells him Southwell has confessed all, and would have him to flee the realm for his safety. That likewise taking no effect, for Arundell did very well know that he had left Southwell here playing at cards with Mistress Kate, then he confesses that he himself had broken to the queen God knows what horrible mendacities to our enduring prejudice.

My first thought, made in haste, was that flight indeed were best, for here was no safety when, as I now informed my friends, Oxford was borne out in his senseless fabrications by so cautelous a knave as Leicester. But this counselling to action was Curio's advice indeed. Arundell had surer footing here, for it seemed to him that all was not yet lost.

"For look you, Harry," says he sagaciously, "assume he has whispered stories in the queen's ear. What else must it mean that he seeks to suborn me to his aid, but that the queen does not believe or credit him?"

"Then what?" said I.

"Then wait," said he.

So wait we did. We passed the night in Charles's rooms, a pretty foursome playing inattentively at cards, leaping at every small sound, expecting at every instant to hear the square below was filled with guard, rehearsing over and over again how we must answer jump together to anything the earl may charge us withal.

It was Mistress Kate who held our courage up, for with never a word all night she sat like the stoical philosopher and kept us to our game, lest we might gnaw our fingers to the elbows and be piss ourselves with agitation.

After some little sleep, we arise in the morning and wait still. In late afternoon, we hear a shout below and a crash in the hall. Then in comes a servingman hoist between Sharrock and my man Gardener. He comes in haste from my Lord Chamberlain, he says, and requires us in his master's name to take boat to Bermondsey at once.

Well, so we do. As we depart Arundell's lodgings, he quickly embraces Kate and bids her never worry, and she nods to him with wet eyes and pushes him on his way. This, he says, he fears will be the last occasion he will see the woman for some time, maybe. She was a kind woman, and though past her flower, yet not ugly; and it may be that Charles thought of her as more than just his whore, though he never said as much, or anything at all, of her, not then, not ever.

I alighted near my Lord Montague's house in Southwark, for I have a settled fear of racing the bridge in light or dark, and walked as hurriedly as I might past St. Olaf's towards Bermondsey wharves, and at the wharves I found my companions attending upon me. Thence to my lord of Sussex's house a little way along, where the earl met us himself at the outer door and conducted us into the long gallery.

My Lord Chamberlain was looking none of his best, his thin frame stooped more than usually and his high, bare forehead drawn down in a scowl of worry. His health seemed somewhat in decline of late, whereat we grieved, for he was a true friend to all worthy men, and but for his life of cares should have had many years of service left to him. Nowhere

in the realm was there a more persevering enemy of the earl of Leicester, nor anywhere at court a weightier counterpoise to Leicester's sway.

Now he sits by the side of the fire and looks us up and down from under weary lids, and tells what has passed at court. Leicester, he says, works upon the wanton Oxford, no two men more together these past weeks, and at last wins him willingly to serve his turn. He picks a time when M. Mauvissière speaks with the queen, myself (says he), the Lord Treasurer, and some other, about some matters of France, and presents Oxford with these words, that the rot of papist treason which imperils all the country he finds begins in London not in Rome, and that some of those whom her majesty most trusts are not uninfected.

"The queen," he says, "seems amused to hear the earl whistling his old air, but begs him proceed with his tired play. Leicester nods to Oxford, who steps forward and blurts a tale of papistry, accusing himself, and you Harry, and Charles, and yourself Mr. Southwell, of being reconciled by a Jesuit known as Swithins upon a time and of attending the mass very often since. Himself, he says, is repentant, for he has learned the disloyalty in these courses, and begs her majesty's pardon both of his error and of anything these unrepentant papists may falsely charge him with in spirit of revenge.

"Her majesty then smiles a little, as one who humors some brabbling boys, and says she has long known of your religion and would gladly close her eyes to it, more specially as you were her kinsmen and had friended her in her late marriage, so long as it were never seen to reach further. At this my lord of Leicester says, Your highness, I am truly sorry, there is more; upon which Oxford, his eyes starting out of his head, swallows and says that, three or four years since, these gentlemen and him had sought to bring the Frenchmen in to succor the queen of Scots, whom foolishly they had thought the great mistress of their papistical cause.

"Here her majesty grew annoyed and sternly warned him, Oh, my lord, now you go too far.

"And your friend Oxford, fairly dead of fright, gentlemen, turns to my lord the French ambassador and instantly craves him to corroborate his tale. M. Mauvissière scratches his head and says he cannot think where the earl has dreamt this dream, but perhaps they mistook another for himself and broached their filthy treasons to some apprentice or waterman who but spoke a little French, or had similar moustaches. For his own part, he had made no such vile conversations with any man, and would not, never.

"Hearing this, but thinking God knows what, her majesty bids the earl to retire, and commands him to bethink himself of what next he will confess to; and Leicester and Oxford retire together, whilst we remain, never a word spoken more on this head."

Mr. Arundell puts in here that this is where my lord of Oxford bids him flee the realm, and he tells the tale to my Lord Chamberlain. "Then," says Sussex, "I find today that Leicester has got him up a long paper of treasons, writ in Oxford's name, and brought it to the queen, who fronted thus boldly exclaims that now she has no choice, alas, and must summon you gentlemen up, but only for examination of these causes, and not for any punishment till these matters be well sounded.

"Hatton she bids to have his guardsmen attach my lord of Oxford and convey him to the Tower, whereat Oxford wails his grief, but she is adamant and avers she will learn the bottom truth or he will rot there. Then Walsingham she beckons to her, and says, Mr. Secretary,

write you your warrant for these men, but have them brought without any violence, for no crimes have yet been proved. But Mr. Secretary draws from his bag his warrants ready drawn, and the earl of Leicester turns vauntingly to me and says, good my Lord Chamberlain, know you where these men are hiding? To which I answered him, Hiding I know not, but reposing they are, as I have heard, in Clerkenwell, at the house of Sir Matthew Arundell--hoping, you see, that there you would not be. What you will do in this I know not, but I could not bear to see my friends caught up by the heels so, with never suspecting of their danger."

We thanked my lord very earnestly for his care of us, and then I endeavored to explain what little truth lay in Oxford's words, but my lord catches me up and says, "No, Harry, I am not to know of anything, neither innocent nor guilty, true nor false, saint nor devil, all is mum." My lord stares into his fire. "Gentlemen, you must know what is yet a close secret, that Monsieur's matters are again taken in hand, though lightly. But it may be that with care and labor we may marry our queen at last and thrust this Bear aside; which he knowing, my lord of Leicester now endeavors to subvert the duke's old friends and prevent this bud from shooting up and flowering in his nose.

"So much," says Sussex, "we may explicate with ease, for Leicester seeks my harm any way and has found you gentlemen conveniently to hand. But yet I do not see why Oxford should join with my lord in this."

But Arundell ventures then to say that it is Nan Vavasour who lies in the back of it, for, he says, my lord knows that her parturience must one day come out (so to speak), and that he may well be charged with the getting of her brat, and so now he seeks to make us his known enemies, in order that when we come to charge him with paternity it will seem but vengeful lies and factious spirit.

"Well, gentlemen, however this be," my lord says, rising from his seat, "you must forgive me now, for I am expected. Pray, do as you list for your safety's sake, but think no disloyalty of the queen, for God's sake. You will find me your constant friend, wherever lawfully I may be." And thus we departed the house and considered what we must do next.

What a quandary were we in! Unclothed we were, or nearly so, for the cold came in despite our double jerkins; and unhorsed, for we durst not return to our own; and unhoused, for after first thinking to dash to Montague's house hard by, we reflected that we must not bring our friends in peril. I do confess I was ready almost to throw me into Thames and be done with fleeing, hiding, and all.

Passing the bridge gate by Mary Overies, we decided against re-entering the city, and walked on through the darkness along the Bankside with never a thought of how to help ourselves. Then Charles suggests our seeking refuge in the French ambassador's house, but that we cannot do, for we must not think the ambassador inclined very far to help us, and half believed he might turn us out to the watch with no ceremony at all.

A gelid hour passed, and brought no help, cowering in the alleys and under Bankside eaves. We shook with the bitterness of the cold. Then Mr. Southwell, with a little cry of desperation, and tears coursing down his chaps, says he can bear no more of it, and he must go home to his bed and let the devils do their worst. Restrain him we could not, for he flung us away and hurried to the bridge. As after we learned, to bed he went, but found there company he did not wish to have, and spent the night in ward instead. His leaving of

us cast us down our last length, and Mr. Arundell and myself had nothing but frozen cheer for one another now.

Then I saw my answer. All unwitting, wandering aimless through Southwark streets this night, past the Bishop of Winchester's house and westward, past the Clink prison on the river side, we have come to stand before the Spaniard's house. I pull my comrade into the corner of the street, and then we turn the wager over in our heads, and decide to play the hazard.

Don Bernardino de Mendoza was little loved at court. Many thought, as Leicester would have us all to think, that not many days hence we should be at open wars with Spain. Already we slew Spanish in America and upon the seas, and Mr. Drake had not long since returned from his bloody plundering of their treasure round the world; and already we slew Spanish in the Flanders wars, where the English volunteers (as they were given out) did line up with the rebel force on every foughten field. Mendoza made no scruple to warn the queen of what end these jars must come to, with the mention of a fleet of ships or so to fright her from such courses.

And to our English, this ambassador was no less than a devil. For the greater the man's virtues who is on the Catholic side, the greater villain he is here in our pulpits; and in the scant two years since he had come, the very name "Mendoza" had become the preachers' cant-word for the hungriest hound of hell.

Some of our English Catholics, oftentimes subverted in their minds, had been driven into Don Bernardino's arms, for he was said to encourage almost any desperate act against the Protestants. But this was whispered rumor; never had we had cause to speak with him, for in the time of the French match his only use was to detract from those who favored it, its ill success pleasing him more no doubt than would a sight of the Blessed Virgin.

We were at our wits' ends, standing in that dark night shaking with the cold, homeless and hunted, facing we knew not what horrors if taken, both of us more frightened by the Tower of London than a child is by the hairy bugbear. We decided that here was a deed must be done, here was a step which must be walked.

We separate by back alleys to approach the house by different ways, slipping through the dark as noiselessly as may be, until each coming up from our several directions, we are sure we are not seen by any. We pound upon the door. A servingman admits us, but he speaks not a word but Spanish, in which tongue we are as babes, so we fall to saying "Mendoza" which will sound the same in all tongues.

The ambassador himself we come upon in his study, fully dressed and rising from a table full of papers. He bows to me and addresses me graciously and says something further which, though intended to be plain English, sounds rather like a list of Dutch forts. Speaking slowly I introduce to him my friend, whom courteously he says he has often seen and much admired at the court and now is very glad to know him better. Then he brings us in a little secretary with the unhappy name of Oberholtzer, or something like, who stands before us with shirt untucked and hose about his knees, and haltingly we begin our conversations. His attitude he uses towards us is all politeness and persiflage, as if we had chanced to meet while strolling in Greenwich Park. So we must enter the matter without his help, and thus I set about explaining the desperate pass in which we find ourselves, how all upon a sudden my lord of Oxford comes after us all bilboes and chainshot and crying "No quarter" out upon us. Of its antecedents, I tell him only that my lord of Leicester loathes us for our

Catholic Christianity, and seeks by use of Oxford treacherously to ruin us and compromise the Lord Chamberlain at once, who has always counselled the queen to peaceful courses with the king of Spain.

Don Bernardino, having listened with great interest, replies that he considers my lord of Sussex his true friend and rates him the most honest man in England, for which cause he is grateful for the chance to succor his lordship's favorers. What is more, says he, he and his king do love and cherish the good of the unfortunate queen of Scots, and he especially congratulates himself in being able to aid one whom all Europe admires for her true servant--meaning myself. I know not whether he spoke in good frankness, but I must needs say I shrank a little to hear that all Europe talked of my small service in that quarter, for if all Europe knew then what must Walsingham suspect!

Accordingly, Don Bernardino honoring us like ally kings, we beg him to extend to us his secret hospitality but for a short time, till we can find our bearings in this fog we wander in. And he will say no more; he takes up a light and leads us to the uppermost floor, where is a garret of sorts where we may lie, unobserved even by those of his own house, and there he leaves us, with many wishes for as pleasant a sleep as may be. For the next two days we lie low, or high, in fact, peeping out from time to time upon Bankside roofs below us. Regular as Austrian clockworks, his secretary Hans brings us our meals and removes our conveniences, and now and then Mendoza climbs the narrow stairs to speak with us himself. But nowhere does he offer any demands of us, or suggest we murder the queen or God knows what; only he discourses of the love his king does bear to the peaceful Englishman, and especially to the papist, and the good he always means to do in that direction, though always (alas) suspected of the worst.

A hint or two of more I think I hear, for my suspicious mind is ever ready to seize upon the hard constructions. I find he mentions Sussex often, and what a great friend to him the earl is upon the Council, but wishes Sussex would trust him half so much as he does Sussex; and ever and again he dwells upon what friends we are with Sussex. And always he cites his own king's love for the lovers of peace and the church, and how ready is his king always to reward such well-disposed men with some token of remembrance, with calling to mind the maintenance my brother-in-law Westmoreland receives in Flanders, that too much maligned gentleman, he says, who is granted his pension not because of his rebellion which failed, but only because both before and after it he has shown himself possessed of a good and loving Christian heart. I thought then how strange this pretense would have seemed in earlier times, that the king of Spain should pay a man for being a Catholic, after so many centuries of men paying the pope for that right.

Upon a time, then, in our second day of residence with him, Don Bernardino troops aloft and tells us our friend Sussex who evidently tenders our welfare (he says) as well as we ourselves do, has sent us word by him that matters are not so gloomy as first they had appeared, that though Southwell has been taken up, assurances have been given that upon our giving ourselves up to the warrant, we must be lodged with gentlemen only, and not in the Tower, and only until the matters in question may be looked into. If it is the masses we have attended which breed fear in us, then we must be content with apology, and some conversation with a learned minister or two, and then with a fit attending of the queen's services sufficient to show our good loyalty to her majesty.

There be in this realm, especially at this time, some of the Catholic sort who hold that attending the Protestants' service were the nearest way to hell. And there be as well some new priests and Jesuits lately come in who do insist upon as much. Myself and Mr. Arundell have never been of such over-precise minds that we cannot do the queen's wish as well as the pope's, remembering within us always that our Protestant worship is but a secret seeming, and done in loyalty, not in faith. So we are agreed that if some small accommodations must be made to keep us clear of prisons, then a sermon or two shall be heard.

For the rest of it, if Leicester is restrained from us, we do not doubt we can thrust this monster Oxford's wretched allegations back into his nose-holes, and so, in hope of surviving this storm with such a little wetting, we will surrender us up to the pursuivants. Thanking my Lord Ambassador for his charity, we leave his house and take boat to the privy stairs in Whitehall, where we walk bang up to Mr. Vice-Chamberlain and beg him to dispose of our poor carcasses. The upshot of all is that I am placed in Hatton's house in town; Southwell is removed from Whitehall cellars and boated up to Mr. Secretary's house at Barn Elms near Richmond; Mr. Arundell is sent in the care of Hatton's men to Sutton in Surrey--there to abide our little time of looking into. And where we now remain; hoping in Jesus Christ and Our Lady his Mother to find favor with the queen, to find no questions to unsettle or divide us, to hear of no good hap to Oxford, nor none to Leicester the voracious Bear, to bear our little cross as we have others borne, and finally, to rejoin these Christmas frolics before the twelfth day passes. But, as our countrymen say, hope is the dream of those that wake.

IX. INTERROGATORIES FOR CHARLES ARUNDELL

(1581)

"Alone in prison strong
I wait my destiny.
Woe worth this cruel hap that I
Should taste this misery!
Toll on, thou passing bell."
-- Anon.

1. "Item to be demanded of Charles Arundell and Harry Howard. What combination or secret pact was made at certain suppers, one in Fleet Street as I take it, another at my lord of Northumberland's, for they have often spoken hereof and glanced at in their speeches."

To the first thus I answer, that I was never at supper in Fleet Street or at the earl of Northumberland's where any combination hath been made to any ill purpose, and of this interrogatory I understand not the meaning.

2. "Further for the same. If they never spoke or heard these speeches spoken, that the king of Scots began now to put spurs on his heels, and as soon as the matter of Monsieur were assured to be at an end, that then within six months we should see the queen's majesty to be the most troubled and discontented person living."

To the second, as I never uttered, so never heard I of any such speech. This is as void of truth as he is of honesty that so reports of me.

3. "Further, the same. Hath said the duke of Guise, who was a rare and gallant gentleman, should be the man to come into Scotland, who would britch her majesty for all her wantonness, and it were good to let her take her humor for a while for she had not long to play."

To the third, I do protest that I never used any speeches of the duke of Guise coming into Scotland; it is a shameless lie and most maliciously devised.

4. "Whether Charles Arundell did not steal over into Ireland within these five years without leave of her majesty, and whether that year he was reconciled or not to the church likewise, or how long after?"

To the fourth, it is as true that I stole over into Ireland within this five years as it is true I was reconciled the same years to the church of Rome, and if any accuser can prove the first I will confess the latter to do him a pleasure.

5. "Item. When he was in Cornwall at Sir John Arundell's, what Jesuits he met there and what company he carried with him of gentlemen."

To the fifth, I say that at my lying in Cornwall, I saw just as many Jesuits as I have seen in her majesty's chamber, and that was never any. Other company I met in then with my brother, a quarry of pleasure, to see our sister and accomplish business.

6. "Item. Not long before this past Christmas, entering into speech of Monsieur, he passed into great terms against him in so much he said there was neither personage, religion, wit, nor constancy in him, and that for his part he had long since given over that course of France

and taken another way, which was to Spain: for he never had good hope of the queen's marriage since my Lord Chamberlain played the cockscomb, as when he had his enemy so low as he might have trodden him quite underfoot, that then he would of his own obstinacy bring all things to an equality. And so he troubled him no more with the cause of marriage, and talked only of the king of Spain's greatness, piety, wealth, and how God prospered him in all his actions, not doubting but to see him monarch of all the world."

To the sixth, I shall not need to use many words to disavow this, these speeches have been too ordinary in Oxford's mouth, as my Lord Henry, Southwell, Raleigh, and as many as hath accompanied him can witness. This springs from a muddy fountain.

7. "Likewise both Charles and Henry. Likewise they have been great searchers in her majesty's wealth, having intelligence out of all her receipts from her majesty's courts in law, her customs, what subsidies of Parliament she hath made since her coming to the crown, what helps by special gatherings made, as for the building of St. Paul's steeple, the lotteries, and other devices from the clergy, and what forfeits by attainder or otherwise; and what pensions were to some of her councillors, what gifts she had bestowed, what charges she was at in her household, reparations of her houses and castles, fees, and a number of things which now I cannot call to remembrance, and the charges she was at in the wars of Leith, Newhaven, and other petty journeys in Ireland and Scotland and in the time of the Rebellion of the Northern Earls, as well what she received as what she spenden in all offices and places."

To the seventh, of her majesty's wealth I never made search or inquiry, and of her receipts I never sought to understand. So ignorant of her majesty's receipts am I as I am not able to say what riseth out of her courts, her customs, etc. The man who says so makes me pause to puke before answering further.

8. "Likewise both Charles and Henry are privy, what increase hath been made of souls to their church of Rome in every shire throughout the realm, who be of theirs, and who be not, who be assured and who be inclined; and in every shire throughout the realm, where they be strong and where they be weak; and this is known by certain secret gatherings of money for the relief of them beyond the seas, wherein there be notes of every household and the court, put into some other's hands of a foreign nation, a thing which if it be well looked into cannot be void of great and notable practice."

To the eighth, which is a lunatic's moonlit raving, as I cannot but wonder at this fiction, so I was, it not my office, never registrar of the increase of the souls that hath been made through the shires of England. Of any secret gathering of money for beyond the seas, this shows as strange as the greater part of the rest of these interrogatories, and for my own part, I hold them all as the ravings of a lathering madman, piggish in his drink and slavish amongst men, and so I commit him to the yeoman of his bottles, who has been no little causer of my persecution.

My lords, ever have I truly answered my examiners, and earnestly craved that we might come to trial of this cause, but without any hearing of us or confronting of us with this libelling monster, here we remain in durance, kept from all conversation with our friends, while this gay courtier, borne out in this by my lord of Leicester, goes grazing in the pastures and up and down the town, and as I am informed obtains his release for the winter tournaments, for no cause but the bright figure he must cut in the tiltyards, for so my lord of Leicester makes him never a man more necessary for the holiday season.

My lords, I beseech you then, weigh my affliction, and so work as the world may behold your integrity and upright dealing, to God's glory and your own immortal fame. I live in misery; stained in credit, cut off from the world, hated of some that loved me, helped by none, and forsaken by all, for what just cause I know not. My distress is great, my calling simple, and not able to avail anything without the assistance of your goodness. Bring me to my answer; and, as you shall see it fall out, my accusers can prove nothing against me. Vouchsafe me speedy remedy, or at the least the justice of the law; and, if I have failed of my duty willingly, let me feel the price of it. I crave no pardon, but humbly sue for favorable expedition, for the which I appeal to your honorable judgments, and pray for good success in all your desires. From Sutton, this 31 of January 1581, your lordships' in all faithful devotion,

Ch. Arundell

C.A., in mine own hand.



A Brief Answer to my lord of Oxford's Slandorous Accusations

1. Article. First he accuseth me of hearing mass six years past in Francis Southwell's chamber.

Answer. This article, being the only true thing he broacheth, is confessed; marry, but protesting withal that whereas the statute law passeth on hearers of mass which are not present at the queen's service within the year, I have been coming three whole months together; notwithstanding six years are now fully past since the time was past which the law prescribeth.

2. Article. It is further charged upon me for the further aggravating of the fault that the priest which said this mass was a Jesuit, and that both I and the other two were reconciled. Answer. To this I answer, first, that reconciling in itself were not a felonious matter until this new statute in Parliament which I find is passed but a little week ago, and therefore misses me clean. And second, that it can avail them little that the priest was of this now suspected order called Jesuits, unless they can prove that I knowing him to be so notwithstanding heard his mass, for many plain and simple men may light into suspicious company; again, the Jesuits were no more offensive to the state seven years ago than any other priests, neither was there any statute or proclamation then forbidding me them more than another. But the truth is, to make short work, that this priest was neither Jesuit at that time nor is any now, as Mr. Walsingham hath found by the flat confession of the seminary priests within the Tower.

3. Article. That my Lord Harry should be present when I presented a certain book of pictures after the manner of a prophecy and by interpretation resembled a crowned sun to the queen, etc.

Answer. Of all other this point is most childish, vain, and most ridiculous, for as my Lord Harry never saw this painted book, I protest, much less expounded it or played the paraphrase, so in my knowledge did he never hear of any such. And for his further clearing in this cause, I will depose upon my oath he was never privy to the book, and that Oxford showing it to me conjured me by solemn oath never to impart a word of the thing to my Lord Harry because he would not hide it from my Lord Treasurer.

4. Article. That I should bring in a Jesuit to see the queen dance in her privy chamber.

Answer. Christ never receive me to his mercy nor forgive me my sins if ever I spoke with Jesuit, much less brought them to the sight of such an exercise, which had stood less with their severity to follow than with my discretion to prefer.

Condemnation of the Accuser. Now I would require of charity and justice that these brief particulars concerning him that chargeth me may be considered.

- 1) That he was never kind to any friend nor thankful to any kinsman in general;
- 2) That though he love no man living from his heart, yet of all he most detesteth those that are either nearly kin by nature or have deeply bound him by their well meaning;
- 3) That by devising tales and lies he would set one man to kill another and hath sought my life by a dozen practices and devices;

4) That he would have set Hoby to have killed my Lord Harry;

5) After he had once begun his accusation, he proffered me a thousand pound in money in case I would concur with him in points whereof he had accused the Lord Harry and Southwell, which I refusing and professing to die against him that would charge me with the smallest thought against my prince, he would have given me as much to fly, that by the flight of one he might have wreaked his deep malice on another. But this succeeding as evil as the rest, with protesting that I should be torn in pieces with the rack he left me, whereupon soon after one of us and within two days all the rest were committed into ward.

Now the truth is that this null count, finding himself forsaken for his horrible enormities, rather to be buried in the dung hill of forgetfulness than reported by any modest tongue, obtained my lord of Leicester's favor upon condition that he should speed us three, and thus the bargain was concluded.

My lords, I have been reticent heretofore, and loath for modesty's sake to fully paint my adversary in all his horrible colors; but now my grief is such, shut up with neither friend nor enemy to speak withal, whilst my detractor lives a gay life pursuing all his former iniquinations, that justice requires me to mention another matter otherwise better left in wraps. My lords, I must prove him a buggerer of a boy that is his cook, as well by that I have been eyewitness to, as also by his own confession to myself and others who will not lie. Moreover, Thomas Power, weeping to my Lord Harry and myself at Hampton Court, confessed how my lord had almost spoiled him, and he could not sit or stand for many days, and yet he durst not open his grief to anyone.

But is this all, my lords? No, there is no end. He would often tell my Lord Harry, myself, and Southwell that he had abused a mare; and said that the English men were dolts and nitwits, for there was better sport in back doors, which they knew not, than in all their occupying of women's fronts, and that when women were unsweet, fair young boys were in season, with so far worse than this as it irketh me to remember, from all which strenuous living he hath as proof his yearly celebration of the Neapolitan malady. Thus much for proof of his sodomy, who is a beast stained with all impudicity.

Next, my lords, albeit (as I have said) reluctantly, must I truly hit him with his detestable practices of hired murders, of which some hath been attempted, one executed, and divers intended. And though it be long since, it may not be forgotten how Denny attempted the killing of Nicholas Faunt, and shooting at him from a rest with his caliver, struck his hat

from off his head. And I would be as loath to omit the killing of Sanckie (being sometimes a special favorite of this monster, but discovered to be untrue) by his servant Weeks, who at the gallows confessed to the minister that he was procured to this villainy by commandment of his master, who gave him a hundred pounds in gold after the murder was committed to shift him away, and so much was found about him when he was apprehended.

But leaving this, though it were not impertinent, I will go more near him, in my own knowledge, for his intended murders against divers. At what time the quarrel fell out between this monstrous villain and Mr. Sidney, he employs Raleigh and myself to carry his challenge, but goes about instead to murder Mr. Sidney in his bed at Greenwich. Let us neither forget his oath to kill Sir Henry Knyvet at the privy chamber door for a speaking evil of him concerning a kinswoman of ours.

Another murder he intended against Mr. John Cheke, and would have put it in execution if I had not told him I would betray him and so stayed him from this villainy. And not long since, as my cousin Arthur Gorges well knows, Mr. Gorges had warning given him to look to himself and how it was intended he should be slaughtered on Richmond Green, going home to his lodging at twelve o'clock at night; and another gentleman of Oxford's revealed it to me, and this gentleman refusing to be commanded by him to so foul a fact, was shaken off and for no other cause. Lastly, if himself lie not, he hath practiced with a man of his own that now serves in Ireland to kill Raleigh whenever he comes to any skirmish in the wars there, and this he terms a brave vendetta; and of this intent I have advertised Mr. Raleigh, as also of his lying wait for Raleigh's life before his going into Ireland.

Lastly, my lords, having well entered at last into this exposition of my lord's virtues, I must conclude him in his religion, which though said to be as ours is, is really of no man else's. To show that the world never brought forth such a monster, and for a parting blow to give him his full payment, I must prove against him his most horrible and detestable blasphemy in denial of the divinity of Christ, our savior, and terming the Trinity as a fable. And that Joseph was a wittol and the Blessed Virgin a whore; my Lord Harry, Raleigh, and myself were present when he spoke these words, and Mr. Harry Noel will say that Raleigh told it him. To conclude, he is a beast in all respects, and in him no virtue to be found and no vice wanting, which things for a time have been dissembled, but long time may not be suffered. Do but consider, I pray you, my lords, who is my accuser, and let these examples plead, and I will abide your judgments with equanimity. Yours and her majesty's ever to command, From Sutton, this 8 of March 1581,

C. Arundell



To my very good lord, Mr. Vice-Chamberlain, Sir Christopher Hatton, at the court, give these.

Right honorable. As my well meaning hath always willed me, so doth necessity now enforce me to write you these. My monstrous adversary (who would drink my blood rather than wine as well as he loves it), as I am credibly informed, hath said in open speech and in a manner of a vaunt since his coming out of trouble, that whereas I built my only trust on the friendship of your honor, he had sped me to the purpose by bringing me in condemnation of a printed libel that should be written against you, whereunto a friend of mine being

present, doubting whether I had written this indeed, Oxford answered that he could not tell, but he was very sure that he had given Charles his full payment by this discovery.

Though restrained for the present to conceal the authors for divers respects, when time shall serve I shall willingly impart for your worship's better satisfaction all my knowledge. In the mean, I humbly crave this favor, that as the matter is a mere supposal suggested by envy, vented by malice, and devised by others not unlike himself common knaves, as shall appear, so you will suspend judgment till truth shall deliver me from this improbable slander and lay it on him that best deserves it.

And if I thought you were otherwise persuaded than I have deserved, I could not rest so well contented in my present condition, which expected all help and succor from yourself, and other friends I have not sought for my delivery, neither will I. Trial is all that I require and trial shall acquit me, and hang the villain for sodomy that hath no proof of anything but the slander of his own blasphemous tongue. Of this last practice against myself, and others more monstrous, which shook the foundation whereon I built all hope, I shall one day tell you more and make you wonder at that which is come to light. In the meantime, I recommend myself, my cause, and all to yourself, who can best judge of all. And here in durance I pray for the queen and my good friends, of which number you are chief; and so wishing for that opportunity wherein I may do you service, I commit you to that God that hitherto protected me. From Sutton, this 15 of March,

C. Arundell



Arundell sat by a thin flame far into the broad night, scribbling feverishly upon sheets of paper spread before him on the table, piled carelessly by his stool. His face showed the desperate concentration of one engaged in a duel with sabers, but he had no saber, only a pen, to fight with.

X. DE PROFUNDIS CLAMAVI

(1581)

"And at my gate despair shall linger still
To let in death when love and fortune will."
-- Raleigh

The sun set red upon the low hillsides of Surrey. Before it, the trees darkened through the shades of green and blackened into the hills themselves as twilight deepened into night. Singly and by twos and threes the stars sparked out in an enormous empty dome. Behind him, the house rose dim and silent toward the sky. The air felt extraordinarily soft and full. Arundell strolled meditatively across the meadow, enjoying what little was left him to enjoy, which was the air.

His thoughts ran naturally upon his troubles, but only in an aimless, mournful manner, with neither plan of help nor analysis of cause. In the months that had preceded this now quiet mood, all plans had failed of fruition, all analyses had been made and remade till both causes and effects had become strange and distant to him, as if they occurred in another's life, or in a novella out of Italy. But naming of causes were a profitless exercise in any case; he knew only that he had gone from day to day, from early years to later, striving in little and unimportant ways to rise in his calling, to worship quietly in his little corner, to offend no man, to keep himself from harm and the malice of men and the passions of the great; but that somewhere he had erred, somewhere he had made a little and unimportant fault which, compounded daily in likewise unimportant ways, had ended in his ruin. Where plans were bootless, too; for his fate depended wholly upon people to whom he was now no more than a name on the wrong list.

This had grown in him, especially of late, this ability, this willingness to give himself up to events, to observe in resignation the great forces of this time clashing about him, while he withdrew into recollections of a happier youth, when his life had seemed his and the time had seemed his and the world had seemed waiting to be acted upon. He had observed this blessed freedom from anxiety, this deplorable failure of nerve, this retreat from life and people and action into thought and memory and idle fancies, fancies so slowly revolving in him sometimes that they seemed sometimes to stop, and he would sit for an hour staring at his plate, or awake to find himself standing in the yard, half returned from a forgotten stroll in the gardens.

"There is nothing but shall come to ruin, be it now never so glorious upon the earth."

This dim passage out of Juvenal turned itself ponderously in his brain as he walked, with neither implications nor echoes nor the following lines of the verse, merely these words, expressing his whole sense of his own plight, seen increasingly from outside himself, from outside his race, as something proper and fitting in creation, a law by which the universe ruled itself, a principle that better than Providence served to make sense of his lifelong observations. Whatever he had done, or now did, whatever his adversaries did; whatever the queen did, or the Spanish, or the pope; however craftily they did it, or ineptly, however right they were or wrong in doing it, it must someday come to ruin. Not today, perhaps, perhaps not tomorrow, but someday; someday all of them and all their works would be covered over by dust and time and darkness, and new worlds would emerge, having forgotten them entirely, then likewise pass away; until one day no new age would come, and only

dust everywhere, drifting over everything, everything forgotten, everything as if it had never been.

Arundell shook himself. These pretty thoughts are very fine, he thought, a pretty poem for a lugubrious hour. He tasked himself angrily for his weakness, marching towards the house again, insisting to himself that doubts were doubtless salutary to a point, lest he behave as fanatically as others behaved, but that too much of this would render him fit for nothing but taking pabulum from a spoon.

Where was this? He must put aside this feminine part and stand to; buckle up and meet his adversaries in the field--for they were adversaries and of flesh and blood and limitless ingenuity, no planets wandering slowly slower to a standstill, by immutable laws eternally fixed from the beginning, but real men who sought his blood by any means, whom he must strive against like Diomedes on the plain of Ilium. It was just such irresolution that brought Norfolk to the block, just such a failure of will that sent Northumberland and Westmoreland scurrying away to the Scottish border, leaving their armies leaderless and defeated with never a blow struck nor shot fired.

The world may come inevitably to ruin, but Arundell was far from ruin yet. He was inexplicably kept in ward these six months, kept from open hearing or confrontation with his accuser, restrained from his acquittal by Leicester and the whole strength of the Ursine faction. Nonetheless he was alive, untouched in any capital crime. And it could not well go on forever. One day he must leave this house a free man, and then he must begin rebuilding, resume his duty to the queen, restore a little of her confidence in him, regain his living from his offices, come again to court, pass Leicester in the Presence Chamber with a level eye and unbowed head.

Come! We'll have here now no more sour faces, no more broodish swells or sallow thoughts--all hereafter will be lips curled back in a foolish grin, merriment, and a bit of whistled song.

He approached the house and threw back the heavy door with a clatter.

"To arms! Escape! Gentlemen, oh God! Escape!"

The guardsman dashed out of the kitchens with his sword grasped in one hand and his boots in the other. Arundell stood behind the open door, as Anthony galloped through it and stopped in the path, peering in all directions through the darkness.

"Down to the stream," Charles cried again; "I saw him, Tony, running down the lawns, as naked as my nail."

Anthony threw down his boots and starting running towards the creek, then halted abruptly and stood disconsolate.

"Well, I saw him, Tony. He was met by a host of Jesuits, all disguised as elephants, and he rode away with them, I think to Africa."

The guardsman turned and grinned. Overhead a shutter banged outward, and Barnabe called down the question what the matter was.

"No matter, friend, but seeing you are awake, why will you not come down and join us?"

Remonstrating with Arundell for his puerile tricks, threatening him playfully with the semi-official bastinado, Anthony came in and let himself be poured a cup of wine.

"Senseless cavillations, my good fellow, these are but the murblings of a diseased humor. For why are we gathered here this night, but for mirth and good fellowship?"

To which the guardsman bashfully agreed, and drank to Mr. Arundell's good health, assuring him heartily that had he gone out to run away in earnest, which he hoped he would never do, and he Anthony had caught him, he would never have found it in him to do him any hurt. Joined by Barnabe, they drank a round to the queen, and another to Anthony's merry wife, then to Barnabe's sister. And the rest of the evening passed in better sort than otherwise it might have.



Since Arundell's sequestration in this house in Surrey, he had had little to do but sit and write out answers to the interrogatories sent him, respond to the labyrinthine questions of the earnest clerks sent down from the Council to trip him up, and muse upon his condition. He read a fair amount (though his mind was often wandering), chiefly in his favorite poets, who were his kinsman the late earl of Surrey and also Wyatt, and also of the Latin authors, and also, of course, in the law. The rest of the time he devoted to writing letters of supplication to everyone whose name he could recollect. His accuser had at first seemed to come off clean, released by Leicester's intercession after a few days in the Tower; in the January tilts at Whitehall, Oxford had cut a brave figure and ridden to great applause. Arundell had been beside himself at the news, not only for the humiliation of his languishing in custody while his enemy frolicked in the broad light of the sun, but chiefly for its ill omissions, with Oxford believed sufficiently to be readmitted to the queen, perhaps believed sufficiently to send Arundell to his doom. And indeed, throughout these winter months, the official questions put him had become less perfunctory, their character more and more desperate and their tone somewhat more hysterical, until Arundell grew certain that either his own great friends had been excluded from the investigation or, worse still, his friends had thrown over to the other side.

But then things had changed abruptly. Arundell and his companions, for the family's honor, though they had charged Oxford with everything their imaginations could rack their pens to, yet they had never mentioned his tampering with Nan Vavasour. But nature divulged what her friends would not, and in late March she disburdened herself of a son in the Maid's Chamber. The secret was well out, and so was the father's name, and Oxford replied by dashing to the coast in a blue panic. Immediately, the ports were laid for him and he was taken and brought back. The Tower regained him, and there too, the morning after her delivery, was Nan imprisoned for the time.

Oxford's adulteries broke the patience of his father-in-law and gave more color of probability to the charges made against him. But there came no answering change in the treatment of the Howards. Even as Oxford was recommitted, Leicester presented new briefs against his former companions, and struck harder home with every item in the charges. The parties at work hit a balance and an impasse. Arundell and Howard could not be released before there was a hearing; Oxford's supporters refused to consider any hearing, as if he had been a common felon, prior to his own release; the queen refused to release him until he had confronted the others and proved his representations against them to their faces.

Meanwhile, the negotiations for a marriage with Anjou had indeed been resurrected. An embassy of Monsieur's friends had come in February, headed by de Marchaumont and the scholar Jean Bodin, and the ways had been prepared for the extravagant expedition that arrived in April. New buildings had hastily been erected at Whitehall to house the marriage commissioners, who came up the river on the 21st, a prestigious troop led by Francis and Charles de Bourbon, the Marshal de Cossé, La Mothe Fénélon, accompanied by a train of more than five hundred gentlemen. On Saint George's Day, Saturday the 24th, began a round of entertainments, three days of which passed with enormous pomp and no negotiation. These great courtly exercises of the spring, the excursion to Deptford for the knighting of Mr. Drake aboard his ship, the dancing and games before the French commissioners, Arundell had only heard about in his distant sequestration. When discussion of the marriage began at last, the queen was as far from a husband as she had ever been.

Sussex, still for the match and deluded at first by all of this elaborate staging, finally sent word to Arundell that gave a discouraging interpretation. The queen was merely buying time, he reckoned, keeping Monsieur in hand to prevent his striking off upon his own exploits in Flanders. What she really sought was a defensive treaty with the king of France, and she bore the French along with hopes of marriage until, having got her treaty, she would come into the open and cease her dalliance with Monsieur. Whereas the French had come to speak of nothing save a wedding, the English commissioners would speak of nothing save a treaty.

And at the same time, there came a far heavier hand over the papists--in the Parliament's new statutes, in the gentry's new fines and persecutions, in the apprehensions of poor priests. But Campion and Parsons, the Jesuits, despite the constant news of appearances and near escapes, evaded their pursuers and continued in their ministrations. Already from Parsons's secret press the inflammatory tracts had begun to flow, forbidding the Catholics from preserving their anonymity by attendance at the Protestant services, challenging the government in arrogant terms to meet them in open disputation of the creeds.

Arundell's afternoons, as often as not, were spent in correspondence. Sharrock came from London from time to time to see to his wants, and when he left Charles usually had a small bundle of letters to accompany him. Those letters he did not mind having seen he sent by the official bearers who at intervals traversed the ten miles between himself and the court, now in residence at Greenwich.

His mornings, however, were usually spent in reading. Recently he had been at Statius again; he enjoyed that antique poet not only for his great learning, but also for his often demonstrated ability to lull Charles's agitated mind into sleep. He was many days in the reading, for with every three or four hundred lines he felt constrained to take a lengthy nap.

Here Tydeus met the evil king Eteocles in Thebes, and leaving him to return to Argos whence he came, he was set upon near the cliff of the Sphinx by fifty of the king's best men. Terrified at first, he then shook off this weakness and set about the work that must be done, hacking and hewing, throwing down boulders from the height, roaring out his anger and his great heart, slashing through his enemies' futile attempts to shield themselves, ignoring their pleas for mercy utterly, until only one man remained, whom Tydeus sent back to the king of Thebes as a bearer of ill news. There was no help for it, but Arundell must picture himself in the role of this great hero, overwhelming fifty, nay a hundred, or more, of Leices-

ter's hired bravos and sordid companions, returning then to Greenwich as Tydeus did to Argos with the spoils of his victory, secure at last in the favor of the queen for having rid the realm of this tyrant's innumerable minions.

These idle daydreams were worse than useless to him. Never since boyhood had he spent his time in fantasies of battle, of gore and bloody victory, and he thought now that this must be a measure of his desperation, that only slaughter would suffice.

How far these matters had progressed. As a boy, he had ridden his pony all over these low hills, in his visits to family in the county, near this very house, in fact, never dreaming that one day it would serve him for a prison. Arundell stood in the windows of his chamber on the uppermost floor, gazing dolefully out upon the familiar terrain, replacing in his mind a meadow here with a copse of wood, removing a cottage there, and not much more; the scene was as he remembered it from many years before, when he and his boyhood friends had traversed this ground with the exuberance of that unconscious time of life. Reviewing so, from this prison, this scene of former happiness, he was reminded of Lord Harry's father's poem on that subject, similarly written in spring, from his imprisonment in Windsor Castle where in love and play and in hateless debates with his friends he had formerly spent his youth. He rummaged among his books for the tattered copy of the Songs and Sonnets that travelled with him always.

The pages were unnumbered, but he remembered the verse to have been but a short way in from the beginning. There he found it:

When Windsor walls sustained my wearied arm,
My hand my chin, to ease my restless head;
The pleasant plot revested green with warm,
The blossomed bows with lusty Ver yspread,
The flowered meads, the wedded birds so late,
Mine eyes discover; and to my mind resort
The jolly woes, the hateless short debates,
The rakehell life that belongs to love's disport;
Wherewith (alas) the heavy charge of care
Heaped in my breast breaks forth against my will
In smoky sighs that overcast the air.
My vapored eyes such dreary tears distill,
The tender spring which quicken where they fall,
And I half bent to throw me down withal.

Here, for a moment, Charles's spirit failed him. There was no help for it; this ruin of his early dreams and the contrast with those jolly woes of his youth seemed too poignant to him now, and like Surrey before him, with the spring verdure bursting into life all about him, he alone seeming to wither and shrink like a flower in October, he thought to remove himself from these ironies by leaning a bit more forward, a matter of a foot or two only, leaning from this high window, a window like the others in this high old house; but to lean a little further distance, to lean, to cease to be amazed at the hard fortune which had brought him to this place. He breathed heavily. From this height, from what a depth he cried out for succor--if not for succor then at least for understanding. His enemies whose hatred meant to baffle him, his friends who made a dainty show of love but stayed a distance from him--all of these he could not curse for their words and actions towards him, but began instead to

see them but as actors in his special destiny, which was to come aground on these hard skeries, to founder on these shoals of his own hopes. To whom could he apply? The Catholics feared him, the English mistrusted him; the French had no use for him; he feared the Spanish himself. Only a few believed in him, and they scarcely in better case than himself. Lord Harry in the same plight he was in, and Southwell too; Lord Paget suspected for religion, and his comings and goings attended by a wicked sort of caterpillars in the pay of Mr. Secretary. To poor Kate, he must be no more than a ghost now, a remembered footfall in their empty rooms. Even Nan Vavasour, whom he had gone ridiculous lengths to protect, now living in public sin with Sir Henry Lee, Leicester's great companion, while Lee's wedded wife, Paget's sister, lived mournfully at home with her mother, driven deeper and deeper into that pale piety which was her only rest, watched wherever she came. In all the thin black universe, he hung alone in space; his friends were only ideas to him now, which he could not see or touch; he had no world to live in, or had only three guards who, insofar as they were flesh and blood, reminded him of a peopled world far off in his own deep past.

But a little push forward. To lean, to launch himself, to flap a wing and fly *ad patres*, like the Birds of Night. A crazy grin spread across his face, then froze into a mask of surprise at the depth of his own grief--then he dissolved again into the same grin, embarrassed by his own tears starting. He laughed desperately, his wide eyes staring at the long sky; as he laughed at his own foolishness, a low moan began in his throat and continued for a good time, his hands opening and closing at his sides. What a world he had lived in then. Of which now nothing remained save memories which jeered, which mocked him in his brain. The emptiness of his years hollowed out in his belly and soul like the icy surface of a pond suddenly giving way beneath; such emptiness he saw now that he could only wonder how on earth he, or for that matter anyone else, could ever carry on, or had ever hoped to. For a moment he beat upon his cheeks to restore life in them; and then the beating grew more savage and he had to control his hands, roll his eyes about again, and laugh scornfully at his tear-starting weakness.

But a little push forward. That was not his way, nor had it ever been. While the chance remained of a better day, he would wait for it; while any strength remained to him, he would fight. If all Leicester's enemies waxed so philosophical as he did now, the earl would rule a empty kingdom. If he stood alone in the universe, then alone he would stand--but stand by God he would. Arundell turned abruptly from the window, banishing all thought roughly, and went down to take some supper with his guards.

A little later in the day, Jamie Sharrock rode in with some papers bearing on Arundell's lands, requiring a few hours' work in the hope of collecting the little rents owed him. The money, scant as it was, would be welcome to him now; his pensions at court were all unpaid since Christmas, and the provisions of the house were distressingly low.

With him Sharrock brought another unsigned missive in the delicate handwriting of Anne Lee. She prayed constantly that God would carry him through his trials. For herself, she wrote, fate had been not very much kinder, for she with her family were kept under constant watch for religion, which made their lives little freer than if they had been in Newgate prison. Even so, the freedom of prayer could never be taken from her, and she exercised that privilege daily and mostly on Arundell's behalf.

Arundell responded at once, retiring to his chamber to indite a letter that would attract her mind for a little while from her troubles, and at the same time dissuade her from a fur-

ther correspondence that might bring her into greater suspicion. When he had finished, he found that the letter pleased him. The woes of which he wrote seemed the less for having been written.

This letter, with some other papers on his table, he stamped with his seal and handed over to Sharrock, who looked at him long and bade him keep his noble heart a little longer. Then his man rode off, and Arundell reclined himself in his rooms to dream of the day that would never come, when he, like Tydeus, would defend himself in arms against fifty of the devil's best, and come away with but possibly a little scratch, beneath all their blood upon him.



One morning Arundell sat reading by the casement window in the north wall of his chamber. Hard at Statius again, he was gazing idly out upon the meadows and the highroad winding away towards the city.

From out of the trees to the left of the road there emerged two gentlemen on horseback, making their way at a leisurely pace towards the house. As they came near, Arundell observed them closely. Young men both, they were splendidly dressed but seemed to go unarmed. One of them looked familiar.

Arundell got up and walked out into the hall. Anthony came out of the next room and asked who the men were, to which Charles replied, "Let us go and see."

Out in the yard, Barnabe was asking the pair the same question, but, before answering, they caught sight of Arundell passing out of doors.

"Master Arundell, sir," said the taller man. "Your friends give you their salutations, and wish for news of you."

"Do they so?" Arundell answered. He approached no nearer, but stood on the steps beside Anthony, whose hand lay casually upon his sword hilts. "I thank my friends for their good care; you must tell them I am very well."

The men sat smiling from their horses, apparently unsure of what to do next. There was a short pause.

"Is there something else the gentlemen wished?" Barnabe asked.

"Master Arundell, sir," said the taller man. "Your friend Thomas is anxious for your advice in a matter of his health. A very private matter, sir, not perhaps to be spoken of in congregated company."

Anthony looked to Arundell, but Charles flicked his eyes at him to hold him in his place. "I shall be happy to advise him, sir," Arundell told the man, "the better when I come to know more about him."

The man smiled faintly with understanding. "Well, it is a delicate matter of his health, sir, to do with the breaking of his forearm some eight years past."

Anthony snorted and told Arundell he would make no objection to the man's unbuckling his coded ingenuity and speaking plainly. Charles laughed and nudged Anthony's arm, and asked whether he might speak privately with his visitors. He understood the men to have come from Lord Paget. Anthony frowned and shuffled uncomfortably, then reminded

him of their agreement. Arundell nodded, and the two guards withdrew to the kitchens to polish their weapons by the door.

The visitors left their horses and followed Arundell into the house. The taller one was a very handsome man, dressed to the point of fashion, who introduced himself as Mr. Gilbert. The other, only slightly less imposing to the eye, was Mr. Fitzherbert. To the latter Arundell expressed his imperfect recognition of the face, upon which Fitzherbert reminded him of their brief introduction in Staffordshire upon a time some three years earlier. Arundell remembered him at once, but wished uncomfortably that they might let that occasion pass into merited oblivion, to which Mr. Fitzherbert, with a rueful smile, agreed readily.

"And what, gentlemen, brings his lordship to use these midnight means to send?" asked Charles. "No trouble, I hope?"

Mr. Gilbert seemed to do the talking for the pair.

"No trouble, sir," he said. "In fact, it is not on my Lord Paget's errand we have come." Arundell stiffened slightly. "But yet he loves us well, Mr. Arundell, and told us you should know us by his forearm. He would have you to trust us, I believe."

"Then that is enough," replied Arundell. "But then where may I be of service?"

"There is another, sir, who wishes to speak with you."

"Yes, of course," Arundell said. "I'll just get my bonnet."

Gilbert smiled at the little joke. "Unnecessary, Mr. Arundell. The gentleman is with us here."

Arundell looked amusedly round the room.

"Well, gentlemen, if I cannot hear his voice better than I can see his face, it will be a short conversation. What is this mysterious fellow's name, pray?"

Gilbert stared at him very seriously.

"His name, Mr. Arundell, is 'Eusebius.'"

Arundell sat expressionless.

"Is it? I would have thought that worthy man had ended his visiting of poor gentlemen many centuries ago."

"The name means nothing to you?"

"If your friend wrote no history of the eastern churches, I know him not."

"Then, Mr. Arundell, dost know the name 'Ricardo Melino'?"

"He wrote of eastern churches?"

Gilbert's expression became increasingly intense.

"Mr. Arundell, perchance you have come acquainted with the name of 'Mark'?"

Arundell grinned. "Mr. Gilbert, I pray you, I lose myself in this march of nominations. Your friend is known by too many names; tell me, how does his mother call him?"

"Oh," said Fitzherbert, "his mother calls him darling."

Arundell laughed aloud, but the earnest Gilbert rose and stepped to the inner doors to make sure of their secrecy.

"His name," he said in a whisper, "is Robert Parsons."

Arundell looked at him blankly.

"Did he write of eastern churches?"

"All England knows that name, sir," said Gilbert, becoming annoyed. "He and Father Campion are hunted up and down the length of the realm."

Arundell stared at him again.

"Oh God," he exclaimed. "You have not brought the Jesuit here! God's blood, man, do you realize what condition I am in?"

"That is just why we have come," said a voice from the door. There stood a short, swarthy man, with thick, rather unattractive features but a kind expression, wearing plain black clothing and no hat upon his close-cropped head.

Gilbert leapt to the door and ushered the newcomer in, placing a chair for him opposite Arundell at the table.

"God reward you for your care, Mr. Arundell," he said in a deep, solicitous voice, "but I assure you, though the danger here be great, we are not afraid, for we have faced far greater, with God's help."

"I am very glad, Father," Arundell returned, ashamed to explain for whose safety he had been so concerned. He glanced nervously to the inner doors. "Tell me, Father," he said hurriedly, "how can I help you?"

"We are riding on to Michelgrove, Mr. Arundell, and thought to stop with you upon our way. It seemed the least we might do for you in your Christian struggle."

"Oh thank you very much, Father," Charles stammered. "You need not have troubled on my account." He was striving to find the means to get these gentle fellows from his doorstep.

"Yes, Mr. Arundell. Do you see, our friend George here," gesturing towards Mr. Gilbert, "George has become too well known to the authorities of this kingdom, whose atheistical spies and minions, as you know, are everywhere, and so we ride now to Michelgrove, where he will travel thence across the seas."

Arundell thought of poor Shelley, arising from a well-set table to find these carriers of legal plague plump and smiling at his door. He wondered aloud whether they expected to find Shelley at home.

"Oh, Mr. Arundell," Gilbert said, "Mr. Shelley is in prison and has been these two weeks, didn't you know?"

Arundell turned pale.

"Fear not, my son," said the Jesuit. "There is nothing against him. With a courage conferred upon him by the Holy Ghost, he refuses anymore to attend the queen's church, and must bide a while therefore in the queen's jail. He has no shame, only glory, by that course."

"Well, I am relieved," said Charles, who was not. He suppressed his annoyance at this blithe dismissing of the man's discomfort. "How fares my Lord Paget then?"

"He is closely watched, but free of prison for the time," said Gilbert.

"I cannot tell you seriously enough, Mr. Arundell," Parsons continued, "how proud we are, and how proud God must be, of the trials you gentlemen suffer daily for the faith, which is an example to all the laity. I am told, now, that you have held out these six months with no one fault. When our gentlemen, and especially those of your rank and kinship with the queen, continue thus to persevere in refusing to attend her service, despite the threats and privations daily made upon you, why, then I am very sure that God will end this persecution soon."

"I cannot tell, Father," replied Arundell. "Only this I say, I must be plain with you; if my delivery depended upon a little sermon and communion, I should have been rowing on the river long ere this."

"How?" cried Gilbert in surprise. "Do you mean you would not refuse to attend?"

"Foh, man, I have been to the church weekly, and would go hourly if it might set me free. God knows my heart, sir, I care not whether the queen knows where my arse is placed."

Father Parsons looked dourly upon him. "Mr. Arundell, I had thought otherwise. I pray we are not deceived in you. Really, these feckless courses may speed you with the queen's men, but God would have more . . ."

"Spare me, Father." Arundell's face had grown red with shame and irritation. "God and I must work this out at our leisure; only now I must come free of this. I have heard of your arguments, Father, I have considered well your cases, I have seen your book of reasons; believe me, Father, you and I are different men, and this is not for me."

Parsons gazed at him for some seconds, not without sympathy in his eyes. "Well, you are not then one of our martyrs," he said, "but you are a Catholic nonetheless. But I must not comfort you in this; the holy church, with the decision of the late Council at Trent, forbids your acquiescing in this opinion and worship condemned. But you will do as you decide. Only remember this; when you lose your way, God will welcome you; do not wait too long."

"Right then," said Arundell.

"We will not discuss the reasons for your durance here, since they have not to do with faith. Unless, my friend, there is something I can help in?"

Arundell shook his head.

"Then let it be," said the priest. "You know, in any case, I am prevented from discussion of any matters of the state."

"Would my lords of the Council knew that. The rumors go that you have come to raise rebellion."

"Nothing less, Mr. Arundell," Father Parsons answered, "nothing less, believe me. We are here for cure of souls, and meddle not at all in politics. Only to say that, when our lost sheep have been regained, as one day soon they will be, then the atheists and hypocrites remaining must necessarily be put aside with perhaps a little force. But the atheists need not trouble us overmuch, Mr. Arundell."

Arundell sat gazing at the table before him. He considered himself as good a Catholic as any in the ordinary way, but often he felt out of touch with the Roman point of view, at least as nowadays he heard it given voice.

"But do you think all Protestants to be faithless?"

"Ah, I speak not of those wanderers who are ignorant, but of the others, yes undoubtedly they are faithless. I can affirm it of my knowledge that heresy in England is desperate, and few or no men of judgment do think in their consciences this doctrine to be true and defensible that is commonly taught and practiced, the absurdities thereof being so many and manifest as they are. But that some men for policy, some for present government, others for ease, others for gain, honor, and preferment, and all commonly for some temporal interest or other, do stretch out a hand to hold it for a time by force and violence."

"But," said Arundell, as the Jesuit bore on.

"Now, when the childish and ignorant have been well taught, and the schismatical temporizers have been led gently back to Christ, and the obstinate and hard-hearted only remain, then we shall know a way of proceeding with them."

"Father, I do believe that when at last we have come into our happy kingdom, you would deal as harshly with the Protestants as they do now with us!"

"You surprise me, the cases are nothing like! Their violence against the one church of Christ is naught but a persecuting raised by the devil, and cannot by any means be consonant with justice. Marry, notwithstanding this, when a man hath received once the Christian Catholic religion and will by new devices and singularity corrupt the same, by running out and making dissension in Christ his body, as all heretics do, then, Mr. Arundell, for the conservation of unity in the church and for restraint of this man's fury and pride, the church has always allowed that the magistrate should recall such a fellow by temporal punishment to the unity of the whole body again. But we, do you see, keeping still our old religion, and having not gone out from the Protestants but they from us, we cannot be enforced by any justice to do any act of their religion; and that is why we require toleration from them, and why you must not yield to their threatenings now."

"You must pardon me, Father. You are too earnest for me."

"Yes, I see we are. Mr. Arundell, of ourselves we require the supreme courage. Of you we merely ask a little patience, a little steadfastness. One day very soon we shall all worship freely here."

"Then you see more than I do. The Protestants are stronger every day, and the Puritans seem to me more numerous."

"Well, my friend, I see more than you see."

"Mr. Arundell," said Gilbert, "when you do come free, we will hope to see more of you at the mass."

"If you are bound across the seas, sir, you must excuse me."

"No, sir, I meant to say," the other replied, "I meant to say that our little association is always in great need of help, you see, and should be very glad to have you join us here in England."

"Association?" Arundell asked with a new wariness. "What sort of association do we speak of, Mr. Gilbert?"

Father Parsons intervened and said, "I think you exaggerate them in your mind, Mr. Arundell. Their principal activity, I am afraid, is but looking after me. No plots, you see, no privy conspirings. Our friends here help the priests come from house to house, and now they are helping too in the printing of our books. You said you have perused my little book of reasons; now, did you know, that book was printed in London?"

Parsons was manifestly very pleased by this, a pride which Arundell thought not unwarranted.

"Yes, beneath their very noses. Mr. Fitzherbert here has even left his new wife to join us for a time, for Fr. Campion's little treatise requires to have its citations checked before the printing of it, but he is unavailable at this present. And Mr. Fitzherbert takes the work in hand."

Fitzherbert smiled at Arundell somewhat ruefully.

"Well," said Charles, "as for joining you, I know not when I shall be free. So long as Oxford remains in the Tower I still await my chance, for he must have his hearing before he may come out, but when that shall occur I know not . . ."

All three of his visitors were looking at him strangely; Charles was caught up abruptly.

"What is wrong?"

"Mr. Arundell," Gilbert said. "My lord of Oxford was delivered from the Tower almost a week past. I wonder that you have not heard."

"Ah," Arundell murmured, and dropped his gaze tiredly down to the table beneath his hands.

"Now, never fear, my friend," said Parsons quickly. "God is watching, in his wisdom, oh you may be sure of that. If it pleases him to set you free, then free you shall be set, and if to keep you in the deepest dungeon, then there is where you shall remain forever. The earl of Oxford, believe it, will never change God's mind."

"But by this I think I see which way God's thoughts are running, and I cannot say I like them."

"Mr. Arundell. Do not anticipate the Lord's will. But if indeed he would have you here to remain, why then you must accept it willingly and love your prison for that cause."

"Not very damned likely," said Arundell.

"Mr. Arundell," said Parsons sternly. "I must tell you, you are not the man I heard reported."

"One does one's poor best, Father."

"I daresay one does," countered the priest. "But these are tickle times, and God's work requires much better than that. Charles, you are not a silly, pious gentlewoman in the far country whom we must comfort as best we may; no, you are a respected man of many parts, much admired for your demonstrated qualities; people look to you for an example. You must be one of the leaders of this straying flock, for it is the place the Lord has chosen out for you. I cannot let you retire here in self-pity and shameful carelessness. This is a day for

heroes and martyrs, not for standers by, all of us, we must sacrifice for God our petty and ..."

The Jesuit stopped. His subject was grinning at him crazily, an unfamiliar response to his familiar exhortations that threw him momentarily off his stride.

"Why, what is it, Charles?"

"You would have me sacrifice for God, the queen my sovereign would have me sacrifice for loyalty to her; the queen of Scots her friends would have me sacrifice for her; yet I cannot sacrifice for all of these. How may I choose?"

"Pray for guidance."

"No want of praying here. I am in a deep fog, and have been for as long as I can remember."

"But God will see you through it."

"Tell him to hurry, Father, I have not much sacrificing left. If Oxford and his friends are given their free passage, I may soon be called to sacrifice my last jot."

Parsons drew his black shoulderbag around before him.

"Let us minister a private good, here, for comfort's sake and for devotion."

Arundell sprang up. "Mass? Mass! Where would we be should we be taken saying mass?"

"Mr. Arundell, calm yourself," said Gilbert. "We do hear mass regularly in the deepest prisons in the realm."

"Well not in this one! Here, gentlemen, thanking you heartily believe me for your visit, and commending you to God's care in your journey ..."

"All right, Mr. Arundell, I understand you, and I forgive you; we are on our road. Do bear in mind our conversations. You are needed, Charles, and do believe me, you need us."

Arundell shook their hands hastily all round and bade them a quick farewell. Watching them ride off toward the trees again, he sighed mightily in relief and in something like despair at the same time. His shame choked him.

He stood on the steps before the door.

"God go with you," he shouted in a strangled voice.

The little man in black stopped his horse and looked back, and waved, then resumed his way, just as Anthony came through to see whether the conference had ended.

So Oxford was free again. How so? In house arrest, or roaming the streets of London, dancing with the queen at court, setting his amorous traps for another Maid of the Chamber? While Arundell, and Howard, and Southwell wasted away in isolation, foolishly applauded for a heroism they loved very little to be guilty of, while others pined in prison, or hid in house watched and followed at every walking forth of it? Such was Leicester's port and sway, that every false companion of his own, however black and foul beneath his silk and sarcenet, may lord it over all with him, while good, simple folk must bear his whims.

The thought of trial consumed him. Without it, he might sit in Sutton for the rest of his life, forgotten utterly and left to explain his doubts to the walls of this house, growing poorer and poorer, less and less amiable, more of his goodness gone and abilities wasted with his fast fading youth. Lord Harry, with his naturally melancholic turn of mind, must be near to desperation now. Kate he had not heard from; she could not write, neither could she read, but in any case he would never have sent to her, for such a woman must be allowed to go her ways.

Later, towards the end of July, Arundell heard more news from Jamie Sharrock. Oxford was indeed in house arrest, still refusing to come to any hearing until he had his own free pardon in advance. His friends at court continued tirelessly to speak for him. Charles was heartened somewhat to learn that, in the very Council Chamber, Sussex and Leicester had come to blows on the matter, and a duel had been made between them until the queen had taken it up, both earls commanded to keep their rooms. He was not forgotten. So far at least, at least Sussex stood by him. At least there were no more interrogatories, no new charges to be answered; now, it seemed, only time and the labors of his friends should make the difference.

Arundell ceased writing to the Lord Treasurer, who had come fully in for his son-in-law, God knows why. But to Walsingham he wrote still, and especially to Mr. Vice-Chamberlain, as follows:

To Sir Christopher Hatton, at the court, give these.

Sir: it is a fault in grief, that either it complaineth too much, or else saith nothing: and yet, for my own part, I seek as much as I can to shun extremes. I have largely unfolded my whole estate to Sharrock, this bearer, because I would not be cumbersome unto you; only craving of charity and justice that my trial, which hath long been promised, may not be any longer deferred. For then shall my enemies sink with shame, and I depart out of the field with honor, and whatsoever either malice hath unjustly built, or a fool devised upon a false ground, must play Castle-Come-Down and dissolve to nothing. God and truth being on my side, is all my comfort; and I now know well that whatsoever the devil or his ministers could devise against me was not wanting, and if there had been any probability in my enemies' accusations, I had been ere this time past *laudate*. I will say no more until either trial or liberty be obtained, which I wish to enjoy by your mediation, whom I commit to the grace of God. From Sutton, the 20th of July 1581. Your honor's fast and unfeigned friend,

Cha. Arundell.

Somewhere, thought Arundell, staring out upon the fields surrounding, browning under the summer sun, somewhere there is a place in this long world where men do not strive for creeds, where men live humbly and modestly with no eristic searching of loyalties and allegiances. Here, he was an Englishman, and he was a Catholic, and in the logic of these times there was no such creature possible.

Had he been made of martyr's stuff, this dilemma would be easily solved--nothing finer than to go to the gallows for God. But so for a martyr; he was but a man. Is there anything more futile than to be turned off by the hangman for what may after all be the wrong faith? He loved nothing worse than to be hanged for quarrels of creeds.



Arundell sat by the fluttering half-light of a guttering candle that threw fantastic dancing shadows upon the chamber wall. His papers strewn about him on the table, the bed turned down hours ago awaiting him, he ignored them and gazed upon the shadows, rising and leaping and fading out, then disappearing as the single light went out with a sizzling gasp in its tray. In the darkness he remained, the darkness within him somewhat deeper than that without, staring long at the darkness where formerly the papers had been visible.



Summer waned, and chills came in the air. The birds lost no time in quitting the territory, hurrying overhead in long files in search of more hospitable ground. Arundell watched the days progress towards winter, with nothing else for him but to sit before his door or in his chamber watching the breezes in the dying trees, the leaves falling to the ground and being lifted lifelessly across it, wasted and dead now and spent. Anthony and Barnabe, affable, good-hearted men, had been withdrawn, replaced by four men of Walsingham's choosing, unaccommodating men with cold, humorless faces who waved all visitors away with upraised muskets before they had come near enough even to be recognized. They scarcely spoke to him at all, save to give him news doubtless sent to him from Walsingham, as for example of the arrest of Campion the Jesuit in Oxfordshire in late July, not told him until September. Arundell concluded that his cause was hopeless, and accordingly he gave up hope.

Then, on a morning in October, a man of Hatton's rode in with Evans, one of Arundell's secretaries in his receivership. They found Arundell still abed at this late hour, for he had taken to rising only in the afternoon, and sometimes not at all, with no more reading and very little correspondence to read or write in the evening. But the reappearance of one of Hatton's men augured a change for the better, as if in the halls and chambers of the court some subtle shift had taken place, and he was now again within reach of his protectors, Leicester's grasp a little loosened, incapable now of maintaining him entirely in isolation, the first face from outside the Secretary's circle of cutthroats he had seen in two whole months. Arundell dressed and went down with something more of spirit in him.

The news they brought was better still. He was at last to have his hearing.

XI. IN A MIST

(1581)

"Now ha! ha! ha! full well is me,
For now I am at liberty."

-- Wyatt

Evans and Sharrock came down the water stairs at Whitehall. The boats were thinly spread upon the river, and through the gathering darkness and fog none were near enough to be seen. Sharrock stepped to the light-post just above the water's edge and carefully lit the lamp, and as its faint gleam shone out across the Thames a cry went up from one of the nearer boatmen, whose oars could presently be heard approaching.

Arundell stepped out of the shadows and clasped Evans's hand silently. The man said nothing and seemed uncomfortable. Wreaths of mist came in off the water and swirled about them as they waited. John Chayner and Thom Norris likewise came down the steps and shook their master's hand. All of them had been summoned to the hearing just ended, and they were now to ride back to Bristol to await the new receiver.

The boat came in along the landing, emerging out of obscurity only at the instant before it ran up along the steps. The waterman leant forward to help his fare aboard, as Arundell and Sharrock leapt into his bottom and turned to gesture to the others. Then the boat hauled away out into the darkness whence it had come. Evans and his companions stared after it briefly, then shrugged, then went back up the steps to their dinners.

The hearing, after nearly a year's waiting and praying for it, had been anticlimactic. Late in October, a gentleman of the court had ridden down to Sutton with papers of commission for Walsingham's guards. Arundell had been given an hour's time to dress and ready himself, then, alongside the messenger, he had left the house of ten months' too much familiarity behind him and made his way at a gallop towards the court. Standing by his horse on the ferry below Lambeth, he had had ample time to gaze upon the buildings of Westminster and surmise both the best and the worst about his reception there. He had felt prepared for neither.

Once arrived at the Council Chambers, there had been no humiliating delay awaiting him, only Sharrock in the corridor to divest him of his cloak and the gentleman of the guard to conduct him in. Robert Beale had risen from his hasty supper by the inner doors and, hurrying before, had announced him to the councillors assembled.

Neither his adversary nor his fellows had been there, nor had all of the councillors been present; most notable of the absentees was Leicester himself, with his brother and few of his closer cronies, but old Burghley had been there, wrapped in enormous robes peering out from under declined brows with a wintry Olympian gaze. Sussex had smiled faintly at him, but made no other sign; no more did any of the others. Hatton had greeted him from official distance, rearranging his papers before him, coughing gently, motioning Arundell to a place across the board.

"Your answerings and declarations well considered," said the Vice-Chamberlain, "and your manifold offenses well weighed, their lordships have thought good to recommend to her majesty free pardon, which she in her justly celebrated clemency vouchsafes to grant you."

"My lords," said Arundell; "what my adversaries have falsely charged to me I must fully answer to . . ."

"There is no charge to answer; there is no more offense; you have free pardon for all crimes committed or uncommitted by you to this day."

"But my lords . . ."

"And there an end," said Hatton, curtly, still staring into his papers. "Your patent of the receivership of Bristol, Gloucester, and other places in that country, your patent of the captaincy of Portland, and all other your patents and grants by her majesty's well known generosity bestowed, each of these and all of them are revoked and cancelled from this day, as unnecessary and superfluous in her majesty's good service to remain with you. Furthermore, you are from this day requested to press no other suit nor seek no other office until signified unto by her majesty, or by messengers in her behalf, that further service is required of you and likewise welcome unto her. And furthermore, being without business which keeps you at the court, you are requested henceforth to quit and avoid the court, wherever it may be in residence at any time, for a space of time limited by her majesty's pleasure, her need of further service to be signified to you at that time if and when it should occur. Do you understand her majesty's gracious will and dealings herein?"

Arundell looked from one averted face to another, down the length of the board and back again.

"Of what charges am I pardoned?" he asked slowly, in something almost like disinterest.

"Of all crimes committed or uncommitted by yourself, wittingly or unwittingly, to this day," answered Walsingham, the only man in the room staring hard upon him. "But only to this present day," he added with some emphasis.

"I had thought to answer my accuser here."

"There is no accuser here," said Hatton. "Her majesty, in her foreseeing wisdom careful of your future good and welfare, especially requests me to adjure you in her name to look well to your courses in future time, and to keep yourself very clear of all suspected and mischievous persons, and to deal openly and in true loyalty with all men. Do you thank her majesty, whom the Lord long preserve, for her merciful dealings towards you?"

Arundell, his head hung down, muttered that he thanked her majesty with all his heart, and was dismissed.

Sharrock had met him as he emerged from the council rooms, not ten minutes after having gone in, and together they had walked across the Privy Gardens in the slowly dying afternoon. Evans, Norris, and Chayner had met them at the garden stairs; Arundell realized that they must have been called up for the occasion, but asked no questions of them.

In the corridors of Gentlemen's Row, Arundell had been greeted by his acquaintances long ungreeted, affably enough but in a tone rather more subdued than was their habit. He had entered his old room to find it occupied by a very proper young gentleman not much unlike the paintings one sometimes sees of Ganymede, who had but newly come to court; the porter had hurried in behind him with a bundle made up of his few belongings, to say that his wardrobe was safely kept for him in the porter's lodge. Arundell had descended to the water stairs and taken boat.

Another boat passed silently by them in the mist and darkness, running west upon the river towards the palace or beyond; the waterman belatedly gave out with his cry, answered by Arundell's rower. The great houses along the bank, as near as they must have been, were invisible through the fog. One wondered how these solitary boatmen, gliding silently through the darkness, managed to go their ways without coming to wrack. Still the boatmen plied their trade, content with their chances, hopeful always of a generous gratuity, by all appearances happy in their jobs. Their fares had been fixed by the state many years ago, before these inflationary times, but though now they made too little by their dangerous work, they seemed nonetheless to be content. Perhaps they never stopped to think about what they did. Perhaps they never met with accident because they never contemplated their risk, and perhaps, were they now to begin worrying about the perils of the night, they would soon end in disaster. Not unlike the old proverb about the clown who juggles ably until he remembers that he cannot juggle, whereupon his bottles fall upon his head and kill him.

The boatman came in close by the effluence of Fleet Ditch into Thames, following Sharrock's direction along the first Blackfriars stairs nearly as far as Paul's Wharf. Here, through the fog, the massive bulk of Baynard's Castle loomed dark above the water, wherein at Pembroke's table as likely as not the earl of Leicester might be dining now and, it may be, even now inclining his head to a messenger just arrived, never pausing in his meal or pleasant conversation, to hear the news of Arundell's rude dismissal, to add this bit of merriment to the table-talk.

"Oh do you know Arundell, my lord of Sussex's erstwhile friend?"

"Oh yes, of course, we do, he of the melancholic mien and hapless hangdog looks, a very dolorous man; yes, of course, died or disappeared, did he not, some little time ago?"

"No, no, not this fellow; he has just returned to court and found for himself a very cold welcome there indeed"--with meaningful looks and eyebrows raised aloft; "Oh my lord, you are too witty! Leave the poor man to creep into his hole."

"Assuredly, my friends, without a doubt. To creep into his little hole, ha ha!"

Arundell sat in the boat replaying this foolish scene many times over in several variations. He was drawn again to emulate Tydeus, and run into the hall with rapier held aloft, crying out his disdain for all his foes too soon triumphing over him. Where he should doubtless find the hall deserted, or but a servant or two to stare at him as if he were run mad.

He alighted tiredly upon the steps along the wharf and turned to pay the boatman. Together with Sharrock he walked back into the tangle of dark streets and byways towards the Priory Mansion, thinking to himself that whatever else was taken from him, tonight at least he had his bed.

Sharrock, as they walked, spoke up for the first time, to say that more than he could give voice to, he regretted the injustice done his master by their lordships.

"Well, James, thank you for so much. Whether stone hits pitcher or pitcher hits stone," Arundell replied, "it will be the worse for the pitcher."

"Aye, there you are right," said Sharrock, and walked on silently to their destination.

Outside the rear door of the Mansion, Charles took his bundle from Jamie's shoulder and turned to face him.

"Jamie, you must run up and find Lord Harry out. Try him at Arundel House, and the Dacre House, and if he lies at neither, pray seek him out at the Charterhouse. Learn from him what you can of what has passed. But never hurry, and pass the night where sleep overtakes you; we shall meet on the morrow. Take this; and many thanks, my James."

"Aye, sir," Sharrock said, and struck off.

Arundell sighed heavily watching him go, and then entered the tiny hall. The candles were where they always were, and he started up the narrow stairway. A sound of movement came down from above. Arundell paused in surprise and listened. Came another sound. He ran up the stairs, fumbling for his key in the pocket of his doublet, and began calling, "Halloo, huswife; halloo, old huswife."

He threw open the door. In the center of the room stood two young gentlemen, staring at him in alarm.

"Here, what is this?" he demanded.

"Your pardon, Mr. Arundell," said the nearer man. "You know me, sir; Basset, sir?"

"Yes; oh yes, Basset; we have met. What make you here?"

"Your pardon again, sir," said Basset. "Here is Mr. Michael Tempest, whom perhaps you have never seen."

Arundell shook the young man's proffered hand, and somewhat lightened his looks to put them at their ease.

"Very well, gentlemen, I have this honor to remember," he said, more kindly. "But I ask you, what do you in my rooms?"

"My good lord of Northumberland, sir, permitted us these rooms for certain uses," Basset replied. "I daresay, Mr. Arundell, he had no notion of your coming home to them."

"I daresay not. To what uses do you put them, then?"

"Well, for the receiving of certain guests from time to time. We are seldom here, sir. Only from time to time."

"Guests; what guests? Oh I see," Arundell said, glancing over their smooth, handsome faces and expensive dress. "Yes, I do see indeed."

"Oh, it is not what you are thinking, Mr. Arundell! Nothing of the sort."

"No? Is it not? Well, what then? What guests are you receiving from time to time in my rooms?" Arundell was slowly losing patience with these coy youths.

"Certain other guests, sir," said Basset. The two fellows exchanged glances and shuffled their feet for a second, then looked back at Arundell.

"And so?"

"Priests, sir," Basset said.

"Priests! You are entertaining priests in my rooms, God's blood, gentlemen, have you lost your reason?" Arundell thundered out his dismay and the men backed a few steps away for all chances.

"By Christ, gentlemen, under every stone we find a priest; I open my pockets and out leaps me a smiling priest. Have you no sense?"

"But, Mr. Arundell, we are told you are a Catholic."

"Well, so I am, but God, man, we'll do the Lord no good saying paternosters on the gallows. Know you not where I have been these ten months past? Has not this house been watched?"

"Oh, we do, sir, but not watched. There was no choosing, do you see. With my Lords Paget and Windsor themselves kept watch of, sir, and my lord of Northumberland looked to everywhere he goes; and with the earl of Southampton dead, sir, we could do no other."

"How, Southampton dead?"

"But newly."

"Good Lord," said Arundell, drawing up a bench and sitting heavily upon it.

"You see, Mr. Arundell, my lady his widow is one of ours whole, but there had been some wars between them, and she has been very ill dealt with in his will, an evil instrument proceeded from his sickly mind, sir, as I guess, poisoned against her causeless by certain base companions."

"You mean Paget."

"Well, Charles Paget, sir, but more than him by certain others of his house, one Dymock, to be plain. Which testament to break, do you see, my lady has sought the help of my lord of Leicester, who can do much at court you know, and now with his lordship's comings and goings to her, pray God only upon the business of this will, she must close up the house a little from its wonted hospitality. And her father, who mislikes her dealing with this earl, has gathered up and travelled off to Cowdray. My lord of Arundel, likewise, resides entirely in his country, sir, and so we lack of proper housing for the priests in town."

"But in this city are there no rooms for priests but mine?"

"Oh, there are, Mr. Arundell, but our many friends in the city are more careful than they were, you see, with Fr. Campion's taking, and since Fr. Parsons has returned to France. Courageous still, they are, but for this time we trouble them as little as we may."

"Parsons has gone to France?"

"Indeed, sir. You have missed a great deal of news."

"I haven't missed a bit of it. I had no idea in what bliss I lived."

"It is not so bad, sir," said young Tempest. "For you are free again. Felicitations, Mr. Arundell, upon your delivery."

"Gramercy."

The men seemed ill at ease still, and fidgeted nervously about the room while Arundell looked into the fire. He wondered at their behavior, and thought them reluctant to sit until they were bidden to. Then he realized that he was rather in their way.

"A priest," he said. "Damn me, you are expecting a priest just now; are you not?"

"Yes, we are, sir. But certainly you need not leave on that account."

"But certainly I must. It will be some hours yet before I shall be ready to be captured with a priest. Besides, I may be watched."

"We feared as much as that, Mr. Arundell. We would leave you, I assure you, but we know not how to prevent the priest."

"Yes, I shall walk on at once," Arundell said. "Only tell me, where is the woman who was wont to occupy these rooms before you came to them?"

"A woman, sir?" asked Basset.

"Yes, a woman, Basset. Very like a man but different. Saw you no woman when you came here?"

"No woman, sir; these rooms were in disuse, which made us the more willing to accept of my lord's offer of them."

"I see." Arundell took up his cloak again and donned it, then placed his little bundle in the corner. "I shall leave this for another time, eh?"

"Oh yes, sir, and your other household stuff will be safe for you, Mr. Arundell."

"Very good," he said. He turned again at the door. "Do have a pleasant act of treason," he said, grinning. They smiled wanly in reply.

The streets in the Blackfriars district were dead black, with still deeper shadows where alleys and recesses opened into the broader way. Here and there were men lying asleep or drunk half in the street. One of them, a small man in a soldier's jacket lying with his face beneath his arms, was sprawled just without the hall door, so that Arundell had to step over him as he came into the road.

He started off eastward, traversing the narrow ways between Thames Street and Carter Lane above. Some distance along he saw a flood of light cascading from a tiny open door, and made for it. It was here, in a tavern with only a green bush for a sign, that Kate had often worked and lived as well when she was not in the Mansion.

The main rooms were commodious, stretching back beneath low timbered ceilings to a narrow stairs in the rear. This night the custom was immense, and the air within was close and warm and the noise cacophonous. Here were knots of prentices laughing and shrieking over dice, and groups of misplaced seamen from down the river planted with their women at benches and boards throughout the room. Fishermen were here from Queenhithe Dock and Billingsgate, banging their cups upon the oak, and a few small parties of gentlemen who found the excitement of the fore rooms more to their convivial purpose than those in the back. Buxom girls with low bodices ran to and fro among the guests, carrying slab trays and coarsely answering the calls and invitations made them. In several corners music was in progress, snatches of several tunes from all directions at once, the insistent beat of tabors beneath the hooting and squealing of pipes of all description. The place was lit as if for a palace ball, and a portly man who must have been the host darted among the candles to guard against their upsetting.

Arundell came down into the room and took off his cloak, and made his way to the drawer's bench. There was no one here with whom he was acquainted, but more than that, nowhere could he find his Kate. The hilarity was high this night, and the cries of laughter and sometimes lubricious glee suited ill his present mood.

He had his ale from the tapster and stood at the bench peering round him. Still no Kate to be seen. The cachinnations of the revellers he found irritating; a bit of inebriety might be just the thing for his present black and evil humor, but only when Kate was here beside him, laughing at his peevishness and jesting him from his troubles.

The host ran by, bound for he himself knew not where, merely running to be busy amid this busy mob. Arundell reached out and caught his sleeve as he scurried past.

The man was a florid, ill-kempt fellow whose hot breath smelt of onions and whose eyes had a trick of focusing several inches before one's face as one spoke to him. He seemed confused and not a little put out at being snagged, and he stared towards his hailer crossly.

"Here, host, I have a question for you," Arundell called.

"Ho, Quidnunc, no questions here. In this house we all know everything there is to know!"

"But I do not know everything; you must make me perfect, host."

The host looked impatiently round the room, fearful to be away from anywhere for very long.

"Well, put your question, sir," he shouted back.

"Tell me where is Kate, good host." The din about them was deafening; nearby an enormously fat soldier fell from his bench to the ascending howls of his comrades.

"What Kate, sir? We have no Kate," the host called above the roar. "But if the gentleman is well provided, we must have the girl for him, with no mistaking."

"No, you misunderstand me," said Arundell. "I ask where Kate has gone?"

"No Kate, gentleman, no more now than a moment ago. Many fine girls here, but no Kate. I must be away!"

The fat soldier was requiring the best efforts of half his company to remount him on his bench. Book was being made on his chance of remaining atop it for a full minute.

"Kate, host! Who worked here not ten months past! Where has she gone to?"

The singing took up from a group hard by, a devilish awful squalling that pleased the singers no end.

The host bethought him, and abruptly recognition dawned.

"Oh Kate! Dead, sir. Died of the fever at just about that time. Excuse me, gentleman," he called, hurrying on his way to anywhere.

Arundell picked up his cloak and bonnet and replaced them once again, then strode quickly out into the darkness. Just outside the door, a small man in soldier's dress lay sprawled in the street, his head buried beneath his arms.

XII. DOUBTS AND PASSION

(1581-1582)

(The Recollections of Lord Paget)

"Forget not yet, forget not this,
How long ago hath been, and is,
The mind that never meant amiss
Forget not yet."

The occasion of our gathering was a hanging. Myself had seen Campion twice or thrice before, notwithstanding which we might hardly recognize him on the cart, so changed was he by his rough handling.

Not many days earlier, when news of his trial had gone buzzing round the countryside, Mr. Arden and I had ridden up to town at Lord Harry's beckoning, to the end that no means might be left untried to save him. Myself and Northumberland made earnest suit to Monsieur, who was returned with the queen from Richmond, but scarcely could we meet him out of her company, and when we could, he paid us little hearing. Especially also we sought out his special counsellor, M. Bodin, who has the great reputation of a lawyer and a scholar and also a Catholic, but he, though he entertains us with much courtesy and also concedes that in his opinion the priests are condemned without any color of law, yet he will not meddle, he says, in the affairs of a neighbor's realm, for his commission is to deal for marriage, not for religion.

Likewise Mr. Tresham worked diligently upon his friend my lord of Sussex, who with many tears protested he could do nothing in this case (though he loved the condemned man well, when he thought of his great learning and good graces). For my lord of Leicester would have him to perish, and, says he, neither in Kent nor in Christendom (as the saying is) dwells there the man who may deny my lord of Leicester. Lord Harry sought the aid of the Spanish lieger here, Señor Mendoza, with whom he had much sway, but his reply was that the matter had come too far for mortal help, and that only God must save the father now. For better to lose a part than lose all, was his meaning, for the Señor had other matters in train which he must not danger by meddling for Campion at this time.

And so there was no help for it. Monsieur Simier was also in London at that time, who might have worked upon the queen, but wherever we might search him out we could not put our fingers in his doublet. In his own affairs he was in much peril of Monsieur's cut-throats, and Simier was never to be so easily found except when the queen was by him.

But despair gives courage to a coward. No pains, no profit, is a worthy saying, and on the very eve of the execution, some few of us besought Monsieur at court where he played at tennis with his apish friends about him. He greets me coldly as we come to him and listens with a truculent air as I tell him what sad case we are in, and must have present help. Notwithstanding he is all of Leicester's own, and little love between us, yet he is a Catholic, and on that account we beseech his merciful intercession like a prince. To which he gazes upon me with insolent demeanor and says in French, "My lord Paget, I cannot strike my ball while you stand before the net."

Well, it is hard to teach an old horse amble anew. Monsieur was ever a faithless miscreant and continues one still. It is too manifest to all of us then that Campion must have his crown upon the morrow.

At Tyburn, on the first day of December, 1581, was a vast assemblage made, despite the early hour of the day. The rain came pouring down like the angels pissing on us for our sins, when out from Holborn we see Campion coming drawn upon a hurdle and two others drawn upon another. Beside their horses walked a pious heretical minister, preaching to the fathers words they little wished to hear. The crowds pushed forward all along their way, and no matter what the guardsmen try, some rush forward here and there and crave a blessing, which liberally he bestows upon them all.

All covered in mud, the three are hoisted upon a cart beneath the gibbet. Lord Harry and myself are standing back amongst the rear, for recognition's sake, and cannot hear all that is said, for the clatter of the rain and tumult of the mob is sufficient almost to fill our ears. Some of the standers by are pious souls, and cry out like lost sheep, wailing the name of our Lord and oftentimes falling to their knees in the muckish road, whilst also many stand among them just as loudly shouting execrations upon the priests, spewing out the names of "traitors" and "popish devils" and other foul denominations.

Upon the cart, Sir Harry Lee (my brother-in-law still, however he may comport himself now), he steadied Mr. Campion, and from below Sir Francis Knollys hurried the others aloft. These were the only great men we could find there, besides a gaggle of the ministers and preachers come to prove their last points of doctrine and triumph in their adversaries' refutation. All three poor priests wore their prison gowns of frieze and, through the gloom and rain, their heads uplifted, faces and arms all broken and wrenkled up from the torturers' devices, they looked like nothing so much as the blessed martyrs of the ancient church, standing amongst the Roman heathens.

From our distance we might hear Knollys shouting that they must confess their treasonous acts, to which Mr. Campion made a reply which fell into the crowd before us. This talk continued as they stood upon the cart with necks in noose, and ever and again we hear the queen's men boom out with vile hecklings and detractions, with modest answers which are lost to us from Campion. What they charged upon him needs no telling, for it was the wonted cant of plotting to kill a queen or so, and Campion's replies we might well guess, of all good loyalty *usque ad aras*, with praying for the queen and so on, for it was their whole cry, of all priests that ever I have met, obedience in all temporal matters to the queen and in all spiritual to the pope. Which to the queen's men was just half good enough.

But care of soul must precede care of body, as the poets ever say, and so Mr. Campion looks no whit abashed by them, only inclining to anger that whenever he makes to address the audience they cut him off clean. Neither will they let him pray in peace to himself. At good length, Sir Henry Lee and the minister leap down into the mud, and the carter whips up his horse and his cart drives out from under the unhappy men, who swing and gawk and gurgle while the minister, who is Mr. Charke, screams to the executioner to cut them down in haste and begin his bloody work. But the executioner cannot free his sword from scabbard, or seems he cannot, and as Briant and then Sherwin hang limp he wrestles with his blade in vain. Sir Francis dashes up and hacks upon Campion's rope with his thin rapier, but it will not take effect, and the crowd is in throes, some crying "let them hang until dead" and other shouting "cut them down, cut them down at once"; but it must be otherwise, and

by the time the executioner has them down and the disembowelling begins, all three priests are gone to where there is no pain.

It goes with no saying that these events moved us deeply. That Walsingham's men, with their Milesian lies and paid professions, might bring so noble a man to dust (within God's plan for us though it be said) passes my poor understanding. According to the common saying, *quae nocent, docent*, what hurts us also teaches us, we must have learned a lesson of all this, and Lord Harry avers we have, but as I hope for mercy I cannot think me what it is. I have only darkness in my mind, and must only accept what I can never understand. Harry's answer is that somewhat of force must have been done to save the fathers, for no good was ever to be expected of our friends in England, nor any humanity of their great lordships. But when death has once come, counsel is too late. In this as in other matters, I know not which way to turn, no more, I think, knows anyone else.

I am in my own case the shuttlecock of conscience. When I am suspected, the ministers speak me long lectures of divinity, all to prove what my poor fortunes incline me to already, that the queen cares not how I believe, but wishes me only to go to her churches in earnest of my loyalty towards her person. So that I do no act of religion, my soul is my own, and by this small compliance I save me all the fines, which waste my estate and diminish my son's patrimony, and free me of their prisons. But yet, on the other side, the priests with whom I have had words in this do say clean contrary, that by the Council of Trent and the pope's own mouth I must do no such attendance, for it gives (as they say) scandal to the Lord and makes the angels blush for my infirmity. Then plump I go to trouble again, and there stay, till this resolution weakens, then out I come, and walk my ways, till conscience pierces me, and in I go again; till now my muddled head is spinning, and no man trusts me for his own.

Likewise, anger and grief collect within me, and I feel I must do somewhat for relief, harried and pressed every way by spies and ministers, justices and councillors, priests and old women who deplore my vacillation, till I come anon almost to envy the fanatics and the martyrs who hold on their short courses with never a look behind.

I see no help for it. They say the longest night must come to an end, with day behind, but I see no end, only night. Passions grow daily greater everywhere, and more we are harassed, heavier our fines and closer our looking to, more violent the words of some of our hotter heads, more frightening the news brought us every day. Our ill wishers have as many heads as Hydra, and when we have detected the spy or informer among us and sent him out, another betrays us, another raid is set on, another priest is tortured and names unwillingly his hosts and harborers, another batch of us brought in; and more wistful talk of the queen of Scots and her good qualities, so much to be preferred in her kindly regime to this unloving queen that now sits on throne, this wistful talk becomes exhortation, with some among us looking black faces and swearing that we must have a new queen, and that soon. Oh, how I tremble when this talk comes on; for wisdom and folly do often dwell together, and what these desperate fellows, leaders among us (some of them) for their able counsel past, may bring us to, I cannot tell, but much fear.

A week or two from Campion's lamented death, M. Simier and the Baron Viteau (who would murder his mother for a sly look) come to us at Arundel House, where we play at cards. Ho, my friends, he says, I am set upon by Leicester's cutters and have hardly escaped with my life. The whole matter is his coming over unbidden, at great jars with Monsieur

this year or more now past. There is a certain vile and loathsome fellow, Fervaques by name, who set Monsieur and him against one another, and had near killed him in France. Now Simier is come to challenge this far-ranger to the duel, or so he gives it out, but really he is sent from the king of France to bend our queen (who ever loved him) against too much speeding of Monsieur. His challenge duly made, it now appears, Fervaques and my lord of Leicester have had him set upon in the Royal Exchange, where they almost spilled all his precious blood, rather than meet with him in the field.

So Simier is now beseeching us to produce Mr. Arundell for his advising, but Mr. Arundell has not been seen abroad for a month or more. At Anjou's coming over, in late October or thereabout, some great wrangling in the corridors of the court, all hidden from us without, had won for my Lord Harry and Arundell and the other their release from ward, whereupon the other, a certain Mr. Southwell, had (as I am informed) kissed his friends goodbye and returned to his people in the country, and whereupon also Mr. Arundell had disappeared no man knew whither.

But in good time, this Simier accepts our advice instead of his not possible to be given, and he goes to the court and informs the queen of what has passed. Hardly she believes him, but jump upon the hour, by Providence no doubt--sufficing proof. For it is one little man of Monsieur's, called Lafin, who warned this Simier of the assault intended and bade him flee, having learned which, this Fervaques meets Lafin by ill luck in the Privy Gardens and draws upon him. Lafin shrieks like an Irish sprite and dashes into the garden-house of Whitehall, hotly pursued by this mad Fervaques, and thence into the corridors behind, and up the great stairs, entering at length into the short gallery, running and shrieking like a man afire, bursting apace round the corner into the long gallery, where he careens bang into Sussex and they tumble headlong down the hall, and Fervaques rushes pell mell after him, dagger drawn, round the corner, right up to the queen.

All are too shocked to utter a word. Lafin scrambles behind my Lord Chamberlain's skirts; Fervaques stands gasping and snorting and breathing fire before the queen, dagger brandishing. Only she is not out of countenance, and turns to the lords with her and says, "Hang this surly Frog." Whereat the Frenchman falls down in a swoon.

But my lord of Sussex explains to her that, assassin or cutthroat or whatever he may be, the man has a certain privilege from hanging, in his diplomatic capacities, and must not be proceeded against with full rigor of English law. The queen swears an oath at this, and tells the fellow she must never see his ugly features in the court again, and the upshot is she believes Simier's tale and summons Leicester to the Presence Chamber, where she tells him before all the court that if a hair is hurt of Simier's head the earl shall have ample cause to regret it.

What a long spring we passed then. Throughout the country, the justices and the bishops proceeded against our friends; some bent, some did not, but none were the better for their decisions, that I could see. Here in town, one by one our friends succumbed, if not to the force of these new laws, then to the wily stratagems of Leicester and his friends. Sir Thomas Tresham was sent up to the Fleet for refusing to pay his fines; in January of '82, his brother William, who was a special friend to my Lord Chamberlain, was threatened to be taken for I know not what atrocious crimes, invented in some feverish head, and fled the realm with never a farewell, fearing lest he be hung by the heels through the malice of his enemies. So

also did another man of my own country, Mr. Fitzherbert of Swynnerton, who was fain to leave behind him his wife of not two years.

In February, Monsieur departed, but we scarcely marked his going. We had no hopes of him or his marriage, which was never aught but a barmecidal feast for us to drool upon. Then my lord of Oxford returned to the town, and straightaway a war erupted in the streets, for the Knyvets, those hot fellows, had never forgiven his carnal crimes upon their family, never caring for the fact that their good cousin Vavasour was now a proven harlot living in open luxury with one of Leicester's worst friends, my sister's husband Lee. In March, Oxford has to duel with Sir Thomas Knyvet, on Black Heath behind Greenwich, and both receive their hurt; but this which should have ended it does no such thing, for in June they battle in the streets of London, on two several occasions, with all their men about them, and in July a man of the earl's is killed, though afterwards Sir Thomas, whom the queen loves well, received his pardon for the murder.

And in the meanwhile, is all the secret talk of plots and combinations. Now, be it said, I love the queen of Scots with all my heart, for her pious soul and tragical state of life, though with none of this Mariolatrous passion of these younger men, Babington and Throgmorton and Salusbury and the rest, but yet enough; enough I do tender her safety, too. And likewise I do hate these times we live in, and these burdens which we bear all for religion's sake only, these manifold wrongs we suffer daily by the hands of odible and venal men. But yet, to me, this talk surpasses. Our lady may be in the greatest danger, but yet I cannot see how in loyalty to our present queen we may set about to free her. Still less do I see how we may aid these foreign armies to change her state, for if war comes between our queen and some other forces, there must never be a thought of standing against our queen anointed. But this was what was spoken, bold as white paint. These young fellows, ever and anon, gallop in with schemes of the duke of Guise, the Spanish king, the pope's own banner, now on the coast of Sussex, now led in through Scotland, now to Flamborough Head, with our queen that now is no true queen, but a mere bastard, disabled from her crown. And at this time, the principallest talk was of the duke of Lennox, whose counsel was the only sought in Scotland, where the young king, so it was said by these men (how truly I cannot tell), would by his advising bring in the duke of Guise to cross the borders and bring his mother forth of her prison.

What folly did I hear! What folly did I not hear? Oh, invasions, and marching, and creeping up to castles in the midnight. But always I am told that, once our lady freed, these projected armies retire then and go their ways, off to fight the Turk or do some other notable deed for Christendom. But I know better than that; these young bloods think me a simple fool, and seek to enroll me in some noble act of chivalry for the freeing only of the Scottish queen, but I see through their passes and Hey, presto! Am I so doddering that I cannot see what is on foot, with all these mumbled traducements and disablings of the queen? They mean to overturn the realm quite.

Ah me. It may be that is what must, come time, be done. I am an Englishman, and I am loyal and true, I thank them very much; it behooves me to speak no treasonous matter; but maybe, when God has so decided, these heretics must be put down, and maybe by violent means. But what I ask only is a true sign, whereby I may know God's will.

Lord Harry says nothing. Like me, he listens to this talk, but like me, he joins not in its speaking. But here, Lord Harry has something else in his book, which I may only guess at,

for always he is closeted with the ambassador of Spain, considering of this and reporting of that and watching over everything, always silent of his doings, never to tell me all or any part of what has passed between them. I fear for him. When he speaks of the Scottish queen, it is as one may speak of his lover, or a poet of his lady.

Indeed, I fear for us all. I know not what this will come to, and dare not conjecture. There are spies everywhere. Still Arundell is gone, in hiding or in secret prison or made away by stealth, I cannot tell which. Still the Scottish queen's letters come in and out of the realm, some (which I am often given to carry) of hello and thank you and God be with you, brought back and forth to the French ambassador's house, but others, closely kept, which I have heard of but not seen, these others--what is in them? Not hellos--these pass by the Spanish way, as if (methinks) the French were but for diversion's sake, and the other of some secret import. *Ecce signum*. I long for help, but fear its coming; I pray for relief, but tremble to think who will be my relievers. Would only that Mr. Arundell were here. Would that my Lord Howard would open with me, and let me taste what danger we are in, so that I might know how to defend me. Oh, the times! Oh, these great heads, these great policies. We are as in a war, where every army hides its banners, and no man can tell for whom he fights. I am wandered into paludal grounds, sinking to my boot-tops, deeper with each step I take to bring me out; I must stay with my friends to avoid sinking friendless, and together we sink deeper in a pack.

Well, the Lord sees all, and into all hearts, and knows who is true and who is not, and knows what doubt a decent man may fall in. Him I trust me to, and only him, for none else can help me if they would. God love and watch over us all unceasingly. Which I never doubt he will!

XIII. THE VORTEX

(1583)

"Benedicite, what dreamed I this night?
Methought the world was turned up so down;
The sun, the moon, had lost their force and light;
The sea also drowned both tower and town."

Hey! Ballou's up."

A great party of men, naked to the waist, charged over the meadow, most afoot but not a few on horseback, toward a similar party charging from the opposite direction. In the middle, a man on a grey mare held aloft a wooden ball that shone in the Whitsuntide sun.

The opposing sides approached, raising up a tempest of hurrahs and dust, which mounted and crested just as the centerman dropped the ball to the turf and tried to slap his horse away from the collision that impended. But it was not to be. At once he was caught up in the havoc, unhorsed and dimly to be seen pushing and hauling to come clear before he made an unheroic end beneath a thousand feet.

The mounted men on both sides were first to reach the ball, but they failed to strike it with their long cudgels and, wheeling their horses about, found themselves confronting their opponents instead, and fell to bashing one another while the ball was kicked about beneath them.

Then the forward runners reached the place. One fine young fellow, lithe as lass of Kent, scooped up the ball and ran laterally to the north, evading his pursuers with dips and ducks and seeking the cover of his friends. But a broad giant of a man caught the ballcarrier with a headbutt to the chest that sent him sprawling. The giant tore the ball from his grasp and stood erect, towering above everyone, to let the wave of attackers break upon him, and disappeared forthwith beneath the battle.

Now all was cries and curses and limbs in the air, as both lines converged upon the center. Through the melee, the ball was nowhere to be seen. The Walthamstow men seemed to be carrying the field, but still there was no ball.

Then from the rear of the battling hosts emerged a single Wanstead man, who darted away towards his home village with mad speed. The cry went up and all turned to the chase, the Walthamstow men earnest to bring him down, his teammates seeking to prevent them by any means whatever. Within four or five minutes, every man capable of running had passed over the low hill to the east. Those remaining were the men who had given their best fight before the game was well begun.

Lord Paget, from his place on the overlooking hill, let out a low whistle.

"What a devilish sort of game these men take up," he said, an immense grin wreathing his face.

"Would that the Spaniards were here to see our play in England," said Arundell. "Surely, they would be in bodily fear of our war."

They remounted their horses and paused to survey the bloody scene once more.

"I have my wager, gentlemen," Northumberland said. "Wanstead has it, friends, let there be no equivocation in the settlements."

"Oh, my lord," said Paget, "you shall have your bet when the ball has found a home. It has a right space to go before that time."

Northumberland laughed. Around them, other gentlemen were resettling themselves on their horses and starting off in twos and threes for London, with their servingmen about them.

"The Wanstead men are Leicester's interest," Paget said. "I wonder he was not here to cheer them on."

"He is here, Tom," Arundell replied, nodding towards a rise in the land above them. They looked up. There sat the earl of Leicester with a troop of his friends, brilliant in full sunlight upon his bright colors, and, as it appeared from that distance, he was staring directly down upon them. Points of light flashed from his silver, and his rich blue jacket, as if absorbing the sun and radiating it forth once more, seemed to bring him nearer, almost to hover over them. Abruptly, the earl and his companions wheeled off towards the east, returning to Wanstead whence they had come.

"What a devil chill I feel whenever he looks upon me," said Northumberland. "He is like the bogeymen and bugbears that affrighted me in childhood."

The others made no reply, but all spurred off towards the city.

The road lay through Hackney Marshes, into Shoreditch and by Islington, south to the Bishopsgate, past the theater near Finsbury and the Bedlam against Moorfields. Once within the wall, they turned west towards the Guildhall, beyond which the earl and Lord Thomas and their servants rode off down Wood Street towards Cheapside, where lay their favorite ordinary, the Horsehead. Arundell carried on straight through Newgate to the Fleet prison without the wall again. Here reposed Lord Harry Howard, who had been imprisoned, in some irony, for an effort to ingratiate himself with the powers that heretofore had kept him in suspicion.

Prophecy was all the cry just now, causing consternation among the churchmen. Lord Harry, sensing his opportunity, had returned to Audley End, his nephew's house in Norfolk, for the Christmas season, and had brought to completion his great attack on astrology, entitling it the *Defensive Against the Poison of Supposed Prophecies*, which he had then had printed in London with a flattering dedication to Walsingham. So far from being flattered by the book, or edified by its scrupulous orthodoxy, Mr. Secretary, or someone, had had it pored over for heretical doctrine, which some of its more opaque citations (despite Lord Harry's care) seemed almost to confirm. He found himself remanded to the Fleet for what he hoped would this time be a short visit. A month had passed already.

Arundell left his horse near the stable behind the building and walked round to the public gate. There the porter summoned a guardsman who (for a sum) led him up the stone stairs to Harry's room in the southern wall, overlooking Fleet Street and, beyond that, Bridewell and the Thames.

Lord Howard was half in sleep when Arundell entered, but hearing his name called he turned his head and blinked at his visitor several times.

"Christ's blood," he cried out; "*Carolus redivivus!* Enter, my boy, my humble establishment. God, man, how good to see you now."

"And you, Harry. More treason, is it, what?"

"Treason! Charles, you will not well believe. It passes all description what meanings and constructions these Bible-eating preachers can wring a learned passage to. I wrote but a simple book, as free of any hurt as pudding. God, man, they have clapped me up for a Latin phrase the meaning of which I scarcely knew myself."

"Ha ha ha," laughed Arundell. "Why, no more do they, it is the very latinity which makes their scholars think you quote the pope."

"Well, there is the joke, Charles. The heresy they charge me with is clean the other kind. I grin to think of it. They peer into my lines because they suspect me of papistry, and lock me up for a line of the Family of Love or some Anabaptistical gibbering. Oh, God, they are too funny."

Arundell laughed with him again, but then grew serious.

"So you are charged, then?"

"Oh, no, no I am not charged; I spoke over-loosely. That makes twice. I shall learn to look to my words more straightly. No, only suspected, as they say. Unless this covers some deeper matter, which I think not, I shall be enlarged as soon as they find the man can check my sources. There is nothing to it this time, Charles, trust me for that; I think they repossess me only that my old rooms will not forget me and wax lonesome."

"Unless it is but a pretext."

"Unless it is but a pretext only, but I do not think it so. There is never a word of Jesuits, none of the queen of Scots, none of armies or wars or spials; only of some ancient passage about orbits of planets, be they free, be they fixed, and what not else, ha ha, some Babylonish mysteries of such pagan foolery."

"Well, so, then. I share your optimism gladly." Arundell walked over to the writing table and gazed idly at the books strewn across it. Lord Harry appeared to be at work upon something else even now.

"Well! Charles, where have you been this year and a half past? Here, stay a moment. Gage!"

Lord Harry's man appeared from the dressing room beyond.

"Wine, please, Jack. Bring in some wine."

"Very good, my lord."

"Well, where have you been hiding out, Charles, with never word to a soul whether you are here on live or dead and watching from above?"

"Had I been dead, Lord Harry, how would you have had me to advertise you?"

Howard stiffened suddenly and stared about him wildly with bugging eyes. "Harry," he croaked vilely, "*Har-r-ry*. For the love of God, Harry. I have somewhat to speak you from the other kingdom."

"Ha," shouted Arundell. "Now, Harry, in good sadness. Do not jest too loudly of 'other kingdom' here, ha ha, or I shall have to share the room with you."

"But truly, then, Charles, where have you been? We have been very diligent of inquiring, but no news."

"Well, it makes no matter. I have lived with Sharrock's people in Wales; never ask why."

"Right then. And now you are come to join us in our revelry."

"Indeed, it seems so."

"Very good. Matters have moved along since your going off, Charles, you know. Much of the speech we hear commonly at table now would startle you, I think."

"Oh?" Charles looked at him steadily. "How startle me?"

"There is much ado now of plots and tricks of a military character."

"Well," said Charles, accepting the wine that Gage proffered him. "Military plots are bad enough, Harry, but are there soldiers to accompany them?"

"Not that I may learn of. There was a great plan now a nine months or a year gone of the duke of Lennox by Scotland way, for bringing in from those parts a certain army of the duke of Guise and others. But all is whusht, Lennox is overthrown and fled to France whence he came, and the young king of Scotland lies in Protestant hands and never thinks of his poor mother now. For the rest, you will hear much, but nothing of substance at this time, I think."

"But no more talk of risings within the realm?"

"Oh, for that, of course there be our younger bloods who still maintain as an article of their creed that, were the word but given, the full-armed Catholics would rise up like dragon's teeth. But there is nothing there, Charles, you know that." Lord Harry sat shaking his head in weary amusement. "No, there is nothing in that at all. We are not so many in the country, nor so strong, as once we were."

"So to what purpose all this plotting?"

"Well, you see," said Howard, staring from his high embrasure towards the river, "it's a matter of keeping up one's spirits. There are two sorts of plottings I do hear of. The one, of some midnight raid upon Sheffield or so, to free the queen of Scots and ride away in the darkness, no man knows whither; very fine stuff, just out of the old romances. The other, to seek out some foreign prince who will commit himself to a landing here. I have few hopes of either course at this time. One man there was, a black little fellow who offered that some must kill the earl of Leicester and all the Protestant lords upon the sudden, but the men beat him soundly and left him by the road in Berkshire; for, do you see, he was either a stark madman, as that man who shot upon Hatton some years past, or else, what is the more likely, he was an agent-provoker sent to stir us into somewhat for a hanging."

"Methinks you are already ripe for hanging, Harry." Charles looked at him soberly. "Between armies landing and assassins shooting there is little for an English jury to choose."

"That is true enough. But I cannot overwatch them all. They will speak what they list, you know. And they're hot, Charles, yes they are hot--no, do not shake your head so; they are not all to blame. All have brother or father in prison or in some other straits."

"Well, Harry, thus much for the younger men," said Arundell wearily. "Tell me now, what does a lonely old scholar have to do with all these broils? I am told you are in something to your hangers, but no man tells me what it is."

"That is as I would have it, my friend," said Lord Harry. "But I shall tell you, for anyway I have need of your help now. It must pass no further, for discretion's sake."

"I am told you are somewhat familiar with the ambassador of Spain."

"I am, I am. Charles, as he is a Spaniard he is an arrogant hidalgo whom I would not cross a narrow road to greet; but as he is a Catholic, you must know, he is a loyal man and a true one."

"From the sound of it, you spend a little of his master's fortune."

"A bit of it, yes, a little bit. Nor am I the only pensioner in London, never think so. A glance about the Council board might show one or two more of them. In return for which I pass to Don Bernardino whatever little informations come to me, matters at court, matters in the country--what the Catholics do, what Leicester and his fautors make to, similar toys--any small bit of news one hears from the ladies our friends or from whatsoever other mouth."

"A small matter of spying for pay, is it?"

"It is, but no consequence, really, for I no longer hear the best news. And do remember, Charles, I say it to my partial exculpation, that in this paradoxical time Don Bernardino is a truer Englishman than are many of our greatest councillors. For you know, he serves his master zealously. Now, observe: his master wants no war with England, nor should we with him; he wants no helps to the rebel part in Flanders, no more should we; he wants no harm to threaten the good queen in prison, no more do we. In all of these, must we with the Spaniard prevent the Leicestrian Bear, who if he goes unchecked and unmuzzled will ere long bring all Europe into conflagration. To be true Englishman, Charles, is now to aid the Spaniard."

"You are a casuistical rogue, my lord."

"Oh, I daresay I am that, but do you see the truth of it?"

"I see much truth in it."

"Well, Charles, always we have sought, you and I, to limit and restrain the earl of Leicester's port and sway in the court. But there is no flying without wings, as Paget says; Leicester has beaten us, alone we may make nothing against him. The French have proved to us but weak reeds, and spoke us fair for as long as we served their turns, but now it is the Spaniards who must aid us, and I will tell you, Charles, they will stand more steady."

"I hearken to your words, Harry, but remain in some part unconvinced."

"In what part? God's blood, man, do you think things can continue as they are? Matters are daily approaching rage and desperation, Charles. In not long time, if nothing intervenes, we shall have a mighty war with Spain, if not here then in the Netherlandish fens, and when it comes, Charles, here at home we shall see such papist blood to flow as will not be believable. There is but one way out of it--to induce her majesty to name Queen Mary

her successor, as in right and law she is, at which time this persecuting of her favorers must cease upon the hour, and our continental foes become our friends again. But hardly will the queen be brought to like of this while Leicester and his canting companions do spoon in her ear this stew of plots and treasons. We must overcome the earl by any means before this realm can be made safe."

"Spooning stew in her ear."

"All right, all right. But I speak in earnest."

"I cannot deny you phrase it well. But consider, though you oppose this traitor Leicester, yet you oppose a many-friended councillor. If taken in this, you may find a room of peers less easily persuaded."

"We do what we must for God and England, Charles, we take a risk or two if we must, so only this venture will succeed."

"Well."

Lord Harry rose from his pallet and went to his table. He found a sheet of paper among his books and, dipping his quill, wrote briefly upon it.

"Charles, this will introduce you to Don Bernardino. He will remember you from the night of our resort to him."

On the sheet, Charles read, in Lord Harry's distinctive Italic hand, the words, "Love him as myself."

"You entangle me, Harry."

"We have need. Charles, the passage of the Scottish queen's letters is a crucial matter for us. The French house is watched, and by that way we send but letters of love and greeting, such as may be patently seen. Otherwise, chiefly we use Don Bernardino's pouches, which is a means as yet all unsuspected. Now, mark me, two of us specially are in touch with the Spaniard, myself and Mr. Throgmorton, whom you know."

Arundell shook his head.

"Francis Throgmorton. He is a little man from Chester, his father was a justice there, but ruined by Leicester's craft and brought thereby to his grave, as is thought. He is a faithful man, but heady, Charles, too young for discretion's requirements. But a very loyal man."

Lord Howard took the paper and folded it several times over, then tucked it into Arundell's bosom.

"You must occupy my place for me, until I come free, lest our chain be broken. Letters from the queen of Scots and from Curle and Nau her men, out of Sheffield or Tutbury Castle by covert means, will come to you by two men in special, one Foljambe and one Ardington, both excellent men and as Catholic as a cardinal; trust them, therefore."

"Lord Harry, letters are letters, and I would do for our lady what in reason can be done. But I will plot no plots, nor carry them. You hurry on before me, and I cannot keep your pace."

"No plots, none at all. Be assured. Though I would not minimize the peril to your body, whatever benefit your soul may reap from this charitable service."

"Peril, I daresay."

"Yes, I cannot tell how great. We have been imperilled before, but here, I think, we may be further out of help than heretofore. There may be no earl of Sussex to love us well if hard constructions should be used of us."

"My lord, perhaps you do not know. My lord of Sussex is vastly ill. He is retired to his house in Bermondsey, and it is thought he hardly will emerge from it."

"Ah, me. And thus my month in prison here."

"Yes, I saw him but this morning, and he lamented much he could not rise to speak for you."

"Well, howsoever be it. The peril is here, Charles, and I would not tell it you in candied terms."

"Well, Harry. What else have we, eh? Two lonely old men."

"Not so very old, Charles."

"No, not so old; but we have neither wives nor heirs, nor fathers alive to fret for us, nor, for me, much lands to lose. I will take up this peril."

"Yes. I knew you were my man as ever."

Arundell started towards the door, but paused.

"Do you know, Paget tells me he has given thought to going over for his conscience. I had thought I might go with him."

"What, wife and all?"

"He has no more wife, having just returned from placing her in ground, with sadly little sorrow, I'm afraid. Sure she will be happier in the earth than she ever was upon it. His brother awaits him in Paris, and sings him a fine song of his entertainment there."

"As you will, Charles. But we have need of you here."

"Yes, all right."

"And what of Paget's sister? Has he not a sister whom you were somewhat familiar withal? I might have thought you would marry, after so many years a gentleman of the court, and go into the country for the quiet life."

Arundell stiffened.

"Mistress Lee is married already."

"But we have other dames."

"Not for me, Harry. What, will I keep my wife like Diogenes living in a tub? Little lands, less coin, a patrimony such as the cat left on the malt heap. Now I am closed from employment in the court. I will never regain my living, I fear me, as long as Leicester lives."

"Doubtless not. Well, Charles, you are the man for the desperate act. Penury urges us to heroism, oftentimes, have you observed? Well, goodbye. I little doubt I shall meet you soon on freer ground. Where do you stay?"

"At the Horsehead."

"Well, come into one of the Howard houses if you wish to. As you will."

"Right, then. God be with ye, my lord."

"Fare well, Charles."

Arundell stepped out into the dark corridor. The low stone ceiling weighed upon him, and he felt the pressure of this oppressive house with its unhappy tenants and its silent guards. Lord Harry bore it up admirably, but he had the money to live more tolerably here, floors above the dark basement wardrooms where the poorer sort were thrown in together and left till someone at court chanced to remember them, or till some bailiff summoned them forth to trial or the gallows, or till some kinsman in the country raised the money for their fines or, at least, for their food.

The place chilled him. He feared it more than death, feared that in such a place as this he would end his days, starved and forgotten. His ride in from the west country had seemed like a protracted march up Calvary. Something called him to London, some clouded hope of change, some half-understood conception of offering himself to some still less understood cause--some notion of sacrifice--but he feared what might transpire. He sensed the final act beginning, in which he, though merely a supernumerary upon the great stage, must participate in the tragic dénouement. He almost believed he was being drawn, both unwillingly and, at the same time, willingly, to his destruction.

He threw off this growing depression. This black mood came of his perplexity and helplessness. God watched. It was enough.

Having retrieved his horse, Arundell rode north towards outlying Clerkenwell, where lived his brother Sir Matthew. The day continued fine, and the ride was a pleasant one. In the bosom of his shirt he kept Lord Harry's missive to the Spaniard, but forced himself to think of other more congenial matters. It was something better left for tomorrow.

In Smithfield the horse-courers were busy. Their strings of horses, led north and south along the road and back and forth across it to pens on either side, made the going difficult and slow. Cries of trade filled the air, as Arundell rode into the cluster of houses and stables and inns that made up this bustling suburb in the shadow of the London wall. In the chief building, a tavern, which fronted on the wide Farringdon Road, the westering sun glanced off the windows and made them seem afire with blinding white light. Arundell guided his horse through the press of people and animals, past the tavern's open door with its jovial sounds splashing out into the street. He held his bonnet over his eyes and beheld the windows, some sixteen or twenty panes of glass blank and shining with an unearthly blast. Abruptly, he passed the angle of reflection and found himself peering deep into the main room.

In the nearest window was a face, a blank, repulsive face, with one useless, milk-white eye staring hard at nothing and a good eye staring hard at him.

A cold panic swept over him. He slapped up his horse and plunged through the crowd, rounding the corner opposite the tavern and galloping out westward into open country towards St. Giles. He never looked back. Soon well away from the good eye's field of vision, he believed nonetheless that the blank eye, wherever he might travel to, would follow him.



To his honor, Mr. Secretary Walsingham, at Barn Elms, or one of his special trusted, give these.

Sir, after my hearty comm'ns, etc. I have advertised you of mine intent to hold to our present course. The hoped for event is so far delayed. Myself remaining in the bootmaker's at Shoe Lane bottom, where at the 10 [French] house none have come these four or five days, saving only, again in the night, my lord the bishop of Hereford's son Sylvanus, who may bear watching in particular, and also once or twice 75 [Fran. Throgmorton]. My man Adrastus informs me from within that house that 75 brought nothing with him neither in nor out of the house, which consorts with my own observation from without. Mr. Parthenopaeus is of like opinion, who has been as flea upon dog with him and informs me 75 has neither seen friend nor received message, saving one thought to be from his brother Tho. over the sea, which could not by any means be got, for this entire week. Mr. Parth. means at my bidding to follow his quarry close upon him till he yields us better game.

Adrastus furthermore offers his copies of other correspondences of that house, all which I enclose, as namely three several letters from the man of 10 [France] extraordinary now in 14 [Scotland], to the effect that you see, of changes wrought by the late escape of 107 [king of Scotland]. As also one of 5 [Lord Treasurer Burghley], which may bear your careful reading, to 11's [the French ambassador's] self, in cipher as it seems.

Amphiaraus is upon 76 [my lo. H. Howard] since his late releasing out of durance, but reports no doings, for 76 has never approached them of 10 not once, which gave me much surprise, to say truly; for he dwells now in Arun. House upon the river, which is hard by. One time this week only he has gone out, for company's sake it seems, for he crossed river and called short time at the Spanish house and at the house of 28 [Lord Montague], returning then to his bed by the water without passing them of 10 at all. What entertainment he may have had among the Spaniards may bear looking into. He is visited on Monday by 33 [Ch. Arundell], later by 62 [the e. of Northumberland] and 36 [my L. Paget] together, and on Tuesday by one Foljambe. Mr. Capaneus is presently away from town, for on Tuesday early 62 rode out from town, and from him I have not heard since that time, though by arrangement I shall if he has matter.

36 [Paget], besides this visit to 76, dwells at home, but goes out often, but never to the 10 house, only twice to tennis and many times to take the benefit of the air, with never stopping for any speech. My Hippomedon is with him at all times. This Mr. Hipp. is an excellent man whom your honor has never seen, for he is but newly arrived and joins me with a great will to do your honor good. He is my sister's only son, and will do much, for which great promise that I see in him I recommend him heartily to your honorable notice, for what time he does some better service you may think well to reward him. I pay him at the wonted rate by the day. Visits his man has had in several, specially from 33 [Arundell], at least once daily, also by Mr. Fagot a Frenchman residing in the 10 house, who I think is one of yours, also by Mr. Gifford a notorious papist lately a prisoner.

Letters which 36 [Lord Paget] receives this week are some from the country of no matter saving money matters and children's toys, and but one from over seas, brought to him by a man unknown to us, but as is thought it is from his brother 20 [Charles Paget]. We could not come to any sight of it, and it was burnt. One Walklate who is his man is thought to yield soon to the argument of angels, which if he does his greed shall speak in torrents to

us. Hippomedon is persuaded his man is very deep in all, but I think otherwise, and think him but an idle fellow and sequacious companion.

Tydeus I have kept close upon 33 [Arundell], notwithstanding he is known by sight unto him, for the respect of your honor's trust in him oftentimes expressed, as well for the knowledge I have also of his excellent skill. 33 was at the house of Sp. on two occasions these three or four days past, and Tydeus is of opinion he breeds something there but cannot tell what. God grant he receive little welcome there if true. Also once to 76 [Howard], once with Foljambe walking in Paul's Yard and again in East Cheap, once by horse to my lord of Sussex's widow, for causes of consolation it should seem. 33 lies still at the Horsehead.

This week past we have neither sight nor smell of any of 100's [the queen of Scots's] letters in any place we come to or are led unto, neither at the 10 house, so I believe and will maintain it, nor with any of those we cleave to. Unless there were some other avenue in use, I think this week has gone with nothing in or out. Your honor may know better from the other side the sea, but we hold on as erst we have begun and find no hint of actionable matters or matters of suspicion here. As you command me, so I perform it, begging only that my account, which your honor may remember I sent to you with my last, may be paid me straightaway; for truly, your honor, though if I could (and would God that I could) I would serve you only for the honest love I bear you, yet my poor men do somewhat starve, and I pay them as I can from my own little purse, which were a threadbare service to so great a queen.

Never doubt, your honor, that we shall have our traitors and our proofs, and that when this unhappy correspondence is revived we shall soon know all, well beforehand with the perfidious proditors who seek the shame and dishonor of this realm by lewd, unruly means. God be praised for your care of our merciful queen. Remembering me and my small purse to your honor's charity, I remain before the 10 house ever diligent to justify your trust in my poor self, commending you to God, who cares for you as one of his best, this 27. of June 1583.

Polyneices, chief of your honor's "Seven Against Thebes."



Hance's, or The Hance, lay in Westminster west of the Old Palace, some way north of Chelsea Reach. In this quiet corner, more than a mile and a half from the court at Whitehall, Edward Stafford kept his ancient house, regranted to him from the huge, dispersed patrimony of the Stafford dukes of Buckingham. The establishment itself was not a large one, but comfortably appointed and conveniently placed, and he preferred it to his home in Grafton, Northants, for here he enjoyed the pleasures of the country without sacrificing his proximity to affairs of the court. For some years, he had served as a diplomatic *Johannes Factotum*, employed first in minor and then in increasingly responsible missions principally involving France, in the affairs of which nation he was coming to be regarded as an expert.

Stafford's rise at court may be credited to his abilities and honesty, but not to his delicacy, of which he demonstrated not a trace. He was an abrasive man, and an outspoken one. Having come to notice first by his mother's influence, who was Mistress of the Queen's Wardrobe, he had had the timely wisdom to link up with the Lord Treasurer at the beginning of the Anjou marriage talks, when Leicester might have hurt him more than ever his

mother could have helped. He had soon become known as Burghley's man. This patronage, despite his vociferous support of Monsieur's cause at that time, had afforded him a certain immunity from Leicester's attack. Fiercely loyal to the queen and to the England he saw misled into peril, he had never concealed his hatred for the Bear and Ursine brood, nor held his tongue in denouncing the earl's motives in everything. So far Leicester could do little, for as long as Stafford sheltered under Burghley and continued irreproachably loyal in all his doings, he might say almost what he pleased.

What nature prompted him to in his disdain of the earl, his marriage perfected in him, for late in 1579 he had taken up and made respectable the Lady Douglass Sheffield, Leicester's cast-off mistress, who vied with her husband who should vilify Leicester more in private speech. Lady Douglass was a Howard and like many of her clan she was secretly a Catholic, a persuasion that sorted well enough, if not with Stafford's theology, which could not be said really to exist, at least with his aristocratic pride and inbred scorn for the new men and their new ways. Between them Stafford and his wife made a pretty pair of bitter birds, cooing lovebirds as often as otherwise, but screaming jays when Leicester's name arose in conversation.

As it arose now, over dinner, in the great hall that dominated the house in Hance's. Douglass, a tall, imperious woman who had nonetheless, despite her Howard nose and strict features, been reckoned a famous beauty not so long ago, sat simmering with familiar rage as her husband rehearsed once again the tale of her poisoning.

"For, gentlemen," he said, "it is a thing well known and spread over all the court how my lady, having observed and noted divers most abominable disorders and enormities of this good earl, and doubting in her heart--did you not, my lady?" (she nodded primly)--"that if speedy redress were not had thereof all the world would cry out of it to the great slander and reproach of all the court, complained one day to the queen, of which this good lord, being advertised very speedily and imagining belike in his mind that this complaint proceeded of the abundance of some melancholic humor in her, and moved with a brotherly charity, judged that this humor offending should be well purged, and to this end gave in charge to one George Vaux, his yeoman of the bottles, to provide with all diligence that some drugs might be had fit for such operation. Who belike, not taking good heed to the confection of the potion, instead of elleborum or good sentuary took a quantity of red arsenic, and the less to offend the weak and delicate stomach of my lady, he espied an opportunity and a fit commodious hour for her to take it all unwittingly. For spying her one day passing by the place where my lord's bottles stood that were in his charge, he presented her with a cup of my lord's wine under a color of courtesy, which my good wife, not dreaming of any malice, refused not but took a good draught, which was the dearest draught that ever she drank; for she had no sooner swallowed down this good wine of my lord of Leicester's but she was immediately after swollen and as it were leprous, in such sort that albeit by the great goodness of God she escaped death, yet notwithstanding, all the world might easily see that she had been poisoned. Yet notwithstanding, this ill which happened to my lady brought both to herself and others this good, to take better heed hereafter how they come to such bargains to come so near my lord's bottles or to taste of his lordship's wine anymore."

Stafford's friends laughed politely with him, genuinely to the extent that his last jest and heavy irony merited, and somewhat more to make up the difference, for the often hearing of the tale had diminished its effect. Lady Stafford let them laugh but put on the martyr's face, as befitted her dignity. But when the moment of mirth had passed, she ventured (as

she always did) to correct certain misinformations in the telling, and reminded her husband that he had got right the doing of the act, but erred in the fullness of the earl's motives, which in point of truth came most of all of her refusal to renounce her legal marriage to him, which certainly she would have done, she said, having come to a better knowledge of his lordship's character, but that in so doing she would have made her son a bastard. Stafford apologized (as he always did) for having got it wrong, and the others (as always) professed wonder and admiration at the earl's unconscionable treatment of a loving wife. No one in England believed she had really been married to the earl of Leicester, with the possible exception of herself.

Drury then set about, in the spirit of the occasion, to tell the tale of Leicester's unworthy acts against Simier, how he would have practiced with one Fervaques to assault him in the open street as he was going to the Royal Exchange under pretense of an old quarrel that was between them; "and to this end, my friends," he said, "my lord of Leicester promised him the aid and assistance of all his hewsters and murderers, of which he entertains no small number to serve him at all assays."

Here he smiled at his wife, as if to ask her pardon for speaking of such violent affairs. His friends listened patiently, with frequent signs of interest, to this tale, which also they had heard many times before. As always, everything was in the telling of it, for this and the rest of the Leicestrian saga they all had well to heart.

"But God (that by his providence overthrows the purposes of the wicked)" --Drury glanced quickly to the ceiling--"suffered this to come to the knowledge of the queen, who calling Leicester to her in presence of divers of her Council made him there a knight of a new order for this his newest practice, giving him goodly titles of Murderer, Traitor, and Villain, and protesting of her honor that if Simier should lose one drop of his blood his lordship should be hanged like a knave as he was, which words did so cool and abate the courage of this brave knight that that which he had so wickedly plotted passed no farther, although the stay was not in himself, whose wicked meaning was sufficiently declared in this matter long before."

"Indeed," cried Lady Douglass, "this rebuke so quelled my lord of Leicester that his feigned humility was long after one of his best virtues, nay his only."

"Alas, brother, what will restrain this over-violent skellum when the queen is no longer on the earth to somewhat modify his rages?"

Stafford's eyes were merry. He was at home in the rhetoric of Leicestrian slanders, but having never felt the earl's whip upon his own unprotected back, though his hatred of the man was real he rather played at fearing Leicester as a game than lived it as a career. Arundell said nothing.

Drury's talk progressed to recent news of the Flanders wars, and then to the perilous state of Scotland's affairs, where the friendliness of the young king to English interest was in great doubt and much discussed in London. The councillors feared that James, with the wrong advisers, would drift to the Catholic part, and Sir William Drury shared this concern. The talk was going round the corridors of the court that the English Council had offered to send his mother back to him if James would share his throne with her, but the king was responding coolly to the suggestion.

Stafford's sister Bess Drury, somewhat younger than her brother, a Catholic but an unassuming one, had no head for heavy talk of state, and seemed on the point of drifting impolitely into sleep. Drury roused her and, with apologies all round, together they ascended to their chamber.

"Well, for my part, I will benefit from this example," said the Lady Douglass. "Forgive us for rushing you off, Charles; always welcome here, you know, do come again."

Arundell rose from the table and began to take his leave.

"One moment, Charles," said Stafford. "Please go on, sweet, and I shall join ye shortly. Charles and I must have a word more ere he leaves us."

"As you wish," she replied. She called her woman to her, and together they went up to her rooms for her undressing.

Arundell sat back down.

"Charles, as is not unknown to you, I am in the way of learning much by piecemeal that passes at the court, what with overhearing this and deducing that from antecedent words and gestures, and wi' the odd remarks my Lord Treasurer lets fall within my hearing."

He paused, and Arundell thought a nod appropriate, still doubtful as to what was next to come.

"Well. These few words heard and some signs seen do give me cause for worry now, for, letting alone the great causes of kingdoms always ready to trouble us sorely, lately I hear of somewhat nearer home, which nearly concerns my friends and, if permitted, I may say my kinsmen."

"I am flattered by that designation," Arundell murmured, "if I am one of those you mean."

"You are. Long time my friends, certainly my wife's near kinsmen, if mine more distantly; and so the objects of all my care and watchfulness."

"For which I greatly thank you."

"I am glad. I would not speak unwelcome to ye, or meddle in affairs of others where my care was hateful to any. Know that what I speak, I speak it to your health, Charles."

"Of course."

"Well then. The cause of my present grief is the suggestion which I hear that y'rself and others are lately suspected of some disaffection." Stafford held up his hand to prevent reply. "Now, understand me, it is not to be thought that we must lay down our heads and let these warlike, canting councillors carry us to ruin. But there is more in this, do you see, and also my Lord Burghley has let pass some monitory word or two, I think in the hope I shall speak to you as now I do."

"Well, speak on then."

"And so I shall. The burden of all is this. I understand by these means just mentioned that you are set upon and watched, as likewise Harry is and my Lord Tom Paget, with some others whom I know not even by their names. I understand further that the reason for this constant watching is twofold. For one, it is thought that all amongst you y'do participate in the passing of the queen in prison's secret correspondence, which were enough, in these

troubled times. But far worse is next, that in this correspondence and other which it is thought you keep there is the plotting of foreign landings and other military matters, which truly, Charles, would merit harsh dealing if true, as I will never believe it is."

"Then why do you mention it, to trouble my dreams with talk of treasons?"

"I mention it to the end that, howsoever false it be, ye may look to yourselves and keep free from all matter of like suspicions. You may think no treason in your deep heart, Charles, but confess it, something in your present carriage is bringing this suspicion down upon you."

"I cannot think what I have done to merit such---."

Stafford cut him off.

"Come, my friend, I am no spymaster or inquisitor. Speak plainly. To begin withal, you know that both my Lord Paget and this new friend of yours called Throgmorton have brothers over the seas whose actions are none of the most loyal to this realm. These *boutefeux*, these far-ranging Englishmen in France and Spanish Flanders you know are much cried out upon here. Now, every letter passed secretly from these men to their brothers, however innocent it may be, nonetheless it cannot but breed the worst interpretations if overseen by other eyes. Northumberland, too, with whom I observe you spend much time, is not his son Percy over seas? I am informed that the Catholics there do spread their nets to keep the boy, and letters are taken which reveal their attempt to win the earl's consent thereto. This cannot fail to excite Mr. Secretary's rage. If Harry Percy joins the Jesuits' part, mark me, his father shall suffer for it here. And for yourself, will you tell me you work nothing at all for the queen of Scotland's aid and succor?"

"I have never had in my life any traitorous intent," said Arundell firmly.

"So far am I as the sun above the earth from thinking treason in you or any of my kinsmen. But this I will say. One, I cannot say as much for some others you are seen to keep company with daily, and two, I cannot swear that some of these present dealings will not be forced and drawn and strained to treason-seeming intents by those who are not your kinsmen nor never wish to be. Mark me well in this, I speak it for your safety. Something grows to boiling very soon, Charles, and I would not for any sum of money have you to be in the pot at that time."

"Well, Edward, I thank you for your careful words. I shall look to myself and speak also to my friends; but meanwhile, I dare assure you, you shall never have cause of shame in us. If some mild aids to the Scottish queen do cross my mind from time to time, yet I have never dealt in plots or attempts of any kind, nor will I. But these times do grow to desperation, and I cannot promise the peace of this realm for much longer if present courses hold. No man may think evil of his lawful queen, but neither must he, for respect of that specious loyalty we are enjoined to by bad counsellors, lie down before the monstrous men who hurry our Christian land to godless, bloody ruin. Marry, I . . ."

"Enough. So far I agree with all my heart. But yet I fear me much that you and I shall come to different reckonings, both born of the same belief but pursued in the end by different ways. Look very well to yourself, Charles, for I tell you again, justly or unjustly, and it skills little which, you are watched over and sought after. And so I would say also to your friends, for you have no Sussex alive now to speak for you to her majesty."

Arundell sat gazing into his cup. Here were his own suspicions, here his nightmares of the man with the all-seeing blind eye; he was abashed to learn he was so much marked and spoken of.

"I will inform my friends of your fears for us," he said at last.

"And you will moderate your courses."

"In what I can."

"Then I have my wish." Stafford yawned and stretched himself. "It grows late, Charles; I must offer you a bed."

"No, no, many thanks, but I must ride back tonight, for I am expected."

"Ah, I see; another wench, perhaps?"

"No, truly."

"You must marry, Charles, and look to your old age, when a man alone will grow cheerless in an empty bed."

"Certainly I must, Edward. One day perhaps."

"Of course, of course. Why not Drury's sister now, newly widowed, or Mistress Pierrepont, or any of a hundred lovely dames all richly suited? Why keep you always to these inelegant rooms with some old tavern matron who cares nothing for any but your purse?"

"No more. We muddle on in our best way. Good night, then, Ned, and many thanks for your wine."

"No guts I'd rather put it in than yours. Fare well, friend. Have a great care now, will you not? Forewarned is fore-armed."

"None more careful."

Arundell departed to the road, where Sharrock had prepared his horse for him. He affected something like insouciance at parting, but his heart misgave him, filled as it was with a slow fear, not first lit, but fanned to flame, by Stafford's warning. He and his man rode back into the city through the darkness, peering behind to see whether they were followed. They saw no one.



To Master Phelippes, at the court, in case of Mr. Secretary's absence, give these.

Master Phelippes, greeting. I am informed here of Mr. Secretary's continuance in Scotland, wherefore again I make my accustomed report to yourself, trusting well you will inform his honor of any herein requiring haste or his perusal. Notwithstanding, this my report, though I might (if I would) so ornament its outside with tales of comings and goings and pregnant speeches overheard, yet it would remain hollow within. Mr. Adrastus informs me, who lies within the 10 [French] house, of the bad 100's [queen of Scots's] correspondence these two parcels sent this past week out and but one only in, which are all of health wished and love forever offered, with only (to be noted) one message from a great prince overseas offering in shrouded terms an everlasting promise of helps, but nothing more harder than "someday" and "let me never fail you." It is enough, Mr. Phelippes, I assure you, to make my teeth ache, for however vigilant we maintain ourselves, still we get nothing this way

(alas) but charitable drivel and good wishes, knowing full well nevertheless that some great matter is on foot that yet we understand not fully of. 100's correspondents out in these two parcels have been, 39, 14, 17, 3, 104, and 6 of Savoy; whereas in have been 3, 104 also, the Lord 42, and her own friends in 10 [France], 22 [Tho. Morgan], 20 [Ch. Paget], and the b. of Ross, and one unsigned.

Fearing lest Adrastus is secretly discovered and the weightier matters by art kept from him, I have asked him so much, but he swears he is as greatly in the true confidence of his countrymen as ever he was before he answered to our wishes. Notwithstanding I believe in his fidelity, I have employed another, whom I call Littlewit, who is English and now has his place in the 10 kitchens, where he may observe both Adrastus and those others of that house towards Adrastus. This Littlewit, my cousin's son, is but a boy, and works upon promises at no expense to me. Which is a very fortunate thing, for I have naught but promises to give him.

In despite of these thwartings at the house of 10, yet do I believe very earnestly that matters draw on more perilously. Certain I am that 75 [Throgmorton] is in the thick of all, for, I assure you, sir, his house is become the very Royal Exchange for goings in and out and congress of people, mostly men suspected, with more selling of secrets there, I think, than horses in Smithfield. Mr. Parthenopaeus still watches by his house, and observes the visiting of many men this week or so past, as once 76 [Henry Howard] and another close behind, who in truth, sir, (here I shall make you smile) was our own Amphiarus, unknown to Mr. Parth.; also visited by one Foljambe, one Ardington twice, and one Tunstead, all of whom ride daily in and out of the town to all parts of the country, it should seem, precisely we know not whither, but certainly upon some furious business of states, as likewise one Meredith, who is 75's man. Also there came a man a fortnight ago, of whom I advertised Mr. Secretary at that time, a man I thought to be and think still to have been 75's brother Tho., whom I was assured dwelt in Paris or Rouen or some other foreign part, and accordingly I did then require Mr. Secretary's leave to attach and take him up, but received no reply of him, and so the man is gone, doubtless (if it was he) over the seas again, busy busy in work of plotting.

36 [L. Paget] has remained much at home, as heretofore likewise has 33 [Arundell] in his tavern room, going out but seldom, but here is news of moment. This morning early 33 rode out somewhat towards Nonesuch or thereabouts, but by ill luck saw my man Tydeus and by artful tricks gave him the slip and rode away. Tydeus is with me as I write, angry at himself for this puny's bumble in a man so long expert, but I must console him and tell him that any man once knowing he is followed may elude the best follower alive. But also this morning rode out 36, whose follower my nephew Hippomedon sent word of his departure but not whither, so that I must linger for his news.

The sum and effect of all this riding out, in mine opinion, is something comes on now more worthy of our diligence. I understand by rumor's mouth of a base man taken lately and clapped in ward and taken upon him certain papers of invasion by some one of the pope's minions, which if true, sir, I beg you tell us of it, Mr. Secretary would do as much I know, for without such knowledge we cannot tell how best to lead our searches here. We hear also of ships on the 10 coast in preparation, which by her majesty's commandment at Greenwich to 11 [the French ambassador] are lately stayed by 12 [the king of France], which if true, I tell you we must be informed of these and suchlike matters. We intelligencers must not always be the last to learn of things.

Sir, I know well you be not one of us poor humble servants, unworthy to touch Mr. Secretary's hem or tread upon his floor, yet do not despise us, for like us you love and serve him zealously, and so I presume unforgivably upon this common bond we have to beg you speak for us to his honor when he returns. For, you know, Mr. Phelippes, so far arrears has our payment become as almost we must feed ourselves on the scraps thrown out by common housewives and sculleries in the street, indeed not these four or five months has a shilling been given me for disbursement amongst the rest, already is my own poor living gone to keep them above the earth which yawns to claim their starving corpses, and believe me, sir, heartily would you weep to see these loyal men who pass such trials in her majesty's service, all for the love of Mr. Secretary, go ragged and scrawny through the town, following the traitors they are charged to follow but unable almost to keep up with them for the faintness of hunger they feel. For God's sake, Mr. Phelippes, do speak for us, and keep life in us, which if you do doubt not we shall soon have our felons in the noose. Remaining here, where you know how to reach me, this 11. of Sep. 1583, your ready servant who calls himself for the present,

Polyneices.



From a journey of more than fourteen hours, Shipmaster Haller made Arundel Haven not long after the sun had set. Lying in Dieppe quays a week earlier, he had been approached by a military gentleman named Watts (whom nonetheless he had once seen in priestly dress coming from the Jesuit house in Rouen), who had settled with him for seven pounds to carry over another gentleman and his man on the 7th of September. On the morning of that day, the gentleman had appeared, a small dark fellow indifferently clad, who had introduced himself as Mope. Again the seaman had been given pause, for this same Mope too he had seen not long since in Rouen, and his name then had been, not Mope, but Nauris.

But inquisitiveness was not one of the master's vices: a measure of common avarice, sometimes, but not excessive curiosity. He had greeted his passenger dutifully as Mr. Mope and set to sea at once. Mope, whatever his true name, was as sick at sea as any human creature he had ever seen. Now, having come ashore in the haven, after a quick meal at a house he knew there, he led his men up into the hills surrounding and walked with them to Mr. William Davies's house at Patching a few miles inland.

There, at two in the morning of the 8th, they went to rest. The next day, Haller left them, and Mope and his companion rode onward, a half day's journey to Petworth, the earl of Northumberland's manor in Sussex. They left Mr. Davies's horses in the courtyard and entered the first hall, where Wycliffe, his lordship's new secretary, came to meet them. Robotham, the companion, introduced himself to Wycliffe, whom he had never met, for though he was another of the earl's secretaries he had been abroad as travelling fellow of the young Lord Percy. Wycliffe brought Mope into the long gallery to meet the countess and pass the interval until the earl's return, for his lordship, he said, having been to church in the morning, had ridden out not long before to pay respects among his tenants.

The countess greeted Mope somewhat stiffly. She had seen him at Petworth before, but never met him; aside from his furtive looks, which did not inspire trust, the very fact that her husband had never thought good to present him to her linked him in her mind to a part of the earl's life she wished not to think about. Mope did his best to charm her with his con-

versation, but increasingly she found him graceless and overeager and, excusing herself at last, she went off to the children, where she felt more at ease. Mope sat dejectedly staring at the books of his lordship's library. Idly, he turned the globe that rested near him, trying to find upon it the distant lands whose names he had learned in fable and report.

At length he heard a clatter of hooves in the court below and rose to watch from the windows. The earl of Northumberland he saw dismounting, with Robotham and some of his auditors and other servants with him. Mope strode to a burnished shield, emblazoned with the cognizance of Percy, hanging upon the wall, and in its reflection he adjusted his doublet and the bright scarf he wore rakishly in the new fashion of Savoy. Presently Northumberland burst into the room.

"God, Paget," he cried out cordially, "here you catch us all unexpected. Good to see you. How fare our friends?"

"All well, milord."

"Well, well, it is bountiful of God to give you to us. 'Mope', is it now, eh? Ha ha. A novelty. Here, you must know Captain Pullen."

A sturdy dark-haired man in officer's undress stepped forward and bowed stiffly.

"Give you good day, Mr. Paget."

"With all my heart, Captain," said the visitor. "We miss you in Paris and wonder at your stay."

"He is here on business of my lord my boy," the earl said. "But, you see, Charles, his coming over was learned of, and we feared to send him back upon the sea whilst the watch was set."

"Oh, bosh," said Paget, addressing himself to Pullen. "I come and go as I please, and so may you do."

"I am very glad to hear it." Pullen maintained, as always, a certain taciturnity tinged now with surliness.

"Yes, yes, never fear. A great lot of blind gropers these watchers are, your lordship, wandering about in Stygian night. Never fear them, Captain, never, I say."

"Well, we shall not, then," said Northumberland. "Robotham tells me you come upon some errand here, Charles. But let us keep mum until you have well rested and drunk some of our ale for but a day or two, then to errands. We shall have some hunting for you. Eh, some hunting, eh?"

"With all my heart, your lordship," Paget replied. "But first I beg you to summon to this place some of our friends, for I do have messages which in time I must convey."

"Quite so, indubitably so. Do but give me their names and dwellings and we shall make them welcome all. Wycliffe, rouse some men to ride tomorrow." Northumberland grew expansive. "It will be a country party as in happy former times. Oh, indeed, the more the merrier we shall be."

His lordship, rubbing his hands together, led his new guest and the taconic captain in to dinner, where for an hour's time the countess fidgeted and ate very little of her meal.

On the morning of the 11th, Mr. William Shelley rode in from his house not far off, and a few hours after him, Mr. John Gage came from Firle, accompanied by his son and his brother, Edward, Mr. Shelley's brother-in-law. The others expressed great pleasure at seeing Mr. Gage *pater*, having thought him still in prison, as until a few days earlier he had been. He hastened to explain (lest they surmise he had recanted) that he had been given a certain time to see to business, after which he must return to jail. "They would not kill this golden goose," he said, referring to the fines that monthly he paid into the Exchequer.

Shortly after noon, William More rode over from Loseley Hall, but having greeted the other men warmly, he drew up when he came to Charles Paget, and soon after made rather lame farewells and rode away again. Towards evening the Lord Paget arrived with Walk-late and Twinyho his men, and between him and his brother there was a hearty reunion after a year's separation. Soon after Charles Arundell rode up, with Sharrock his servant. Northumberland led the growing party out into the fields nearby and pointed out to them some of the innovations he was trying out with the help of his tenants.

The countess kept well out of the way, understanding correctly that her presence was not required. By ten in the evening, three sheets to the wind and still roaring with laughter, the gentlemen slapped one another's backs and retired loudly to their rooms.

The next day another group came in, Lord Harry Howard and Gage his man, Francis Throgmorton and John Meredith, and Godfrey Foljambe. They had thought themselves followed, they explained, and had ridden by circuitous ways throughout the night to preclude any chase. Arundell replied that he too suspected he had been followed at a distance, and had taken pains near Croydon to elude pursuit. Lord Paget was quite certain he had not been similarly attended. Lord Harry's party retired to the rooms assigned them, while the others spent the afternoon at falconry. The last arrival was a Frenchman named Martelli, who likewise turned straight into his bed.

In the evening, they congregated in the gallery, and the earl of Northumberland called out for everyone's advertence to their visitor and his matter. Charles Paget assumed an air of gravity and seated himself upon the table before them all, the better to command his audience.

"Gentlemen, my appreciation of these few days of bonhomie runs far too deep within me for words. What a great joy it is to one who labors long in stranger lands to spend a time with his old countrymen in sport and gentle conversation. Nevertheless, we cannot dwell here overlong like careless lotus eaters while events take hold of us unawares. For, my friends, a great moment has come in the history of Christendom, like unto which the crusaders' conquest of the Holy Land will seem as a baronial feud to future generations."

He paused to wet his throat.

"I come to you," he continued, "from conference with that renowned warrior and defender of the holy church his grace the duke of Guise, who is pleased to trust me as his own. Throughout this summer past, we have sat in high counsel, diligent to devise amongst us some good means by which we might succor the queen of Scots and relieve our brethren the Catholics of this realm.

"To us in that place came all the great heads of Europe, or nearly all, all anxious to deliver you from this unholy heretical persecution under which now you labor, among whom I may mention not only Mr. Morgan and myself and Dr. Allen and two Jesuits his friends,

Fr. Parsons and Fr. Crichton, but also his noble lord his grace the duke of Guise, Monsignor Castelli the pope's nuncio in that realm, and John Baptist de Tassis the great Spaniard lying there, and the archbishop of Glasgow, the queen of Scots's most trusted agent in that kingdom. And also Mr. Martelli, who sits among us now."

The others looked at the stranger with new eyes.

"Now, at last we have our mundane salvation, and you must know that my whole mission is to inform you of this present determination, and to learn from you how far able you are to lend your support to this great enterprise."

Paget gazed round the room. He had at least the complete attention of everyone present.

"What is this present plan?" inquired Howard.

"Only this. Observe me now. James the king of Scotland, as you know, even now divests himself of his English faction, more daily. The Spanish force, which is the main, will land at Leith or thereabout, with his consent, and descend by Berwick to York. His grace the duke of Guise will at that time strike upon the Sussex coast, as a man might jab with his left hand before his right is launched with all his strength. In the meantime, certain gentlemen will descend upon Wingfield in the night season and bring forth the queen of Scots to our friends in Wales before anyone is the wiser. Then, if you are with us, my lord of Northumberland shall lead an English force to join the other two and take possession of the court."

"Stay, Paget," interjected Lord Harry. "What if her majesty in prison will not accompany you, as not knowing your intentions or authority?"

"That, I believe, has been M. Martelli's task."

The Frenchman rose and bowed to Lord Howard.

"M. Morgan is correct. I have been again to visit with her majesty and tells her of this plan of the duke of Guise to free her noble person, which now she expects her liberator soon to come."

"I am Paget; Morgan is in Paris."

"Please excuse me. You of course are M. Paget. I am befuddled again."

"I come lately from the queen," said Mr. Foljambe from the shadows, "and her man who gave her letters out to me asked me particularly in her name whether I knew of any such attempt which a M. La Rue had told her of."

"What was your reply to him, Godfrey?"

"I told him that I had not heard of it, but should inquire upon my return to you."

"Pray, then, who is this La Rue?"

"He is certainly myself," Martelli said with a pleasant smile.

"Yes, very good. So you see, my lord, she will be ready." Paget dismissed this aspect of the problem and turned to another. "Now, gentlemen, I turn me to the second part of my commission from the duke, which is to tell you in the duke's name and especially in the name of the king of Spain that no conquest of this realm is intended by any person, in proof whereof you see it is a combined force of Spanish and French, with no bond between them save their Catholic zeal to do us good. Their whole interest is to liberate the queen of Scots our virtu-

ous lady and to set her upon this throne, which in right is hers already, and to return this realm to the holy Catholic faith of our many generations of forefathers. There shall be no loss of life to any saving to those who resist these sacred purposes. In proof whereof, I show you my instructions signed by the duke's hand and seal dated the 28. of August past."

Paget drew from his bosom a folded sheet of paper and passed it to Northumberland, who glanced it over and handed it on to Lord Howard.

"We have heard many times before of the king of Spain's invasions," said Arundell. "It is well said that if death came from Spain we should all live a long time. What if he has no more soldiers now than formerly for this enterprise?"

"Then there shall be no enterprise," said Paget. "Not this year in any case. We rise or fall by his aid, which though it is not yet a thing decided, yet I believe we shall have it."

Arundell put in another point. "The game of guessing where the king of Scots will play is an old one everywhere pursued."

"If we may not land in Scotland, then we shall land elsewhere." Paget spoke almost flipantly. "I have spoken for Wales from the first, in Snowdonia or Denbighshire. Others hold for Lancashire coasts. It skills not where we land."

They sat silently for some moments, some perusing the duke's commission, others staring at the floor.

Lord Harry asked Paget why Don Bernardino de Mendoza had never alluded to this latest plan in his own presence, if the Spanish were so nearly along to leading it.

"Belike he knows not of it yet," said the little emissary. "I will not suggest he trusts your lordship too imperfectly for such news. No, this is fresh from the press, gentlemen, and you are its readers of proof. It will not rest long, I doubt not, before Señor Mendoza will receive his instructions from home, for jump upon my departure for this coast, Señor Tassis sent to Lisbon with our news. Now, as you know, though his Catholic majesty is ever true and faithful where the cause of God does call him, he does not always promptly answer. Answer he must, believe it, but we must allow him his own time, for he is a great monarch."

"Well, Mr. Paget," spoke up the elder Mr. Gage. "What would you have of us?"

"Well asked, Mr. Gage, well asked indeed. I am now to embark upon the third part of my commission you see before you. Gentlemen, I must now enlist your aid in this great enterprise of England."

Paget strode over to the brown globe resting in its cradle near the window. Taking it up in both hands, he returned with it to the candlelight and held it out before him.

"See, gentlemen, one round earth upon which God would have us live in Catholic unity. We do not have that unity, and why not? We have not that unity for two causes in chief. One is ignorance and the other is the evil of men. Now long time, gentlemen, we lived in that unity so far as we knew, except as the ignorance of the paynims kept them in the awful schism of their damnable prophet Mahomet. Now newly we learn of new lands, thronged with benighted savages, and now the furious wills of ignorant heretics, now the devious policy of scheming atheists, pare us away and away, and God's Church--here you see, gentlemen; in this little corner of this ball--God's Church dwindles almost to nothing.

"But see, how the spirit of the Holy Ghost entering into brave and pious men can bring this earth within a halo once again. The king of Spain, in his late victories over the Turk, weakens their great sway in Africa and the Orient. The Anabaptists and the minions of Calvin in the Low Countries will soon be chastised. Polonia is daily more reclaimed. The Jesuits convert the Indies, by their holy sacrifices and truly Christian zeal--I do not hold with priestly meddling in our affairs of state, but for missionaries to the heathen lands, by God, the angels could do no better. What is left, gentlemen? I ask you, look upon this ball, what is left? England only is left! This is your great opportunity, and think not God is not attending to your choice. Gentlemen, will you throw yourselves to this holy cause?"

Everyone stared at him.

"Gentlemen, will you?" Paget cried. "God is waiting for your answer!"

Everyone stared.

At last Arundell broke the silence.

"With all eternity to wait in, he can wait a little longer for mine."

"But the duke must know what he may expect of you."

"Oh, the duke must know! I thought you had said God."

"What, Paget," asked Shelley querulously, "must we reply at once? These are weighty matters, man, you shall not have me down with no respect of reason and thought."

"Well, let me not unduly hurry you," said Paget. He seemed to recognize that his precipitousness might rather alienate his hearers than propel them.

"I for my part am well inclined to this bold scheme," Northumberland said, "and find myself more than half inclined to say aye."

"And I to say nay," said Arundell. "My lord, there is a vast difference to be made between resisting a usurpation or so at court and joining up as rebels our very selves. Gentlemen, my friends, do not count on me for anything."

"In fact, Mr. Arundell, we do not. But some of our more substantial and perhaps more zealous friends here might contribute much. You gentlemen are powers in your countries, and your tenants await your lead. And all the younger bloods, Babington and his legion of companions, throughout the realm, will follow your examples. Mr. Arundell, with his one servingman, may come along if he likes."

"All right, brother," said Lord Paget. "Enough is said for one night. Let us have less of acrimony, and more of amity now. We shall sleep upon these hot words of yours, and reconvene on the morrow. But I will say you surprise me, Charles, with these great matters, so little do I know you anymore."

"Well, you are my brother still," said Paget, "but no longer perhaps my tutelary angel."

The party began ill-naturedly to go their ways in twos and threes to bed, muttering among themselves. Shortly the corridor without the gallery looked like a night processional in a jubilee year, pairs of candles' pinpoints marching slowly, in near silence, to the wings of the darkened house. Within a quarter of an hour, the house was utterly still.

Arundell shared a small chamber with Lord Harry, who drifted uneasily into sleep in an uncomfortable bed he'd been given near the door. Gage slept on a pallet near his feet,

and alongside him lay Sharrock. Arundell sat long by the casement gazing dolefully upon the meadows behind the house, thinking of nothing very coherently but mulling over his powerful sense of uneasiness at the sort of talk he had been hearing. The image of Tydeus at the cliff of the Sphinx came back to him, and briefly he saw himself raised up in military triumph over all his foes, but hard upon that came the face of the blank-eyed man, the black squinting face with the blind, all-seeing eye that seemed to haunt him everywhere and peer into his thoughts to root out only his graceless ones.

Charles started. Below in the shadow of the house there had been a movement. The slim moon threw a faint luminosity over everything, and, in a moment, into that pale light a figure darkly ran. What a murrain made a man out in the middle of the night, furtively running to the trees across the field. From that wood, Arundell thought he saw another shape stand forth. The two seemed to meet before the tree-line, lost in those shadows but surely somewhere there. Of the one figure, in any case, he was certain, for presently he saw it come scurrying back to the house. A face seemed to glance up toward the black windows. Arundell strained his eyes to recognize the man. He was almost sure, in the last second before the figure passed into the darkness beneath him, that he had seen the face of Charles Paget.

"What's amiss?"

Lord Howard sat in his bedclothes watching his companion. Arundell hadn't realized how alarmed, indeed how ridiculous, he must have looked, dressed only in his smalls, leaning over the casement sills long after there was no more to be seen.

"An assignation, as should seem," Arundell whispered back, "amongst yonder trees."

"Who was it?"

"I thought it was our great friend Mope," said Charles. "I am less certain as I try to recollect his face now."

"Good Lord," said Harry. "What, is it more treachery?"

"It may not have been him. Indeed, it may have been anyone--a servingman, perhaps, selling off the cutlery as a nightly sort of thing."

"Well, I should scarcely be surprised to find Paget engaged in something lewd." Harry rose and stepped quietly to the window. "What think you of his speeches, Charles?"

"Oh, my lord, do not ask. I am in a great quandary. It is as if we stood in a deep hole, all inky darkness around us, and we must learn where to climb out, with never knowing if there really be a way of climbing out, and never able to see it anyway, and furthermore unsure whether we can climb out if with God's help we should find it."

"Well," said Lord Harry in a low voice, "this talk of landings and rebellion ever chills me, but long enough I have awaited some remedy, and now I am half prepared to eat my proper fears and dash ahead."

"I understand you," Arundell answered. "But Harry, you know I am not a heroic man, yet I will fight a field if I must. That is not that which so much troubles my heart. Rather it is that there is more to everything than ever I can see. Look me now--Paget bids us all openly to take arms against the queen, then slips out and bids I know not whom to do I know not what in the darkness whilst we sleep. This Monsieur Martelli; this La Rue, whatever he prefers now; well, he is neither. Whether he means us well or ill, I have seen him before, a long

time since, in Paris, and at that time his name was Samerie, and he was then a Jesuit. Now I say nothing against the man at this time; only I wish to say that if I must talk hanging talk with any man, I mean to know his name."

"You are right in that."

"Well, consider further. Here we mean to do ourselves some good and help God likewise by combining for the pope to put aside our queen. So far, good. The pope is Christ's vicar, the queen is a heretic. Good. But who is this pope, Harry? I have never seen him. If I were to see him, would he look upon my face half so graciously as this queen was wont to do?"

"It may be he would, if you ever saw him."

"It may be he would. But I have seen this queen, and known her friendliness."

"My cousin, in good sadness, let me advise you just a little." Lord Harry spoke solemnly, looking down at his hands which shone palely in the window's soft glow. "Charles, give up this business, will you not? Whether this be right or wrong I leave to Almighty God to judge of. But as I listen to your speeches, I cannot think that any decision you may come to will hold good for you. You may stick your course, indeed I know you will; but I know you, Charles, you will never cease to doubt of it. Get you free of this, therefore, for if once you enter this full in, you must never look behind."

"But if it is right, Harry, and what I should have done, where will I be not having done it?"

"Where you should always have been, in Cornwall or hiding out in Wales. Charles, these great deeds, these great jars of nations and creeds, these are for kings and queens and dukes to worry one another over, like snarling dogs about a joint, not for such as you and me."

"What make you here then?"

"Well, ha ha, you know, I am a busy meddler born, I cannot keep me from it. I sometimes think, Charles, tell no one of it--I sometimes think that if this realm were now a Catholic realm, perhaps I should be meddling on the other side. Damn me for giving voice to such a godless thought. Bless me now! But I never rest, you see, but meddle always. And to say the very truth, the same is the case of half these busy plotters, and this lesser Paget is not the least among them. He will never rest until either he is lord of his own little nation or dies seeking the same, which will happen first I leave to your judgment." Harry gazed out at the pallid moon and sighed quietly. "Give it over, Charles, this is not for you, with your doubts and second thoughts and maybes and maybe nots."

"Well, it may be you are right."

"Ha! And maybe not!" Lord Harry laughed. "Come, old rogue, to sleep now. Tomorrow we shall talk again."

And when they had retired finally, the great manor house was absolutely still. Occasionally from the kennels, the sound of a dog's restless barking broke the silence, but that was all.



Sharrock left his master to his snoring and descended to the Petworth kitchens. The Gentlemen were breaking fast in the main room, but in the back the aggregation of

servingmen and women, those attending to the present business and others awaiting a momentary call, was overwhelming in its noise and bustle.

Arundell came down late. Some of the gentlemen had already departed for their homes. No decisions had been arrived at. Though Paget's plots were given an encouraging response for transmission back across the Channel, he had no firm reply. The consensus of the gentlemen's opinions, it seemed, was that they first must see some firmer assurance of both capability and good intentions from the invading princes before they would commit themselves to support of any kind. Charles Paget suggested that these men might never be prepared to do themselves this good, and more than a few of them murmured that he might well be right in that.

Lord Paget spent the early afternoon walking with his brother near the house. Howard and Arundell accompanied them for a time, listening as the expatriate described his entertainment and estate in France. Though vast sums passed daily through his hands, he said, of the queen of Scots's money, meant for her special friends and favorers, he had none of that for himself, but was well provided for out of a special pension given him by that queen for his careful service. But failing that, he insisted, he might live equally well, indeed far better, out of any one of the allowances pressed upon him by other great princes. "*Ma foi*," he said again and again, "a good and clever man would never want for a living while such Christian princes remain on earth."

Lord Thomas had several times all but made up his mind to carry himself over to join the Catholics in exile. Now, his age coming upon him, sick of the gout, his wife dead, he was toying with the opinion that nothing mattered so much as the freedom of his conscience. In good part he still hoped for some change in England, some change of heart in this government or change of government in this realm, which would permit him to worship in the Roman manner with no more fear. But increasingly he complained that such an alteration would hardly come within his lifetime, and increasingly he thought of giving it all up and retiring to meditation in some continental haven. So far he had not had the courage to make the break. Always, in brief time, his natural optimism intervened, and he would give a laugh, and shake his head as if clearing it of muddle, and return forgetfully to the daily round of his affairs. He could not so easily part with the familiar.

Arundell, too, had entertained such thoughts. But he knew better the precarious life of a penniless Englishman in foreign parts, especially one perhaps too old to begin a military career and perhaps too proud to dog the steps of clerks and secretaries begging some small hospitality. For the great lords with great pouches jingling full of gold and silver coin, travel might be all the cry, but we ordinary men, we impecunious mortals, have need of some more circumspection.

Nothing, in any case, was to be decided now. Charles Paget was to remain a week or two more at Petworth and Michelgrove, and then he would return to the duke of Guise with his report. The others, the gentlemen of the country, the city kinsmen, the servants, set out for their houses or for London, travelling in small parties by separate ways, lest they attract the attention upon the road of any suspicious man. Rain was falling all over England.



To Mr. Principal Secretary, at the court at Oatlands, give these. Sir, my hearty commendations, saving your honor, etc. It grieves me more than I can tell your honor I cannot

bring you that which you desire, for as yet, though we have everyone of the small fry secure within our nets, we have not got our big fish. Daily more and more we see who are the main actors in all, viz.: 75 [Throgmorton] who receives these correspondences from some (whom yet we know not, but by sight) and 76 [Howard] to whom he passes some of them. In my conscience I believe that my Adrastus has seen everything that has gone by the 10 house, and if as I understand by certain mouths that Mr. Fagot of that house is also one of yours, then we be doubly sure. Some way our big fish nibbles at this bait, but we cannot tell how; here is my poor opinion, that if any longer we must wait, we may lose fish and hook and pole and boat and all. For, your honor, if any letters pass by devilish arts or howsoever and we ignorant of their contents, why we can never guess at what new sleights and shifts daily they may devise. I speak it for her majesty's safety.

My Hippomedon, who is my nephew and was the man who brought to your honor your message from this Mope, is of opinion his man 36 [Lord Paget] makes nothing more in any of this business, and on this account in part and for some other respects he thinks your honor must not believe this message sent to you from this Mope.

I beg your honor to teach us whether this Mope be one of yours or no. But whether or not he is I do not see how any of his informations will serve your honor's turn better than ours will; for consider, I beg you, we have the men (if not yet the matter), and these men once given a little taste of the rack will give us all, I warrant you. Arrest them now, I urge you, sir. Not until that is done, perhaps, will your honor and the noble lords of the Council truly believe me how deep this stratagem will be seen to run.

Sir, craving your pardon, my men and I are starving still for want of any sustenance, for these many months have my accounts to your honor gone unpaid or only in so little as keeps us enough alive to starve the more. I beg your honor therefore....



Tuesday morning, the 5th, dawned bright and clear. Arundell was in his old rooms in the Blackfriars Priory, and the Thames, glimpsed from the windows in the corridor without, flowed cold and crisp beneath the small November sun. Arundell spent an early hour answering his correspondence, and then rolled Sharrock from his bed and bid him come abroad.

Together they walked leisurely towards the river. The broad expanse of glaucous water, smoothly rolling through the city towards the sea, calmed one, made one think of pleasure journeys and river trips on holiday in warmer times. Near Paul's Wharf, they turned aside, intending to step in and knock up Throgmorton, whose late rising had grown to be a jest amongst his friends.

Out of Throgmorton's door came a white-jacketed gentleman of the court, followed by Throgmorton himself and then another gentleman. Arundell stopped in his steps. The three men turned down towards the river stairs at the end of the street, hurrying along in an absurd little jog which should have been comical but for the sick pallor of Throgmorton's face. He was held firmly by both his arms.

For a moment Arundell stood and trembled. All his nightmare visions these seven years of dungeons and racks flooded into his mind at once. It seemed unwise to him to be seen upon the streets, and he felt irrationally that he would be safer at home in the Priory, where accordingly he flew now, with Sharrock close behind him.

Tregian, taken before his eyes years ago. Troops of priests, crying out abjectly or grinning with some crazy inner triumph, gone to the rope and disembowelling knife, for the saying of a mass. Arundell expected a hand upon his shoulder round every corner.

Once at home, he sent Sharrock running on to Arundel House to bring the news to Lord Harry, then sat numbly staring at his fire, remonstrating with himself that now when action was most required of him he could think of nothing to be done.

Sharrock returned with the message that Lord Harry too was taken. Arundell was beside himself. His first thought was to gain his horse and turn its head towards Cornwall or some other wild place, where between friends and uninhabited parts he might elude his pursuers for who knew how long. But he reconsidered. It was only by lucky accident that he knew of these arrests; there were others to be warned.

He rode for Paget's house, a matter of ten minutes' pushing through the crowds in the market lanes and watching everywhere for the queen's men. Lord Paget, by the grace of God or a piece of luck, was in, but soon in panic, incapable of any counsel. Arundell scrawled out hasty notes to as many friends as might be threatened by this unhappy chance, and employed his lordship's servants to post them on their ways. Then, no better plan forthcoming, they did nothing, and waited.

There were no more arrests. For the next week, Lord Paget, Arundell, and now Northumberland as well, and Shelley and several others, kept together and listened for what news could be obtained from surreptitious sources anywhere. Everyone spoke, not only of these late arrests, but also of the recent indictments against Mr. Arden, their friend from the country, a worthy Catholic gentleman. For the murderous ravings of the lunatic Somerville, who by the worst luck happened to be his son-in-law, Arden had been brought up and charged with an attempt upon the queen's life. This, with everything else, was taken to signify the beginning of a general massacre of Catholics throughout the realm, a pogrom, no less. But still, a few days passed, and there were no more arrests.

The first tidings, discounting those mad rumors that subsequently came to nothing, were that Foljambe had fled the realm successfully, but his colleague Ardington had been taken on the coast. There was yet no word of Howard; Francis Throgmorton and his brother George were said to be lodged in the Tower of London and threatened daily with the rack. Gradually Arundell began to understand what had happened: Walsingham had fixed upon that small correspondence of the Scottish queen that travelled by the embassy of France, in which Lord Harry and Throgmorton had been forward. Since none had been clapped up but those involved in that part of the whole, it was easily to be inferred that the rest was yet unknown, in which case, for as long as these men kept their silence, the others had some respite.

The great questions then were how long Throgmorton might hold out before divulging all he knew, and how far privy to any other matters were Ardington and, now, Tunstead, who had been seen by some prisoners being led into Newgate prison. The general opinion was that Throgmorton could not stick above three or four good rackings.

On the 15th, more than a week after the first arrests, arrived a message from Mendoza, to the effect that Throgmorton's man Meredith had come to the embassy bearing a green velvet-covered casket in which his master had kept his special papers. The casket, however, once prised open, had been empty. Whatever were these papers, they were hidden else-

where in Throgmorton's dwellings, either at Paul's Wharf or in his house at Lewisham, and would not long escape detection.

In a postscript, Mendoza added a piece of political news: his master the king had important affairs in hand and (this stated in the most circumlocutory terms) could not be expected to afford any aid to anyone to any purpose whatever. Thus, no invasion.

Clearly, something had to be done. Northumberland was of opinion that for most of it, no treasons actually committed, they might bear it out, especially, whatever became of the lesser actors, might the earls and barons be left with their knuckles rapped and a little time instructed to keep to their houses. But only, he thought, two things in chief he would not answer for if they were to come out, which were, first, Charles Paget's dealings for invasion, and second, whatever frequenting of the Spanish house had gone on in addition to Harry Howard's.

Here, he said, sucking on a comfit for his breath, was the crux of all. But for these two fatal facts, the rest of them might come cleanly away, whatever Throgmorton was constrained to sign to on the strappado. And this must be a paramount concern, he affirmed, stoutly. For as the duke of Guise's plots served to illustrate, a man such as himself, Northumberland, was too vital to the success of the Catholic cause to be sacrificed without need. Thus it was imperative that every link in the chain of suspicion to himself must needs be severed without delay.

Arundell asked, somewhat drily, what that meant in practical terms. Only this, his lordship replied, looking slowly round the room, that Lord Paget, the brother of this tainted messenger, must promptly flee the realm, and he spoke this the less reluctantly seeing that Lord Thomas had often said that he meant to do the same of his own inclination anyway. (Lord Thomas began to frown and look alarmed.) Furthermore, any who might have been seen at the Spanish house, or who might be alleged to have been there, must likewise flee forthwith.

You mean me, said Arundell. As it turned out, when the activities of all the men present had been somewhat inquired into, that was who was meant. Whatever had been done or not done, that made nothing to the matter; that Arundell had visited that house regularly might suffice to have him attached, after which there was no guessing what might be wrested from him all unwilling.

And so it was concluded. Northumberland's reasoning was sound enough; the earl was, still, an earl, and could presume some distance upon his rank alone. But Lord Paget had been found troublesome in the past, and for Arundell, what Leicester might do to him now, having him thus at utter disadvantage, did not bear contemplation. Of so much he might be sure: Arundell needed no guilt--a charge or two would suffice to deliver him up to Leicester's mercy, which his lordship had in no abundance.

Accordingly, Arundell made ready. Northumberland, indeed all those of the Howard party, he implored to fly with him. But the others intended resolutely to brave it through. As the earl of Arundel said, there was great hope that the queen would never allow the Bear to bear them all away, for she must have them still as her old counterpoise to his power.

Paget, too, set about completing what already he had begun, collecting as much ready money as his solicitors could set their hands upon and placing his affairs hastily in order. Shelley was charged with bespeaking a craft to carry them across. At last, when word was

brought of still another racking of the miserable Throgmorton, and when no man could be expected to hold out through a third, on the evening of the 23rd of November, Thomas Lord Paget, Charles Arundell, and a few of their servingmen, accompanied by William Shelley, rode north out of Moorgate to mislead any watchers, then galloped round and crossed the Thames beyond Chelsea Reach, and made for the southern coast.

And only just in time. On that same day, Throgmorton, merely shown the rack and scarcely roughly handled, broke utterly. On the morning of the 24th, a squadron of pursuivants and some of the officers from the court ran through Lord Paget's house and found him gone. The chase was made through town for Charles Arundell. Northumberland, against his expectations, was arrested, with all of his principal servants, and lodged with a man of the court, and a day or two later removed to the Tower of London; Wycliffe and Robotham and the others went to the Fleet. Men were likewise sent to Shelley's house off Chancery Lane and, finding him out, settled down to await his return. The earl of Arundel was commanded to keep his house, and then, like Northumberland, transported to the Tower, though he had had no greater part in these affairs than a mass or two at intervals and a certain affection for his uncle Harry. The examiners began the work of sorting out what evidence they had to hand and obtaining what they had not, and the Protestants breathed a hearty sigh of relief that the realm continued safe and the queen in good health.

Meanwhile, as Lord Harry paced his long familiar rooms in the Fleet, as Throgmorton shivered in the Tower, Arundell and Lord Paget, in the care of shipmaster Clynsall, rode the night waves and the channel breeze towards France, in some concern about what awaited them on the other side.

"After the day there cometh the dark night;
For though the day be never so long,
At last the bells ringeth to evensong."

Part 2. THE CONTINENT (1583-1587)

XIV. COLD CITY

(1583-1584)

"You will come to learn how bitter as salt and stone
Is the bread of others, how hard the way that goes
Up and down stairs that never are your own."
-- Dante

In almost perfect gracelessness, the door had recently been painted a luminous green. The wooden façade, in desperate contrast, had of white long since become dirty brown. The whole establishment spoke only of neglect and penury and deplorable taste.

Stafford's house lay in La Monnaie, just north of the Seine between the Grand Châtelet and the palace of the Louvre. His predecessor Cobham, in his excitement at going home, had permitted himself the luxury of a quarrel with his landlord. The new ambassador had thus arrived at the commodious old "English house" nestled so conveniently beneath the great mass of the Queen Mother's half-finished palace, the Tuileries, just without the city wall, to find the lofty chambers vacant and most of Cobham's furnishings departed towards the coast. Only luck, of a qualified sort, and the help of some of his exiled countrymen, had found Stafford his new house off the Rue du Bout, an astonishingly ugly little house, long disused, far too small for his staff and household servants.

Lord Paget stood beside the door of garish green and blew on his fingers. The afternoon sun sat upon the high roofs behind him. No one responded to his knocking; he and his companions waited in the disagreeable chill, cloaks drawn tightly about them, stamping their feet on the bricks to keep them from going numb.

"Oh God, you must have it wrong, Charles," he said to his brother. "No one lives here. No one could ever live here."

The younger Paget reached across and pounded upon the door.

After another wait, his lordship frowned at his friends and tried the latch, and found it free. Slowly, he pushed the door open and peeked into the hall. The oak panelling in the dark room was old and in places split, but it was evident that some program of renewal had begun, for the furnishings were new and clean and the walls bore a few hangings that were well chosen. By the stairs that wound tightly above stood a small table, upon which rested a pile of paper packets near an open diplomatic pouch.

Arundell gestured towards the dispatches.

"The secrets of Europe."

Lord Thomas chuckled, but glanced uneasily at his brother. Charles Paget, however, removing his cloak and brushing back his hair with his fingers, seemed not to have noticed.

In the main room, with his back to the long passage, sat Sir Edward Stafford at his dinner. At the farther end, intent upon her plate, was his wife Lady Douglass. She sat beneath a tapestry upon the wall that gave a colorful scene of the winged demons hurrying the howling Lost with pikes and spears downward to the left of the throne of judgment, a tall seraph looking on complacently. Two unfamiliar young men dined with the Staffords, one on

either side of the table. So far, amid the sounds of mumbled chewing and clacking cutlery, no one had observed the newcomers' entry.

"Room for three?" called Arundell.

Stafford leapt to his feet, upsetting his chair.

"Charles, good lord man, is it you?" He began pumping Arundell's hand with enthusiasm. "Your lordship," he nodded, stooping to set right his chair, and nodded again, a little less cordially, to the other Paget. "Here, I am astonished. Do sit. Tell me what this is."

"A continental holiday, may be," replied Arundell, and made his way to greet her ladyship, who in seeing him looked less querulous than her custom was.

Stafford followed him round the table, as the other men stood. "Oh you are welcome, gentlemen!"

Abruptly he remembered himself and turned to bring in the other gentlemen. "Look, you must know Mr. Constable, who is a very proper young man, the earl of Rutland's trusted kinsman, now in his travels. And over here is Mr. Hakluyt, who is our chaplain. Mr. Arundell, my Lord and Mr. Paget."

Arundell and Lord Thomas greeted the first man and nodded affably to the second across the board.

"Hakluyt is an Oxford man, you must know more of him. He makes those books of the navigations in unknown seas. Look you, do sit down. If you have eaten nothing yet . . ."

"No, we have eaten. I fear we disturb. Let us just warm ourselves, if you please, Ned." Arundell and Lord Thomas sat up to the table as the diners resumed their meal, while Paget went down to sit before the fire.

As the greetings had progressed, Sir Edward's brain had not been idle. It occurred to him that, as pleasant as he found his new surprise, there ought not to have been surprise at all. Slowly his brow darkened and for a few moments he ate silently. Arundell, as the servant appeared with cups of warmed wine, watched his host with some sadness.

"Well, you are right, Ned," he said at last. "Not quite a simple holiday."

Stafford looked up and said, "Mr. Constable is on his road out of Italy and, gentlemen, we have been debating where are the least civilized, in those parts or in France."

"Yes," said Constable; "and the question devolves wholly to the point of haberdashery. Not to put too fine a point on it, sirs, we ask ourselves whether the more barbarous were to invent these outlandish fashions of attire, as do your Italians, or basely to imitate them, as do the French."

Arundell laughed. "But then tell me, sirs--I exclude you deliberately, madam--what barbarian do we accuse for the green door just without?"

"Oh God," Sir Edward groaned. "My door! Oh."

"Charles, we beg your forbearance here in this unfamiliar land," Lady Douglass cried. "I am too much at fault."

"No, sweet, never say it. My lady, Charles, upon our first arriving, told me that if I did nothing straightaway for the sad aspect of this house she would destroy herself. Well then,

I ran to Lilly, my man, and I said 'Beautify this house at once,' and he, dull man, ran out and engaged a Frenchman painter who hates the English mortally, and now we eschew that door and come round to enter through the garden. Indeed, we pray nightly that a mad St. Bartholomew's crowd of the city will come and knock it in."

"And then retire."

"Yes, ha ha, and then retire, their spleens well vented on the loathsome door." Stafford carefully wiped his fingers on his lap-cloth. "Retiring, you know, is not the thing which Paris mobs do best."

"Ah, but it is that thing that I do best, my friends," Mr. Constable said; "and if you will forgive me, I will remove me now to my chamber. I have letters to write and would not lose this bearer." He rose from the table with a polite bow towards the lady, then bowed again to the gentlemen. "We shall meet again soon, I hope, good sirs."

"If I may have my wish, sir," said Arundell amiably.

Mr. Constable took up his rapier and belt from the high back of his chair and, with another courteous nod, left the room.

Mr. Hakluyt was a thin man of about thirty years, with a nose that frequently drew comment. Having regained his seat after the other's departure, he resumed his meal energetically. Stafford glanced at Arundell. Hakluyt, with a fowl's breast in his hands, looked up at Sir Edward and smiled somewhat greasily. Sir Edward smiled back with a friendly nod. Richard Hakluyt returned to his bird, and then paused to swallow off some of his wine. His eyes met Lady Douglass's; she smiled at him; he tried awkwardly to dip his head in a short bow whilst drinking. Hastily, he turned down to the other end of the table. Sir Edward, Lord Thomas, and Mr. Arundell smiled pleasantly back at him. He nibbled furtively at his fowl. Sir Edward, he noticed from the corner of his eye, was turned away. He raised his head; Sir Edward swung about and smiled at him.

With elaborate show of finishing, Mr. Hakluyt sat back in his chair and pushed his plate from him, patting his lips slowly with his lap-cloth and replacing his knife in its silver holder on the table. He sat for an uncomfortable half minute gazing bemusedly at the timbers above, as if recalling an entertaining anecdote he'd been told a day or two before.

"Well, then," he said. "I crave your pardon, madam, for this incivility, but I must return to the writing of my sermon. It is, you know--a'em--the Lord's work."

"By all means, sir," replied her ladyship, smiling graciously.

Hakluyt bowed to the gentlemen, who smiled at him, and then, adjusting his dark jacket, saying again "sermons always to be written, my good friends" as he backed away, he left the room somewhat hurriedly, his hard shoes clattering across the boards.

Charles Paget rose grinning from his place by the fire and took the chair before the half-finished plate.

"Well, my friends, he is gone," Stafford said after a moment. He frowned quickly. "You anticipate my thoughts. As custom and use is, I think, I should have been warned to look for you, should I not, as I am warned of all gentlemen who take the queen's passport to travel in these parts?"

"I think you should have," said Lord Thomas.

"Defect of government," said Arundell. "Most reprehensible."

"Then," Sir Edward replied, more soberly, "then I doubt not this has some taste of politics in it, eh? What is the cause? Not this Throgmorton business, is it?"

"Sir Edward, you have named the occasion of our coming, but not the cause, which verily was all upon the note of conscience." Lord Thomas too grew earnest. "The queen herself and all impartial men do know our loyalty for our bodies to her majesty, but now our souls must speak to God, and that, Sir Edward, they cannot easily do in England at this day."

"And one need not ask whether you have been touched in any matter of state?"

"Certainly we have not! But like all honest men in these divisive times we have enemies--who knows that better than yourself and your good lady?--and we may not go to bed in good hope, anymore, of arising free men. For you know that this traitorous Somerville's taking will be fuel for the brands of those who would burn us on the flagrant pyres of their bigotry and--."

"Tush, Tom," Arundell said.

"Well, I wax metaphorical. You understand me, Sir Edward. The precisians will rally to this, mark me, and make their use of it, and we fear a hard hand over all the papists, while our enemies will grasp upon it to bring us into peril. Hardly should we ever come out of it in England, thus we have come abroad only until the occasion of this danger is past."

"I hope you do exaggerate," the ambassador replied. "What, may I expect a general Exodus? England is England still, where law rules even above the queen."

"Does it so, Ned?" his wife put in heatedly; "or shall we say where the earl of Leicester and his canting creatures rule above both law and queen!"

"Well put, my lady," Lord Paget said. "Already Mr. Arden, no better man in the country, nor a truer, is arraigned for treason; and because why? Because he refuses to take Leicester's livery upon his back, because he would not let go his freedom to join that faction; the tale is too notorious. And now Mr. Throgmorton and my Lord Harry taken up. Who next, Sir Edward?"

"Who indeed?" Sir Edward sat back wearily. "What would your lordship have of me, then?"

"Only this, sir. We come to you, not only as our friend and (if I may boldly say it) our kinsman, but as you are her majesty's lieger here, to beg you write to her, to assure her majesty that for all things but for exercise of conscience we will live as dutifully here as any men in the world, and to beg her highness on our knees to preserve our little livings, and allow us to enjoy them here if it were possible and readmit us to them at home when passions cool."

"I will say ye said so."

"That is our whole joy." Lord Thomas thought again. "'Look to a gown of gold,' say I, 'and you will get at least a sleeve of silk.' And what you may also tell her, we will remain here either with you or else wholly at your appointment, or if you would not that, then refrain any company here you would forbid us."

"Well. But you are very silent, Charles," Stafford said, turning about to face Arundell. "It may be y'are musing upon your recollection of our last meeting. What was it was said then, do you remember?"

"As I recall, Ned, you advised me hang myself, as the only way to be free of detractors."

"Well, it may be that is what I should have said." Stafford thought for several moments.

"Well, Lord Thomas, I must say, as I think reason is, that your coming away at this time may very well give cause to your enemies to suspect your conscience be not clear, and may breed more mislike than abiding the peril would have done. Notwithstanding, I will make report to her majesty of your speeches here; but for coming to me, I must desire ye to forbear me till I know her majesty's pleasure and receive her commandment for the course I shall take with you. In the meantime, I would have you, in friendly counsel, to write to her yourself to say the same."

Lord Paget reached into the bosom of his doublet and withdrew several papers.

"Surely I have done so, if I may avail myself of your bearer."

"In truth, Ned," put in Arundell, "we had thought merely to tuck our missives silently into your pouch to avoid troubling you with such a small matter."

"Tucked into my pouch? Heh, heh, my dear Charles, I hope my pouch is better looked to than that."

"It is lying open in the hall."

"What!" The ambassador dashed into the passage, pursued by the others' laughter. "Moody! Damn me, where is that bearer? Bring down that bearer."

He returned in a moment, carrying his leather pouch and all his week's dispatches. His eye went uncomfortably to the younger Paget, who was toying innocently with the remains of Hakluyt's bird.

"Here, your lordship, you may add these to my pouch. But y'must know that they will come first to the sight of Mr. Secretary."

Lord Paget held up three papers folded and tightly sealed. "They need not come to Walsingham, Sir Edward. Let me show you, here is one addressed for her majesty, another for my Lord Treasurer, and a third, if you will permit, for my mother, lest she worry needlessly."

"Very good. But I am to tell you, the bearer will deliver my pouch direct to Mr. Secretary, and (I say it in confidence) he will likely have a sight of all of them before they reach their destinations."

Lady Douglass emitted something like a snort of anger. Lord Thomas caught on only very slowly.

"But they are sealed, Sir Edward."

"Lord Thomas, boldly I will tell you now, Phelippes, who will receive them for Mr. Secretary, is competent to open your mouth, copy me out your teeth, and close it again without your knowing of it. If these cannot be seen by Mr. Secretary, I advise you to send them by-by another way." He glanced again at the younger Paget, who still gazed modestly upon the ruins of dinner. "Or much rather, not to send them at all."

Michael Moody interrupted by entering with young Painter, the courier, firmly in tow. Stafford held up the open pouch and let the papers fall severally through his fingers to the table. Painter shone with embarrassment and tried stammeringly to indicate that, passing up to the study, he had stayed merely to answer the call of nature. The ambassador cut him off with a gesture.

"Moody, bring him back and have him ready to ride within the hour. Mr. Constable will have a letter for him, too, see that he has it, and I shall have another."

Moody nodded and gathered up the papers and pouch. Painter followed him silently back towards the hall.

"And Moody, for God's sake, set someone near the door!"

Stafford turned to the others when his men had departed.

"Ye see how it is, gentlemen. The fellow's father once pleases the earl of Leicester with his moral tales and pleasant narratives, and not only he must have the best post in the Tower armories, but his noddys-headed boy must carry all my news. There are but two ways to gain employment in England, i'faith, which is either to murder a man for Leicester or else dedicate a book to him."

"Another time," said Arundell, "let me tell you how to lose employment there."

"Ha," Stafford laughed. "Well, for your company here, only I will say that you know there be papists of two sorts here in Paris, those whom we call papists of state and those we call papists of religion only. With the former ones I would by no means have you to meddle, so that I may report you keeping clean apart from them. And you, Mr. Paget, I say this no less to you, sir. You know you have not dealt plainly with me."

Paget looked up slyly at the mention of his name. "But, Sir Edward, neither have you found for me the favor of her majesty I might have looked for."

"Paget, I told you when last you came, you must avoid this Morgan and all his brood, and you must do for her majesty some of that signal service you never cease to promise."

"Mr. Morgan is as honest an Englishman as any on live," the other said heatedly.

"No he is not. He is a busy meddler, and a Welshman too, and while you league with him I can report no good of you. No more for you, my friends. I say it in old friendship. Do hold yourselves free of--. And then this Roman widower, who had buried twenty wives, in his perfect confidence did marry with the widow of twenty-two husbands, and all the city of ancient Rome did fall to wagering huge estates who should bury other, ha ha."

Grimston, another of the ambassador's household, had come through the door with a message for his master. Stafford read from the paper and thanked the man, continuing, "And all the aged men daily gathered before the house to cheer the husband on, and the grave matrons of the city likewise assembled daily to do their best for the wife, you see."

He looked over to where Grimston had departed. His companions chuckled amusedly at the anecdote until the footsteps were no more to be heard.

"Grimston is the Secretary's man," Stafford explained simply. "Well, enough. Where may I find you?"

Arundell sat forward. "For the moment I am with a man named Fitzherbert in the Ruelle du Foi on the other side the river."

"I know the man, a good man. I'll inform her majesty what you say. I may have word for you within this fortnight. And I must beg your pardon, gentlemen. Painter must be prompt upon his journey."

Arundell arose and shook his hand.

"Pray God, Charles," Sir Edward said, "you may have your wish. If it is this Throgmorton business I hold little hope for a speedy reconciliation."

"We shall see." Arundell bowed to Lady Douglass, who sat scowling in a sort of slow anger. Lord Thomas took up his cloak and bowed likewise, and the three of them departed from the notorious door.

They had not brought horses over, so to avoid another long walk round by the bridges in the cold they decided to try the river traffic. At the foot of the Rue de la Monnaie, across the wide bank, there were several small wharves and a few unoccupied boats tied up to them. They looked a hundred meters across the stream at the tiny mounds of islands below the Ile de la Cité, where some men were to be seen working. Up river, obscuring all but the rooftops of the Pont au Change, lay the Millers' Bridge, with ten or eleven wheels reaching across from the shadow of the Palace of Justice on the island. They set off walking downstream past the school of St. Germain in hopes of flushing out someone to row them over. The bitter wind blew down behind them from the north and forced them to lean sideways into it with necks drawn in.

"The wrathful winter, 'proaching on apace,'" Arundell quoted, "'With blust'ring blasts had all ybared the treen--'"

The others looked at him in mock rancor.

The cold, gray water swept by below them with a hushed rustling sound, swirling against the rocks and pilings and carrying bits of refuse and wood in its flow. Alongside them the graceful Hôtel de Bourbon rose amid the ruin of the ancient city wall, and a little further on, the mighty Louvre, the high lines and bellied towers and embattled parapets of the medieval fortress softened by its long new windows and garden walks, loomed enormously against the sky.

"Damn me," cried Lord Thomas, who had seemed lost in thought. "I should like to know whether widower or widow won the hazard."

"Ah ha, the husband won, Tom," Arundell said. "His friends, at the unhappy woman's funeral, crowned the worthy man with a laurel wreath and, setting him atop the wagon, danced victoriously before it as she rode to burial."

"What, Charles, is it true?"

"Whether true I cannot say. The tale is in old Painter's book, *The Palace of Pleasure*, that Sir Edward spoke of, do you look to it yourself."

Having found a boatman, they clambered aboard his punt and dropped down the cold river towards the center, then huddled together against the wind as the man rowed powerfully back against the current. Alighting by the city wall, they entered through the Porte de Buci and separated, Arundell turning in to Thomas Fitzherbert's rooms near the Hôtel

St. Denis. Fitzherbert kept these chambers chiefly as a stopping place for himself and his acquaintances, and so, though altogether much lived in, they little looked it, remaining bare and cheerless when unoccupied, pleasant only when pleasant people stayed in them. Tom Throgmorton resided there often; William Tresham was there now, newly evicted from his old place for a failure to pay up his keep. Fitzherbert himself used them but seldom, for in his post as the English secretary of the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici, he was usually fain to follow the court, and otherwise he often moved to Rouen, where also he had business.

Arriving in Paris some few days earlier, Arundell and Lord Paget, ignorant of the city, had gone first to the College of Clermont near the Sorbonne. The Jesuits there, in particular Father Claude, the duke of Guise's favorer, had directed them to Charles Paget's rooms in the Rue de la Harpe, the left bank's principal boulevard. Lord Paget promptly moved in with his welcoming brother, while Charles found hospitality with Fitzherbert not far off.

There are not many things so disheartening as a strange city in a foreign nation, in the gathering dusk of a winter evening, especially when one is not only cold but nearly penniless and not very far from friendless. The loneliness of the twilight hour weighs upon one's heart. The people rushing by one have homes to go to, warm homes, probably well lit.

Into what a morass had he fallen unawares? No money with which to buy a position in some court or entourage or a command in someone's army; no skill to offer, no military expertise save a few skirmishes in his youth. He had all his adult life been a courtier, and a courtier might or might not capably acquit himself in the offices granted him, but one skill indispensably he must have, that of getting and retaining favor. Arundell had lost all favor. A courtier without a court can scarcely be said even to exist.

Eight days after his visit to Stafford's house--it would now have been Thursday, the 10th of December 1583 in the English style; in Catholic countries, since the advent of the pope's new calendar, it would be reckoned the 20th--Arundell lay late in bed watching the gray sky above the towers of the Hôtel de Nesle toward the river, and listened to Tom Throgmorton clattering pots near the low fire trying to stir up something for a breakfast. Similarly in former years, he had lain abed gazing at Baynard's Castle on the wintry Thames, while Kate had stirred up a new fire and then crept back beneath the quilts beside him. Throgmorton, an honest fellow, was a jolly poor substitute for Kate. But Charles found it entertaining to try picturing Kate as she would have looked, bending at the grate where Throgmorton bent now, tossing her hair back irritably, laughing perhaps in mock cruelty as she came back to him with icy fingers on his chest.

From his bed, Charles heard heavy boots tramping up the stair. Tresham, who was reading in the front room, went to the door; the sounds of greeting came down the open passage. He watched young Throgmorton reach into the high chiffonnier and extract a shirt with which to cover his thin, hairless chest.

Lord Paget came in first and called, "Where's to eat?" He darted straight for the fire basin, where he commenced at once, heedless of expense, to throw new coals under the grate.

"Hey," called Throgmorton, and playfully elbowed him away. "Tonight's coals; mind your freedom with us, sir!"

Charles Paget came in after his brother, followed by Tresham still in morning undress, and after them came two others. One was a man somewhat older than the rest (who were

all, save Throgmorton, in their early forties), and somewhat stouter as well; the other was a tall man gone prematurely gray, wearing the remains of fine attire, now in disrepair.

Greetings were echoed round the room, and Lord Paget undertook to introduce Arundell to the tall man, Charles Neville, the earl of Westmoreland, no older, indeed a little younger than Arundell, yet a veteran of thirteen years' exile. He had been attainted as a traitor for his leadership (to flatter him) of the Rebellion of the Northern Earls in 1569, and had wandered across the continent ever since, enjoying a small Spanish pension in consideration of his rank and trying generally to make himself useful.

"We meet at last," his lordship said in what was meant to be a cordial tone, but came off sounding fatuous. "You know, Mr. Arundell, we must be something like, let me meditate a space, something like second cousins, are we not?"

"By marriage, your lordship," Charles replied, taking the earl's proffered hand a little diffidently, forced to rise higher from the bedclothes than modesty required.

"Well, my brother Howard has lost his wonted agility, has he not? Not nimble enough at the last, eh? But you've come out of it right enough; well played!"

"Thank you."

The older gentleman was Dr. William Parry, a man whom many of the stricter sort were inclined to avoid for the scrapes into which he'd none too honorably fallen in the past, but nevertheless a man who found himself (one presumes for his love for the queen of Scots) made welcome in the Morgan circle. Only recently having obtained his degree in the faculty of law, he wore his learning well, and spoke intelligently and soberly, and expressed authentic-seeming pleasure at meeting Arundell, whom heretofore he had seen only from afar when in former years he had hung on the fringes of the English court.

Amenities completed, the gentlemen ranged about the room finding places to settle; they were awaiting the arrival of Morgan himself, whom business had detained. A shout came from the outer room, and Thomas Morgan stood in the narrow doorway.

Still dressed in his great cloak and spurs, the Welshman looked the more imposing for this evidence of haste, as if he were a man whose time is too valuable to be spent in dressing and undressing for every occasion, a man always caught in flight, as it were, from some prince's chamber to another's council of state, with scarcely time between for bothering about his cloak. From his shocking red hair to his broad, blocky shoulders to his travel-stained hose, Morgan was a picture of the energetic, industrious man of affairs. From his beginnings as a mere secretary, he had come a long distance. In his few years in Paris, indeed, he had contrived to wrestle from old Glasgow's grasp the management of all the queen of Scots's affairs; in this capacity, he corresponded with princes indeed and, controlling as he did the captive lady's purse-strings, her French dowry and her annuity from the king of Spain, he was much sought after by nearly all the English Catholics on this side the sea. If sometimes it was whispered that events had yet to prove his qualifications for these tasks, yet Morgan betrayed no want of confidence in himself and had lately taken to beginning his letters to great prelates and high ministers of state with not much more than "Sir."

As Morgan greeted him, Charles took occasion to watch the man's behavior. He grasped Arundell's hand firmly enough, and even ventured a conventional jest upon his dishabille, but he glanced busily about the room the whole while, as if checking off an invisible attendance card, and never met Charles's eyes.

Morgan welcomed the new expatriates and informed them that already he had written to their saint and very good lady the queen of Scots, begging some small maintenance for her ancient servants Lord Paget and Arundell, now in want for her sake. He doubted not (for her trust in his judgment) that a favorable reply might be expected. He had been yesterday with Tassis, the Spanish agent, about the long-awaited creation of an English regiment in the prince of Parma's army, and he foresaw better-filled pockets for all of them who cared to enlist, especially for Westmoreland, whose command it was to be. Dr. Parry, he continued, so recently come to them in autumn, was soon to leave again, bound shortly for England where he had in hand some special service for the cause, the secret of which did not yet bear divulging.

Finally Morgan came to his last news, which bore on the new arrivals' case. "Not a few days after you twa be departed of the ambassador's," he said, "did a' not receive a special rider with missive from the Secretary, reading what, think ye? Wall, it warned him particularly of y'r dangerous flight and bid him in her majesty's name t'carry a verra watchful eye over y'both, to understand what ye may practice or deal in to the prejudice of the realm; and said furthermore that the queen ware assured that Sir Edward's lady's near kinship wi' y'both should ne'er make him remiss to perform his duty."

Arundell started slightly.

"That's a bit queer, is it not?"

"Indeed it is, verra quare," Morgan replied, "and shows what good faith Sir Edward may expect from Walsingham and all that brood. And look ye, a' grew in a rage thereat, and wrote a letter full o'venom to his old pallie the Lord Treasurer, to tell him of these foul aspersions and demand apology; but a' ne'er shall have it, for Mr. Secretary will look old William calmly in th'eye and say he wrote but what her majesty bid him write."

Arundell felt some distress for his friend Stafford; for the others, the business seemed but a lively joke.

"But how is this known all so particularly?" he asked.

"One of that house is ours." Morgan was manifestly impatient of delay. He glanced round the room as if to inquire what business was left untouched upon; then he spun to face Arundell again and said briskly that he never doubted Charles would soon have his health again and need no longer languish his days away abed. With that, and with a series of abbreviated nods like cervical twitches round the room, he departed. Westmoreland, waving apologetically at his newly-met kinsman, hastened to overtake him, and the brothers Paget and Dr. Parry followed after. The image came in Arundell's mind of a duck, with an absurdly red head, bustling across a barnyard with her file of ducklings, in ruffs and hangers, trailing behind her.



For Charles Arundell, matters were in abeyance. More than anything else there was only waiting, and for him the sensation of dangling. He sent once to Stafford, and had word in return that he must wait a little longer. Morgan had written once, a week into January, to inform him that the queen of Scots had been advised of his worth and need, and that one had now only to wait.

To wait then. Only tarry a little; go soft a while. Linger here in bare rooms. Stay! stay; abide this little time. Only wait; December grows to January, as the Yule season passes (in these bare rooms), while others act, do, bustle everywhere on errands. Arundell hung on nervously, cleaving to his little hope, dreaming of errands to bustle on. Occasionally he attended mass in the chapel in the next street, and now and then he walked out and paid brief visits to the famous parts of the city, strolling of a gray morning past the Petit Châtelet and across the Petit Pont, to survey the grand heights of the cathedral of Notre Dame; thence, perhaps, he would descend the length of the island, across the boulevard and beneath the arches into the great courtyard of the church of Sainte Chapelle. Another time he would walk through the serried colleges of the university district, passing the scholars in their gowns and the monks in theirs, or scurry through the stews, brushing away the gay women who leered up at him and the lurching drunks who sought clumsily to slit his purse. All the time he was waiting, tarrying, dangling.

For some time, he had little news. Throgmorton was out of the city, and Tresham had ridden to the prince of Parma's camp at Tournai, concerned that the formation of the new regiment should go through without impediment. Fitzherbert brought word of more arrests in England. Northumberland had been transported to the Tower of London, but had not yet been charged substantially. Good Mr. Arden had been executed, though his mad son-in-law Somerville had escaped a public hanging by conducting a private one in his Newgate cell. The earl of Arundel had been arrested, as had Mr. Shelley, along with a host of their servants and a number of Sussex men thought to have known something either of the Petworth meeting or of Lord Paget's flight.

Not long afterward, Arundell was sitting at midday before a low fire, reading laboriously a book of tragical histories in French. He answered a quiet knock and found the man he'd once met at Petworth, then called Señor Martelli, who now wore clerical garb and reintroduced himself as Father Henri, and summoned Charles abroad. Together they walked southward a short way, then westward almost to the city wall at the Porte St. Germain, whence they turned eastward again along the Rue des Cordeliers to the church of that name. They entered the dark, silent edifice by the main portals, and then Father Henri left him alone.

The church was bitterly cold and seemed entirely vacant but for himself, left to the huge motionless shadows cast by columns and arches in the pale light that shone down from dusty clerestory windows at the top of the vault. He stepped across the stone floor, startled by the echoing clatter of his own boots, and ventured further down the center of the nave. Still no one appeared to greet him.

As slowly he approached the raised chancel, he discovered that the effect of the place had begun to grow in him. Blocks of chilled stone rose silently all about him in arching shapes. He stood in a small pool of rose light at the foot of the steps and gazed past the altar into the apse, where dirty ornamented windows threw a halo of pallid sunlight round the great tortured crucifix mounted there. Beneath his feet he felt the worn contours of the effigies of buried knights and churchmen, their names with their poor faces trodden away by the passing generations. The marble heads of noblemen stared sternly or forlornly from the walls, guarding in the darkness the skulls of their subjects plastered within their niches.

The stillness of the place began to seem less annoying (because he had been called out and left to stand idly) than almost comforting, as if he had wandered into a sort of haven.

Here, it seemed for the moment, the passionate men and actions and causes and the mighty struggles of the daylit world might carry on around him throughout the busy city and leave him unnoticed and undisturbed. Here suddenly his concerns over factions and loyalties, even simple livelihood, seemed less real, or at least less immediate, and he sensed a certain tentative peace in a world that was above faction and above violence, above even common notions of loyalty. Perhaps it was some spiritual breath that filled the air of the place that made him feel so, or merely the presence of dark, cold death on every side.

Behind him the great doors swung heavily open. The deep, echoing clatter returned him abruptly from his reverie, and instinctively he stepped across into the southern aisle, where the columns and the gloom hid him completely. Murmuring voices and the tread of boots approached him down the nave, and he recognized Lord Paget and Twinyho, his man.

"Halloo!" Paget called in a voice that boomed through the vaults and came back to startle him more loudly than he'd sent it out. He and Twinyho stood somewhat abashed before it.

"Hello," Arundell replied from just beside them. Both leapt half a meter into the air.

Lord Thomas greeted Charles warmly. They had seen little of one another in the six weeks of their sojourn in the city. He professed a similar ignorance of the cause of their summoning out, but seemed less disposed than Arundell had been to wait patiently for a sign.

Presently, however, the sign came. There was a rustle of silk from the direction of the choir in the chancel, and out of the shadows a priest stepped forward. Hitherto unnoticed, the man had been seated in the darkness, watching Arundell, probably, for some reason of his own, since he had entered the church. The man motioned them to follow with his black-robed arm and led the way out of the southern door into the cloisters beyond. In the dim sunlight, he could be seen; without the gentleman's jacket and hose, in the long soutane and blocked cap of the Jesuit, he was Robert Parsons.

Parsons led them silently along a corridor open in stone arches on the left and hard against the building's wall on the right, passing from time to time through dark tunnels where small overhanging outbuildings closed them in entirely. On the farther side of the deserted quadrangle ran a similar walk, enclosing a half-paved court open to the sky, with gray cobbled walks radiating from a great stone well in the center. Only gradually did Arundell become aware of obscure figures moving across the yard as well. As the little party passed into a complex of masonry at the corner of the square, the other men across the way were lost from view.

Suddenly, before the tombs of several abbots set into the wall, the parties met. In the shadows of the corridor, three men approached and stopped. Father Parsons took Lord Paget's arm and led them all into the somewhat better light of an archway, and there made introductions. The first man was a dark Welshman of middle size, dressed in the robes of a secular priest, who was called Father William Watts of Rouen. The second Charles had met not long before at Petworth, then Captain Pullen, the earl of Northumberland's retainer and once his deputy at the Castle of Tynemouth, now likewise dressed in priestly attire, and transformed by it, looking less the bluff, laconic soldier Charles had taken him for and more the austere servant of the Lord.

The third man, taller than either, stood behind them. He stood slightly bowed by some fifty years or more, but his thin frame still rose above Parsons by a full eight inches. His long, thin, delicately bearded face, with its large eyes, clear and steady, framed by a three-

cornered cap, a hood thrown back, and below it, a stiff robe unadorned but for a row of tiny buttons down the front, spoke immediately of enormous intelligence and commensurate self-respect. The man merely gazed, as if appraisingly, at Arundell and Lord Paget.

"This, gentlemen, is Dr. Allen." Parsons paused to let the effect sink in, which promptly it did.

William Allen, in exile for over twenty years, once a colleague of the great doctors of Louvain, more recently the founder of the English seminary of Douai then of Rheims, was the unofficial head of all the English Catholics. The idea of meeting so important a personage, of consuming his time even by an introduction, made Arundell flush with embarrassment. "He has come," the Jesuit continued in his broad Somersetshire English; "he has come from Rheims especially to welcome you to these parts."

Lord Thomas and Arundell stood at a loss to know whether they should shake the man's hand, or kiss it, stand or kneel, or simply flee back down the corridor. But Allen contrived to put them more at ease with a half-smile and a simple gesture of the hand.

Then Parsons came to the business, entering into somewhat convoluted expressions of sympathy for their present circumstances. These required a lengthy exposition of the deeper historical meanings of the heretics' persecution of the faithful, of which the difficulties of these men here and of their compatriots now in English prisons were only a small, albeit to them a painful part, but not unlike the trials of the ancient faithful under the pagan Romans. Arundell understood the Jesuit's analysis, in which the new men with their self-serving new creeds were shown to be intent upon erasing the old faith from the English realm, in order to clear their own paths to personal gain; he was not so certain that it was all so simply a matter of the Devil at work in the human theater. But he listened politely without demur, content to allow Parsons the rather streamlined interpretation doubtless necessary for his passionate continuance in the cause.

All this declined into a martyrs' roll of priests hanged and simple gentlemen turned out of their homes and forced to lie in common prisons, like poor Verstegan, lately incarcerated in the Bishop's Prison in Paris at the instance of the English ambassador in this town, but Parsons came round finally to Lord Paget and Arundell. He knew of their kinship with Sir Edward Stafford, and he hoped he might advise them in friendliness and mere love not to presume upon that thin bond for fair treatment from the government. They would never be reconciled to the English state, he said, no matter what fond hopes they may have harbored, and they must never allow themselves to be suborned by Stafford's words into any act of bad faith with their coreligionists here.

But this was only half the Jesuit's theme. He embarked now upon a too circumstantial explanation of the factional strife in the English College in Rome back in 1579, which had from that time and place grown and spread like a chancrous disease and now threatened the unity of the body of the English Catholics here on the continent and even at home, all of which disaffection and acrimony gave scandal to their enemies and undermined their hopes for aid from their friends. The causers and setters on of this division and broils, he said, were notorious for a sort of busy malcontents, envious ne'er-do-wells who thought more of wealth and worldly power than of any true service to God. Many of them were thought to be secretly in the employ of the English government, especially to divide the poor Catholics here and set them one against another, and to that purpose they played upon the weaknesses and infirmities of frightened men to turn them against their natu-

ral superiors. Amongst those whom he named as members of this factious crew were the bishop of Ross, Mr. Tresham and the earl of Westmoreland, the Lord Claude Hamilton of Scotland, Dr. Parry who was an open spy, the disreputable priests Gilbert Gifford in Rheims and Edward Gratley in Paris, but the chief and head of all, he said, was a certain dissolute Welsh madman by the name of Morgan. May the Lord deal with justice not with mercy in his case.

"But, your reverence," Lord Thomas cried, "this Morgan is my brother's greatest companion!"

Parsons held his eyes for a long moment. "That, your lordship, is why I have ridden specially from Rouen to warn your lordship from this infection, ere it be too late to withdraw yourself from other men's suspicions."

Lord Thomas shifted uneasily from one frozen foot to the other. Then Dr. Allen stepped solemnly forward.

"Hear me, friends," he said. His face was settled in a sort of wise energy. "The cause of God has never had more need of good men. It has never, perhaps, been more endangered by the malice of bad men. We look to you to join with the good, and to avoid the bad. In our lifetimes, with your help, we *shall* worship freely in England again."

Looking at the man's eyes as he spoke, for that moment Arundell had no doubt that he was right.

Parsons went on to say that he was soon to write personally in their behalf, using Dr. Allen's good name and credit, to the pope in Rome and the king of Spain, and that he would soon have welcome news for them in the form of some small living. He expressed confidence that they would not, before that relief should come, be driven by want to any desperate acts. Then Pullen led them away towards an exterior gate letting from the cloister of the Cordeliers into the street just near the city wall. Arundell glanced back and saw Allen and Parsons standing together looking after them.

In the street, Lord Thomas seemed awkward in Arundell's presence, and after a promise to meet soon, he hurried away with Twinyho at his heels.

Arundell walked slowly back towards his chambers. The Jesuit's speeches concerning Stafford were only what he had expected, raising again a genuine problem--in short, was Sir Edward to be regarded as his friend or enemy?--but adding nothing toward its resolution. Parsons's insistence about Morgan's crew, though, this being pressed to choose sides in a game he had not yet learned how to play, this unsettled him. It confirmed rumors he had lately met of animosities and smoldering fires within the papist community, but left him without a clue about what the issues were and what was at hazard. Charles thought carefully over all he knew of the men he'd met on each of the two sides, if "sides" were really the correct word, and if indeed there were only two--the Jesuit and his colleagues with their moral straightness and their singlemindedness and their religious devotion the intensity of which he found (he confessed it to himself) alarming; and on the other side, Morgan, whom he had distrusted from first meeting, and Charles Paget, whom he had never liked, and their less godliness but equal singlemindedness. And were there other factions yet unheard from? With so many zealots all under such formidable strain, how could there not be, now or someday, as many factions as permutations of a single creed, as many as opportunities for jealousy and disagreement?

There was no solution now to be had. He was as much in the dark, as lost among uncertain friends and veiled enemies, as he had been in Leicester's home court in the palaces of the queen. But here, at least, both sides, all sides, seemed prepared for the time to bid for his allegiance with the promise of pensions.

There was nothing for it now but to go on waiting, but waiting for what, really, Arundell could not have said.

XV. "MY LUTE, AWAKE!"

(1584)

(Narrative of Thomas Throgmorton)

"Instead therefore of the sword, which we cannot obtain,
we must fight with paper and pens, which cannot be
taken from us."

-- Sir Francis Englefield

The kindest time of all the time that I have spent here, sojourning like great Brutus among the Trojan fugitives of ancient Greece, but myself not so great and (I fear) never finally so victorious--the only kindly time, as now I remember me, was in the spring of 1584. It was, to be sure, a precarious time and a time of doubt and fear, but it is not without reason that now I think upon it as our best time.

There may be many causes, good and bad, why the young gentlemen of our nation do withdraw themselves to this side the sea. Some are moved by a youthful and vain tickling humor to be wandering abroad in strange and foreign countries; others are in hope here to grow to great preferment, advancement, employment, and wealth; others pursue matter of conscience, seeming to have sure confidence that here they may live with more liberty and ease of mind than within that realm of England they enjoy. Of these first two I cannot say much good, for here our greatest preferment is like to be a bare pension, which in the Spanish service we call *libranca*, that is our greatest wealth, which were nothing but the paper given us, and from time to time, after long sitting before doors and padding after the paymasters of the army, a small note of promise to pay which we may perhaps redeem in the city at a murderous discount. And for employment, why that is like to be in the armies, to be shot through and through with English arrows, or if not that, then as a spy or something worse, and like dogs trained to a great lord's hand, glad to snarl and bite where we are commanded to and set on. And all, our soldiers, our spies, made sport of oftentimes and spat upon by the men of other nations, who reckon us as traitors and malcontents, like dogs to be kicked and despised by uncharitable men.

But some men come to us in conscience, in hope of free worship, which otherwise in England at this day they cannot have, and here I will say nothing. For the wisdom and reason of this course lies in the breast of the man, or I may say of the woman too, who chooses it, and some would come with our Lord to the Calvary Hill for the same cause. Some are scholars and may come to enroll in the priesthood, even mere youths who cannot learn Catholicly at home, and come to us very young, and many wish only in time to travel home again for the solace of them that remain, and perhaps to gain a martyr's crown. These blessed youths I am in awe of, as perhaps I would be fascinated to observe a moth approach the flame, albeit a holy flame.

There is, too, a fourth category of those amongst us here, after those who come foolishly for adventure's sake and those who come to make their fortunes, and those who come for faith, which is those who less come to this side than flee the other. These men truly do I pity, for no choice was theirs; it is as if they had awakened one morning to find the continents revolved beneath them, arising from their beds in a strange, friendless land and forced now to walk abroad in the same, while their hearts are still at home.

I am, I suppose, rather of all four than of any one. When my poor father died, harried into his grave by the infamous earl of Leicester, whose encroachments in the city and country of Chester my father had set himself vainly to combat, then it was plain and evident that no good would come to me in those parts. Not only would his lordship ever have me in his books, but also, for that we were known recusants at that time, and because of the charges frivolously brought upon my father by Leicester's friends in the courts, I would everywhere be observed in all my attempts; and our other woes still prosecuted upon us, my father's lands sold to repay great sums of speculation, as is said, that never he did see. Well, I chose this way hitherward, for adventure, perhaps, being but a young man, and employment; chiefly for conscience I like to think; and somewhat also for fleeing the implacable earl, who like an avenging god or alastor pursues his adversaries fully to the third generation.

My brothers, though, would not take flight with me, Francis, who remained behind for the queen of Scots her sake, and our little George, who lay in prison too, uncharged in any matter of the law, until a half year later, in July, when he was set out of the postern gate and bid to walk his ways.

It is too too plain what trials we suffer daily. I bid you prevent me from starting now, or I shall weep till Sunday. But the worst is, for all our cold reception and tardy hospitality in these towns here, the worst is our treacheries among ourselves. In the spring of '84, and this I remember gladly, these factions were not yet come in amongst us, or leastwise were they not come in to harry us like old Cloots and make us wish us never born. Mr. Arundell had but newly come over with my Lord Paget, fleeing (like me) the unappeasable wrath of my lord of Leicester. It was my brother's trouble which had sent them headlong flying, but more than that I never learned of him, for he was loath to speak upon that theme.

The Lord Paget, who at their coming was his very friend, grew somewhat apart from us. Though all of us made a party still for the good of our great lady the queen of Scots, yet was there some coldness and strangeness between Mr. Morgan and Mr. Paget and some of theirs on the one side, and Mr. Fitzherbert and Mr. Foljambe and others on the other, who look to Dr. Allen for the lead and direction in matters of religion. The Lord Paget, when he joined us, was his amiable good self, but he was not our frequent crony to that extent I think Mr. Arundell would have wished for.

For most of that spring, excepting brief excursions elsewhere for a need, I dwelt in Mr. Fitzherbert's chambers near the street we englished to St. Andrew's, as also did Mr. Arundell and Mr. Fitzherbert, and also Mr. Tresham sometimes, whose company in the new regiment, since yet it existed chartaceously at that time and not in the field, could spare him.

Upon a day, when a cold rain kept us in, Mr. Arundell recounted for us gathered there some new jests of the earl of Leicester which lately he had heard at my lord ambassador's table. Twice or thrice in that February he had been to dine with Stafford, the English lieger here, who holds some bond of kinship with him, and ever there the talk was wont to turn to Leicester, for that Sir Edward's wife, an old rejected paramour of the earl's, did hate the earl as the Romans hated Tarquin. Now, there was scarce a man of us who did not lay half or more of his private woes at his lordship's door, to say nothing of our country's present misery, and we fed upon such tales as the Israelites fed upon manna, and thrived thereon, for there was little else to nourish us withal except that bitter food. Mr. Verstegan was with us, too, lately got free of the Bishop's Prison by the intercession of his eminence the nuncio of the pope, and when we had laughed a while to Leicester's derogation, he brought forth his

book of pictures of the English cruelties, which Arundell took and turned the pages over as one deep in thought, and paced up and down the chamber, and then said here was our way to make our pens into swords if only we would trouble ourselves a little. For however we gloried and triumphed now upon the earl's facinorous acts, yet was he little hurt thereby, for we were only a few impotent men afar off, muttering in our sulks.

For, quod Mr. Arundell, a proper showing of the earl in all his colors, a painting so to the life as must be of truth undoubted, will bring the earl to a public shame and give scandal to his cause. Then will his Puritan fautors see him as he is, and go out from him, and likewise will the captains and soldiers, when they discern his cowardice, turn to other generals, and it may be even the queen, ashamed to hear her lovely favorite so generally cried out upon, will cast him out.

And so on that day we amused ourselves in imagining what each of us would have in such a book, and then, though it was put aside amongst other doings of the time, ever we turned again to take it up, chiefly Mr. Fitzherbert and myself, and sometimes Mr. Tresham, Mr. Arundell making notations of all things that passed our lips, discarding some of them as frivolous, or too bold, or too nearly touching the queen imputatively perhaps; and also my Lord Paget sometimes, and even, mark you, my lord ambassador, who likewise added many a merry jest of his recollection to our store.

Whether or no any such book or libel were ever written, we passed many a friendly evening in plotting tricks and devices for its writing, and often laughed to late hours at outlandish inventions of some wag or Sir Pasquino among us. Especially we were concerned also for the queen of Scots, and my Lord Paget brought a little treatise of the bishop of Ross, first made many years ago but newly in part brought forth again in Rouen, which showed by many learned arguments how her highness were the true and legal heir to the throne after her majesty that now is. This Mr. Arundell promised to read over and find what profit we might take of it. And each of us singly had his private grudges against the Great Bear Leicester, myself for my father's unhappy cause, of course, the Lord Paget for the harassment of one Robinson his friend in Staffordshire, and for Mr. Arden and Mr. Greville and Mr. Gifford, and so on. Innumerable charges we collected, as it were the devil's roll call of the sins of all humanity, but all committed by this one man, or rather monster, and the problem were not the want of matter but having too much of it. Even the ambassador's wife had infamous tales to tell, which Mr. Arundell returned with to our ears, which (forgive me) made me blush to hear them. Since all of hers made much of other beautiful ladies of the court, we forgave ourselves for doubting perhaps a one or two of them.

This were otherwise a slow and heavy time for all of us. I awaited with both fear and settled resignation the trial of my poor brother, who though slenderly charged withal, yet was much made of and bruted for the greatest traitor ever discovered, by providence and God's love of princes, since Captain Catiline in ancient Rome. The Great Bear did ever lust bloodily for the life of our Scottish mistress, which only the natural mercy of her majesty's sisterly feeling did protect from his claws that rend and tear; and here, Mr. Secretary made a mountain of a mole's hill that her majesty might in terror and jealousy forsake her care and hand that captive sainted lady to her persecutors gaping for her dear blood. For as long as Christian Queen Mary did live in England, never in that time should Leicester and Walsingham count themselves as safe, because if ever the crown should come to shuffling (and with Elizabeth's death it will, as one day sure she will come to it, as all mortals do), and our mistress come to throne, on the next day come these two to the block. And lest that time

should ever happen, by fair or foul means and with the effusion of innocent blood, they will find plots in Mary's name, plotters in Mary's cause, all to put the now queen in terror of her natural cousin and loving heir. My poor foolish noddie Francis, ill hap, wandered into the wrong house in the night season, and I had no hope he'd scape out of it again.

Also in April, as I awaited news of Francis, and we all watched the fate of my lord of Northumberland and Mr. Shelley and my Lord Harry Howard, also taken in those broils, another sufferer in the same cause came to us in Paris. He was Don Bernardino de Mendoza, quondam lieger in London for the king of Spain, whom Walsingham sent tramping for his supposed foreknowledge of all my brother's silly schemes. He came to us from the prince of Parma's camp, where first upon quitting England he had repaired, and roosted with Señor Tassis, King Philip's man in this town at that time. Don Bernardino travelled on then into Spain, and the rumor ran wide he was gone to arrange for the great armada awaited so long by some, but it did not fall out so.

Mr. Arundell in this time spent more than a few evenings with Sir Edward Stafford, as already I have said before, only in causes of old friendship, as I think, though some few murmured darkly otherwise, and Mr. Morgan came once to our chambers with his little company of friends to tell him he did cause concern among the godly of this land, lest he be doubted of too great sympathy with the heretic queen's own man. But at the same time, Mr. Ambassador had to bid him stay away, too, for he had comminatory messages from the Secretary plainly forbidding him Mr. Arundell's company. What a passion old Charles flew into then. For no one could tell by what unsavory means Mr. Secretary had learned of his resort thither, and it was to be feared that spies were abroad.

This also gave Mr. Arundell finally to understand that there was no going home for him, which had contrary effects upon him, as I remarked him. For first, do you see, he moaned and hummed lugubrious lutesongs and stared long out at muddy streets as if the hearths of home were all his joy. Until that time, it may be, though the truth was as plain to me as that cardinals wear red hats, he hoped still for some atonement again by Mr. Ambassador's good intercession. But this were a slender hope, for say the law whatsoever it will say, where Leicester hates there shall never be repose, and now, by Mr. Secretary's missives to Sir Edward, that chimerical hope lay slain at last.

But also he was I think relieved, if only for that now he knew certainly, and need not listen at the door for the chance of a passport brought him. And after learning of Mr. Secretary's settled hatred of his name and face, with or without the process of the law, he seemed relieved as well as wretched, in such a kind of contrariness as I have not seen save in lyrical songs of lovers. So that from his sometimes choler and impatience, he passed now by degrees to a certain calmness, I had almost said a certain peace, though that would be scarce believable of any man in our condition (except a half-addled seminarian)--but at least a less moony agitation; and henceforth he began to look around him at this new city, and began to press upon Morgan and my lord the old archbishop of Glasgow for some moneys owed him of old time, whereupon to live. Moreover, in that vein, he willed Dr. Parry, by means of special bearers into England, to have his servant to prepare his accounts for secret sending over, and I think he looked for the servant, too, to come if he could.

Once there came to us one Captain du Bourg, an ill-favored military gentleman, sent from the duke of Anjou since his unceremonious expelling out of the Low Countries, who lay now in a strange indisposition at his house at Château Thierry. Monsieur the duke would

have had Mr. Arundell to come to him there, for old fellowship's sake, but he speaking coldly to the captain said that mayhap the good fellowship of Monsieur's great friend the earl of Leicester would be more grateful unto him at this time. To which the captain replied that oh, that lesson had well been taken out, that Monsieur had found the earl to play not honestly with him in the Low Countries, poisoning his reception there by the prince of Orange, and now, after these late last reverses of his, which have proved the effect of Leicester's perfidy, Monsieur has learned to sing another air, and who his true friends are. But Arundell would never be moved, and offered press of business as preventing him, saying on another day he would ride to see the duke. Not long afterward, in early June or so we learned of Monsieur dead of some diseases, scarce thirty years old, but death is everywhere. Indeed, in the next month, was the prince of Orange too murdered at his house in Delft, which gave the Protestants in those countries somewhat to muse upon. Also then, in July, my brother Francis returned to the celestial home whence we all come and, I pray, must return. So if not disease, then assassin, and if not that, then the gallows. "Since death shall dure till all the world be waste, What meaneth man to dread death then so sore?"

Upon a time in May, then, when I had returned from some days and nights in Rouen, where affairs had bid me journey, I discovered Mr. Arundell sitting still in his nightclothes, though it had gone three of the clock, before our little table. Beneath his hand lay a pile of papers, scraps of every size and shape, all scrawled upon in his hasty, scratching hand. He glared at me with a jesting fierceness, as who should say, "I have here somewhat to make you shudder."

"Oh Lord," I cried then, "you have written our book! Pray let me look."

"Step back," he shouted. "Never lay your unclean hands upon it. The oracular leaves are sacred to the god of Leicester! I replace them in the Temple Jars."

And so saying, he folded up the doors of the desk and enclosed the writings within.

"Take time while time is, Tom," he said then. "Come wi' me now while I walk by the river, in the dying light of this excellent day, and let anticipation grow."

So we passed then out of doors, and circumambulating the houses of the Augustinian friars, issued out upon the embankment along the river Seine, where in the warmth of the waning sun we strolled upon the green and commented wryly upon fishermen and housewives. We passed some goodly time in this wise, speaking little, for Mr. Arundell seemed depleted and strangely in a dump, walking very slowly to and fro along the bank. And then of a sudden he roused himself and proposed a supper at the Inn of Alemains. And there we dined, at his expense, be it remembered gratefully, following which we returned to our chambers and found Mr. Fitzherbert and my Lord Thomas Paget (whom he had summoned) awaiting us.

"My dear boy," cried his lordship at once, making to Mr. Arundell a deep congee. "Oh the brain incorruptible! Is this the night we have long expected?"

"This is that very night," replied my friend, smirking.

"Oh applause. Call for wine!"

There is a kind of barbarian people told of by the ancient authors, as by Herodotus, whose use is before deliberation in their councils to apply themselves to drink, whereby in short time they render themselves incapable of any guile or double-meaning, and so conclude

their business in more honesty. This like some other pagan customs, though not all, has much of wisdom in it. And thus with my companions did I bring my stool up to table, with wine before us, and we proceeded to remove our double-meanings. Then Mr. Arundell brought out the script and dropped it before us on the board, set before him his ink and quill, and said, "Let us now begin."

Some sheets, he said, remained unfinished, others called for mending, and now he proposed we must set our heads together and make our final determinations, adding what we would, excising what disliked us, and polishing upon all. The whole was in a manner of a conference or conversation, had not long since among three interlocutors, to wit: a young scholar of Cambridge and a worthy gentleman of the town, both Protestants, and to make a third, an ancient gentleman of the law, who was a moderate papist, but nothing inclined to evil willing towards any person. To this advantage (*quod* Mr. Arundell), that here you may see the papist will seem least contentious, least suspect of prejudice, and must in his natural good will to all men be then convinced by plain evidence, forced upon him by these Protestants, of the earl of Leicester's evil preparations for the crown.

"All good, Charles," said Tom Fitzherbert then. "But with these Protestant conversants and this hollow papist---"

"Not hollow, Tom, nay, say not hollow, rather say temperate, or moderate."

"Well, moderate; what will our worthy Jesuits say when they overread our little book? Who here will defend the pope? Who here will speak for the plight of Catholics? Who will cry out upon the cruelties of Protestants against our friends?"

"A timely thought, but needless worry," said Mr. Arundell. "For the Jesuits, we must let them write their own books, which daily we see they never fail to do. The pope will not go undefended. For us, we cry out upon no Protestants for these cruelties; rather we lay them at the door of Robin of Leicester and his atheistical followers--for, let me read my hasty words," he said, turning over some leaves, "the earl, 'being himself of no religion, feedeth notwithstanding upon our differences in religion, to the fattening of himself and the ruin of the realm.'"

"Oh well put!" said Lord Thomas.

"Yes, if it does not say the whole truth of these afflictions, yet it says enough truth. I put it out of doubt," he said, "that there are now Protestants innumerable in England who would gladly live in all harmony with their Catholic neighbors, if they might do so without suspicion of this man's friends and spies. Well, we must demonstrate to the satisfaction of all good and friendly men whence come these outcries and uproarings, and then let us all join to put aside these fishers in stirred waters and live together as Englishmen only, whatsoever sect or denomination we may privately in our bosoms cling to."

Mr. Fitzherbert objected still, however, saying that however much he stood in sympathy with such goodfellowlike sentiments, yet he saw there were many points of doctrine still at lively issue between us and the heretics of all their factions, and he feared that this strategy of men living together as if all were of no religion at all would be found to err by glossing over those points in which instruction were most necessary for those in present error. Mr. Arundell agreed thereto, but said that for the time he could be content to let the Protestants wander eternally in Cimmerian night, so they would desist from depriving us of life and living; and for his part it were worth the simplification of causes of these troublous times,

if we might help to bring all good men to agreement on the worst cause, which is Leicester and his ambitious favorers, which if removed, time and good intentions may cure the residue. And so this strategy was approved by all, and in this little book we pretended all to be well-meaning Protestants.

And now Mr. Arundell commenced to read over the pages of this conference, which pleased us all heartily, only noting the change of a word here and the adding of a tiny morsel there. Here we heard introduced as the causer of the outcries of treason against those who would never offend, the earl of Leicester and his faction, for the reason that they themselves sought absolute rule and the compass of the crown, and meant to achieve the same by exacerbating these differences to desperation and setting one part against another to the weakening of the whole realm.

Then to the more ample disqualification of the earl in his own person, Mr. Arundell proceeded to the indictment of his crimes, recounting here, in the guise of this dialogue, all of the stories which long had passed current among us, both here in this city and for many years together in our homeland. Here, in all detail and quoted testimony of many worthies, were his murders, his excesses of bestiality and venality, his oppressive rapine and depredations upon infinite good families--O, succession of infamies.

It were tedious in me now to recite all the merry and some tragic things that Mr. Arundell read out to us of his own inditing, both on this night by candles set among us and again on the morrow and the next night, and more tedious to mention the bits which we thought good to add from time to time. Which were a work of supererogation, for the book now printed is still to be had, and suffices. From leaf to crowded leaf we progressed from Leicester's crimes against particular men and in particular times and places to the anatomy of my lord's manipulation of the court, thence to the great danger to all men by his unbridled appetite for a crown, and finally, the exposition (namely with some borrowings from the bishop of Ross his little treatise) of the present state of the succession after her majesty that now is--how the only claim in justice to be allowed was of the queen of Scots, who only stood between our realm's happiness and this man's brutal lust of power. It was, in brief, a most brilliant book, so damning of his lordship's flagitious enormities and gross influence, so constructive of our lady's present safety and future hopes, as when at last Mr. Arundell threw aside his quill we stared in admiration.

"Gentlemen," said my Lord Paget. "Hats off, gentlemen." And with that his lordship raised his glass and proposed a toast to all of us, but especially to our English Cicero, who with a stroke of his golden pen had justified our sufferings at Leicester's hand and struck another great blow for our return in triumph.

"Would it were so," Mr. Arundell replied, "but it is, Tom, only a book after all. It is but a book."

"Oh, oh, but such a book. Such a book, Charles," Lord Paget said, and we all chimed in our sympathy with that judgment.

Now we pressed him to learn how he had come to writing it, and in so short time. To which he explained that ourselves being all elsewhere, and the weather coldly wet, he had got himself in the dumps again and considered he was at the end of his long trials, forgotten here in this strange land far from home. And he had thought then in his mind of all the tasks undone, words unsaid, friends unrepaid, enemies still thriving, even girls unknissed; and had resolved if not to kiss the girls, at least before he passed from this great stage, hur-

ried from the boards by this action which was not his, by the great actors who addressed one another over his head, scarcely even seeing him below, to speak one line at least before retiring.

"And then," he told us, "I brought together ink and pens and knife and dust and paper and all, and sat me here with our notes and all before me, and then sang out, with old Wyatt:

My lute, awake! Perform the last
Labor that thou and I shall waste,
And end what I have now begun;
And when this song is sung and past,
My lute, be still, for I have done.

And in four days' time I had done indeed."

"Oh, but you are not done yet, Charles, not by a far cry," we cried out to him.

"No, not done yet," he answered. "Now we must find a printer."



There was plague in Paris in that summer. By day and, more terribly, by night, lantern-lit bellringers went their sorrowful rounds, and blue-clad Michael's Men appeared round corners, bearing their mortal burdens from houses marked with the red cross, bound for the cemeteries already swelled with new inhabitants. This early in the summer season--I speak of late in May, perhaps--the toll was not yet so high, yet too high for so early in the season, which promised to be long and very torrid. "We are but dust, and die we must," as the poet says.

The task we set ourselves to was the printing of our book. Mr. Morgan would be of no help, because he had not had the writing of it himself; the queen of Scots' good moneys were not for rogue enterprises, he said, and without he should have the revising of it, he would hear no more word about it. And so perforce we took horse and came to Rouen, where the Jesuit Parsons perused the thing and, albeit something squeamish about our Protestant-seeming interlocutors, agreed to have it printed on a press of his own in that city, then to be transported into England by his means. And so was our little book published, titled thus, *The Copy of a Letter Written by a Master of Arts of Cambridge to his Friend in London*, but very soon called "the book of Leicester's life" or "Leicester's Commonwealth." And those factious men who still cry out upon Mr. Charles Arundell for his coldness towards Morgan and some more sympathy with the Jesuits, may chew upon this cause, among other, if it should come to their ears.

But one more thing I would fain tell you of, that happened in our road toward Rouen. We had ridden down beneath the trees in a shadowed length of hillside and reached an open meadow dropping gently to the stream below, when Mr. Arundell swore an oath and drew up sharply. We followed his eyes to the hilltop whence we had come. There, in the full light of the sun, standing out in great vividness from the shadow all about, sat a party of travelers on horseback. It was a gentleman or lord, as he seemed from his brilliant habit shining in the sunlight, with two or three companions about him and a little troop of servingmen hard by, and appeared to be gazing down into the city, though it may be the man was watching us instead. He wore a doublet of astonishing blueness, with a panache of white feathers falling all about his high cap, and his trappings and sword hilts and the badge of

his hat gleamed like mirrorglasses in the light. For some moments this gentleman and his band sat immobile far above us; then they wheeled abruptly and passed beyond the brow of the hill. Mr. Arundell, however, stared after them at the place where they had stood, somewhat abashed by the sight, seemingly. But he only shook himself as if to dispel some eerie charm put on him, and we resumed our way.

Later, however, he explicated for us this strange mood of his. Of a sudden, he said, he had been taken by the fancy that this brilliant rider, this shining courtier upon the height, had been the earl of Leicester's very self, for he had sat just as Charles had seen him once before, plump upon a hilltop surveying some scene below, observing all things before him silently, with his troop of friends about him, then wheeled off to other business and left Charles with others in the shadows beneath him, knowing not even whether the earl had been remarking them especially, or had merely seen them as a part of the composition of the scene, or had even deigned to notice them at all; but that he had sat on high like the Almighty surveying his creation, perhaps musing with himself which of his creatures he had pride in and which he regretted having given being to, and found unnecessary.

"For that is my remembrance of the earl," quoth Arundell then. "Daily at times I have passed him in the chambers of the queen's palace. Often I have stood next him as we danced with some gay ladies at a ball, or have passed him on the river or in the road from court. But always my remembrance of him is of this sitting ahorse upon a height, all in a great halo of light, in a wardrobe that at auction would relieve my want for a lifetime. Ha, ha," he said--

"And always myself below, gazing upward as at a celestial throne, ha, ha."

XVI. THE INTELLIGENCER

(1585)

"Whose conscience is cumbered and not clean,
Of another man's deeds the worse will he deem."

-- Proverb

Because the day had come on finer than any in the year, Arundell bid the host remove his chair to the terrace, where, cup in hand, he leant back and propped his boots upon the wall before him. On the other side of the way, the trees of the Vincennes Wood showed the first foliage of the new season, the palest sprinkling of greenness about the black and brown stocks of dead winter. The year was slow in changing, for it was March; but it had been a hard year.

During the most inclement part of it, in January of 1585, and through much of February, normal business had come nearly to a halt. The autumnal chill, welcomed when it had first crept in upon the languishing city of the dog days, bringing the cure that helpless men despaired of to the murderous summer's plague, had then progressed from friend to foe. For it had worsened without respite, as early the poor and eventually even the rich went destitute of fuel to heat their rooms, as the impassable roads prevented revictualling from the south, and riots interrupted market days when the quantity of food appearing in the stalls was found to be too little by half. The reports from the prince of Parma's camp, where the army lay in siege of Antwerp, told of soldiers dying a hundredfold more numerous of cold and want than ever by enemy pike or gun in the hottest skirmish of the former season.

Arundell squirmed more deeply into his cloak and contemplated this first reprieve from the sharper chill. It had not been the sort of winter that dampens one's spirits and vexes one with staying in at doors, but rather the sort one feels grimly fortunate to have survived. He had survived it, and looked soon perhaps to live less in want than heretofore. For if matters fell out as it began to look they would, by the onset of the next winter he might enjoy a few coins, at least, to rub together to bring him warmth.

He stared vacantly at the boughs across the road.

Winter is worn, that was the flowers' bale.
And thus I see among these pleasant things,
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.

Lord Harry's dad again. A couplet or twain for every mood. Arundell brooded silently. What a course had he set for himself now, this too blithely sailing under crowded canvas among unknown skerries and shoals, bearing out with neither chart nor compass into strange oriental seas; to find what blank shores, with the godless anthropophagous Canibales, savage beasts peering from the verge upon the strand, and scritchling birds of death only awaiting one's wrack of ship--what an unthought course this was.

Arundell fetched up a laugh despite himself. Beggar this farrago of nautical metaphors. In truth, he had set no course, and he flattered himself in this pose upon the high deck, persisting in despite of all the timorous wise to brave the dark sea and find the Terram Novam. In truth, he was merely adrift, still adrift these fifteen months, and merely found himself now answering a new current fortuitously come his way.

The wind was lightening, and as it did the air felt warmer, the sun having risen now well above the trees. Intruding upon his thoughts came the sound of horses approaching along the road. Arundell turned to the west, toward Paris, and out of the wood came three riders making their dilatory way along. He called within to have his horse brought round and ascended to the level of the highway.

Hans Oberholtzer came up in the lead, holding his own reins in one hand and his master's in the other. Mendoza himself, aware of the altering pace, mumbled something in the Spaniard's tongue, to which replied the third man, Sir Herman Carteleger, a fellow of indeterminate nationality. Back along the road, where it wound into the wood, a fourth rider drew up and sat facing backwards into the eastern suburbs.

Don Bernardino squinted up at the inn that rose above him, then sat waiting while Arundell approached near enough for his failing eyes to make him out. Charles doffed his cap.

"Good morning, my lord Ambassador."

"Good morning, my friend. You are ready?"

The innboy came round and coaxed Arundell's horse up into the road. He mounted, and the ambassador's secretaries led the way onward, slowly, into the trees again on the eastern edge of the clearing. Behind them, the rearwatcher resumed his even pace, with frequent glances back towards the city.

The party crept on in a southeasterly curve through the forest until they reached the crest of the valley of the Marne. Below them, running northeastward to Meaux, a well-travelled route wove its way over dun hills into the distance. To the south the lazy river could be seen sweeping back round in a wide arc before it bolted westward to join the Seine. Just across the stream lay the village and château of Joinville. They continued a short way along the crest, and then rode down to the bridge below.

As they descended the open slope, the rear rider caught them up and settled down to their pace. Beside the bridge stood a tiny timbered house, scarcely more than a single room within, with three loops spread across the face fronting the ridge above, and with a few truncated sheds behind it along the riverbank. A thin fume of smoke rose from the roof. Two crudely-built turnpikes hung across the ways, one at the head of the bridge, the other intersecting the southern road to Brie.

Mendoza's party approached the meeting of the roads and came to a stop. Within a few seconds a long musket poked from one of the loopholes and trained itself rather loosely upon them. Then someone shouted for them to halt.

A hatless trooper ran out of the house and called for one to draw near him, which promptly Herr Oberholtzer did. The Fleming drew from his doublet a sheaf of papers and extended them for the guardsman's perusal, after which the man waved them forward, returned the papers, and crossed the road to loosen the pike-noose.

The huge trunk, weighted on the other end, rose silently into the sky. Arundell surveyed the man closely as they approached; he wore the scabbard of the cavalryman, and the leather holster across his chest, but both were empty, and his jacket hung open to his girdle. To his beard clung bits of cheese, as the man stood gazing impatiently down the river. As they passed the house, Arundell saw another guardsman reclining on a pallet within; near the loophole, the musket was held by a giant of a woman clad only in her chemise, who met

Arundell's eyes silently until he had progressed beyond the door. The trooper cursed as he hauled the pike down behind them. So much for the king's discipline.

The timber bridge ran steeply up to a height of three meters above the brown water, and continued level upon pilings the entire way across first the narrow channel, then a lightly wooded island, and then the main stream. From that vantage Arundell could see a company of troopers riding to meet them at the farther bank. Both groups reached the bridge's end; as before, Herr Oberholtzer descended and presented another fold of papers. The leading horseman scrutinized them closely, his saber balanced across his pommel as he held the documents close to his eyes. Satisfied at length, he returned them to the secretary. Resheathing his sword smartly, he swung about and led the way at a handsome trot towards the château, which was already visible through the trees.

Mendoza paid no attention to the trooper's gesture and made his own leisurely pace down from the bridge and along the road. In a few moments, the military men, now some distance ahead, wheeled round and came back. The leader inquired with forced courtesy whether anything were wrong. The ambassador bestowed a smile upon him, with a squint, and moved slowly past. The soldiers swore murmured oaths and looked at Arundell, who shrugged, and then they split off to encircle the party and accompany it at its own speed.

The road brought them round from the side of the château of Joinville, which had a relatively large Renaissance front, with rows of long, southern windows, appended to the older structures, the squat block of the donjon and the great hall, both of which dated from before the time of the thirteenth century seneschals of Champagne who had made the place their principal residence. The whole assemblage of new and old was now the seat of the family of Guise, less comfortable than its commodious house at Eu on the coast, less formidable in defense than its great fortress at Châlons; but it was closer to the capital than either, yet not so conspicuously under the royal eye as was the Hôtel de Guise in the northern quarter of the city.

In this ambiguous time, neither war nor peace, the fortification of Châlons was not quite necessary, the proximity of the town house not quite wise. In December the great Catholic nobles of the faction of Guise had gathered here and struck a pact, which included the Spanish interest through the representation of Juan Baptiste de Tassis. The aim of this "Holy League," as it was called, was to coerce the French crown into a religious war of extermination against the Huguenots of France. Philip II contributed Spanish money to the cause, gaining in return the alliance of this powerful faction in a contiguous kingdom and the promise of Guisard aid against his own Protestants in the Netherlands. Both parties profited equally by their coalition against the Protestant English, who were known to be helping underhandedly, by gold, stores, and volunteers, their coreligionists the rebels in both France and the Spanish Netherlands.

Only a few days earlier, on the 9th of March 1585, the French king Henri III, unaware of Spanish involvement in the League and probably unaware of the strength of the radical Catholics' contempt for his temporizing ways, had moved to test the League by promulgating an edict that solemnly prohibited the formation of armed bands that were not his own. No one, not even the king himself, expected either Catholics or Huguenots to disarm; rather the edict was taken as a sign of his refusal to bow to the League's demands. A prompt response was therefore in order, lest the king and his mother draw confidence from the irresolution of their more zealous subjects. For that purpose, Mendoza, who had super-

seded Tassis as ambassador to this realm, arrived now at the château to confer upon the matter with the representatives of the League.

The owners of the house, when the ambassador's party had ascended the long Italian staircase and been shown in, were unready to greet them. The visitors were brought to a wide glassed terrace to take refreshment while they waited. In due course, a servant appeared to announce at least one host, who swept in a second later: Charles, the duke of Mayenne, Guise's brother. A disappointingly short, thick man, he had heavy-lidded eyes, one strangely wider than the other, thick curly dark hair, and abbreviated beard and moustache covering a slightly puffy face. Altogether he seemed rather a stolid merchant or financier than one of the greatest noblemen of the realm, but his was a comfortable face that partly put one at one's ease.

Far unlike the great duke's face, when he came in. Henri, the head of the crusading house of Guise, the eldest son of Francis "the Scarred" and himself the firebrand of the Catholic right wing, looked his part in every feature. His great wide forehead, surmounted by a full head of dark hair swept straight back all round, tapered to a long, determined nose and chin; his sleek jawlines and sharp beard accentuated the illusion of a sword or mattockblade for a face. His moustache he wore brushed up across his cheeks, which though meant for a rakish effect rather seemed diabolical, and his eyes, swiftly darting, looked constantly to be searching out the hidden meanings. His most distinguishing feature was his small, pursed mouth, which was arrogant and amused at the same time. The lower lip bore a sharp, vertical duelling scar. His clothes, even to the particularly high ruff, were properly aristocratic in cut and ornamentation, but gave anyhow a military air.

With the duke of Guise came Mayneville, whom Charles had come to know slightly in the few months past. About the same age as the duke himself, only about thirty-five, he was nonetheless a trusted diplomatist for the interests of Lorraine and Guise, and at the same time, miraculously, a likable fellow. As the duke made solemn greetings round the room, Mayneville waved cordially to Arundell from behind his back. Then the duke turned to Arundell and spoke in French: "My dear Mr. Arundell, perhaps you will find the library suitable for your brief attendance."

Arundell bowed and followed Mayneville out of the solarium and across the broad hall. Behind him the dukes of Guise and Mayenne, Mendoza and his two secretaries, came out also and mounted the central stairs towards the study above. Two servants scurried after them.

When Mayneville had withdrawn, Arundell was left alone in the room the duke had called the reading room, by which he had thought a family library had been meant. The opportunity to survey the accumulated books of a great princely family had struck him as an amiable recompense for his time. What he discovered was rather a chapel than a library, for in a small dark room dominated by a raised altar and, above it, an art-window that portrayed a gothic, bloody Passion, he saw but a row or two of pious books along each wall, fastened to their places by chains just long enough to permit the reader to sit in straight benches nearby while conning them. On the one side were works chiefly homiletic, both ancient and modern, but all very strictly orthodox, arranged by the scriptural books they had as texts. Along the other wall lay the scriptures themselves, with a collection of brevaries and missals. Arundell settled onto the hard bench and sighed.

In due course, he was summoned above to the others. In a capacious study well placed so as to overlook the stair and road below, he found the other gentlemen sitting on chairs strewn all about the room. Along with those he had met below, there sat Fr. Claude Matthieu, "the duke's Jesuit," the Provincial of Paris, and several noblemen unfamiliar to him. Arundell bowed courteously all round and especially to the duke.

Guise half-rose from beside a great table and inquired whether Charles had been much put out by the long tarrying. He replied that he had found his time in the duke's splendid room most rewarding. He said he felt curiously renewed. The duke seemed enormously pleased by this.

A chair was brought up, and Arundell sat just to the duke's side, with Mayenne by his other arm and the Spanish ambassador directly across. Guise remarked that before he opened his business he wished to learn what Arundell knew of the miscreant Parry, his countryman. Charles answered with the bare details of what had newly been told him, that Dr. Parry--a Welshman and therefore not his countryman--had been tried in England for a conspiracy to assassinate the queen of that realm, and that, there having been only one witness against him (the law required two), the government had introduced his own confession, which he had refused to acknowledge. And, of course, that he had been condemned.

"Well," said the duke, "we have learned this morning that the villain has been executed."

Arundell made no reaction.

"But here is what I wish to know. By whom was it said that he was set on?"

Arundell blinked. "As I hear, my lord, by some great persons."

"But by whom, do you see? That is what I wish you to tell me. My friends tell me that the wretch in his confession named myself to be his suborner and the original of this devilish device--that through your people here in Paris I have myself been the means to send him to his work. Is so much true, as I have heard? If not your friends, then the ambassador of England must have heard somewhat on that head."

"My lord," said Arundell, carefully seeking the proper words in French, "that false lie have I met with once or twice indeed, but only from those this side the sea. This I know of a certainty, that was sent to the lieger here from Walsingham, which was that his indictment alleged him to have come from his holiness the pope himself, and that a commission was found upon him subscribed by the papal secretary Cardinal Como in his holiness his name, granting him an indulgence for a meritorious deed."

Mayenne spoke up to ask whether the duke of Guise were named at all in that indictment, and Arundell assured him that, to his knowledge, he was not. The duke inquired then what really lay behind it all. Charles asked them all to pardon him, for he had no knowledge beyond that much spoken already.

"Well, then good," returned Guise --"but surely Mr. Stafford must have had some conjecture in the thing. Did he not speak something to you in this cause?"

Arundell checked for just a second, and then said, "Yes, my lord, but speculations only, which was the cause I did not speak of it at once. Sir Edward believes that the man was in my Lord Burghley's confidence, whose commandment was to sound out others for their disaffection and learn their true intents; which business happily he was engaged upon

when the spies of Leicester and Walsingham his famulus took him up; and finally, that he perished for the differences between those two great planets, for my Lord Treasurer could not save him once he was well in."

"No doubt very true. These perfidious mercenary men are everywhere among us. Who on this side knew. . ."

Arundell raised his hands in demur.

"-- Oh, only as the rumor goes, Mr. Arundell," the duke continued. "Were any of yours inward with the man whilst he was here?"

"Only, my lord, the indictment nominates Mr. Morgan as his confederate, and Mr. Stafford is warned that there shall soon be means to have him attached in this realm and sent for home to answer for the same."

"Well, let Morgan go and to the devil," Mayenne interjected. "I never trust the man."

"Nor I," said Guise. "Mr. Arundell, do you for my love this one thing, which is to have it known everywhere as you come that this was none of mine, this sneaking murder. The imputation does me no honor. The man Parry I never saw, nor I think have any of mine ever spoken with the wretch. He was disembowelled while still alive, you know."

Arundell thought of the polite, shy man he had met but once, and suppressed the disagreeable image of those ample guts spilling upon the scaffold to the loud hurrahs of a London mob.

Herr Oberholtzer and one of the duke's clerks leant over to assemble some papers for the duke's inspection. Guise opened a black case on the desk and withdrew a tiny pair of spectacles. "My Florentine eyes," he smiled at Arundell as he hooked them behind each ear. He scanned the uppermost sheet.

"Mr. Arundell, my good man," he began then. "Here we come to my reason for bringing you this distance. You know of our League, as it is called, to fight Christ's battle against the heretic, schismatic, and infidel. You know too how closely Señor Mendoza and his master participate with us in this crusade and sacred war. For you who are English, and I who am a Frenchman, and my lord who is a Spaniard, we are all good Christians, and we stand together as one against the armies of Aversa, of whatever nation either we or they do come. But not every man understands so well what you and I together understand, and so for the time this must remain our secret.

"Enough of that. I think you also know that we would have that king of ours to leave off his staggerings and divagations and join with us in pursuing God's cause. But as you see, his wicked mother woos him to the devil's party, to the everlasting peril of his soul, may the Holy Mother of God have pity on them both; and now, *per consequens*, there comes this late edict for the dismembering of our only strength. Now we must make reply to this and leave no doubt that we will never like St. Peter deny our Lord, and for this reason we are at work upon this manifesto. There are other great men with whom first we must confer, but here is what today we have agreed upon."

He flourished aloft a single sheet of parchment.

"I recount to you the main heads for a need I have of you. They are, first, that we must have no heretic for king in this realm, neither now nor ever more. I spare you the details of

the terms. Second, that there must be no more favor shown the heretic nobility, and should there be, this Holy League of ours will prosecute the war against them, if necessary without the king's aid and good opinion. Following this, we call for an end to oppressive taxation of the loyal nobility, and for a regular meeting of the Estates General in each triennium. In the last, we appeal to all the great towns of France to join our towns in excluding the king's garrisons from their midst, until the king does as reason is and complies with our just demands, which are very modest and also godly.

"This," the duke continued, "will be the color of our manifesto. Now to you. You must tell me, what will be the English reaction to what I have opened to you here? For you know the meddling ways of that queen of yours, and that she was never a friend to the Holy Church, nay even a great enemy. How will her advisers speak when this comes to their ears? Will any of them intend us greater harm, and will they be sufficient to sway that Jezebel and breed us some distress?"

Arundell considered the matter carefully. Absently he mopped his brow. After some moments of thought, during which the room remained silent, Charles turned to the duke of Guise and said: "My lord, I beg your pardon, I do not know what the reaction of the queen's Council is like to be." He paused.

"Pray continue."

"Well, there is only to say that you know that Leicester's men at that table bear little love to you and your cause, yet for all that, I think they mean still to speak for their war in the Low Countries." Mendoza began nodding in solemn agreement. "They believe they are close to an intervention for the Protestants in those parts, in all plainness, and need only to push her pacific majesty a foot or two farther in that cause. With Orange lately dead, and Antwerp in this peril, we hear the representatives from the rebel States are howling in her ears for present help. In my own opinion, I do not foresee their letting slip that opportunity to open new matters here."

The Spaniard reminded the dukes that this had been his opinion from the first.

"Only this might be feared," Arundell continued, "that should these broils proceed still further and a new war here seem toward, then might they counsel to send more in loans for the fortifying of the Calvinist towns, as in the past they have done. Hardly, I think, will the queen be brought to open jars in this kingdom."

Arundell thought for a second more.

"And furthermore there is that last thing, which is that any plain discords between yourself and that state of England may fall out dangerously for your noble cousin, my lady the queen of Scots."

"She is ever in my thoughts," the duke replied easily.

When he understood that Arundell had concluded his opinion, the duke of Guise prodded him with a few unimportant questions about individual members of the English Privy Council and then pronounced himself satisfied.

"I ask you now, Mr. Arundell, for the glory of God, that you will tent your friend the ambassador on these same heads, as (in conversation) to ask as it were lightly, 'what d'ye suppose if such-and-such,' or 'this-and-that,' and discover whether his opinion consorts with yours. And directly you find, either before or after the publishing of our manifesto,

that anything more is meant, that you do send or come to us at our house at Châlons with speedy news of the same. We are fortifying now a line of towns and castles from Orléans to Verdun, to anticipate all events, and shall ourselves remain at Châlons until we better learn the king's meaning."

The duke removed his spectacles and replaced them carefully.

"This too, *mon ami*. You will sound him at what time you think propitious whether the ambassador will come in with us. I leave to you to choose the time and place of asking, or whether never, but if ever you should have him in, I have left at the house of Señor Mendoza the sum of 3000 crowns, which you will come and deliver to your friend with promise of more as service warrants. I hope you will work upon him through his wife, who as I hear is well beloved of all the Catholic ladies of the king's court."

Arundell nodded again. The conversation then became desultory as the men slowly quit the room. The visitors were invited to stay over till the morrow, as already the sun was westering. Arundell, however, preferred to return at once to the city and, as the party descended to the great hall below, he took his leave. The duke of Guise, in parting, made him a present of a small, jingling purse.

Finding his horse readied before the house, Arundell set off towards the bridge. As he hadn't his own papers for the guardsmen, he angled his route northward and forded the main stream of the river somewhat above the guardhouse, protected from the guardsmen's view by the island intervening. As he splashed across the narrower channel, one of the guardsmen peeked out of the door and yelled at him, but unhastily he mounted the bank and set off up the slope to the ridge above. Of course, there was no pursuit.

Within two hours' time he had regained the city, riding into the long shadow of the Bastille just as the sun fell below the spires to the west. His reflections as he rode through the dark wood had been all of Dr. Parry. The shadows deepened round him as he rode, and he shivered with the cold.

Having reached home, after a short respite from his journey, he went down to take supper in the next street. The ordinary was more crowded than usual, and he was forced to dine uncomfortably far from the fireplace. When he had half finished his meal, he saw Throgmorton entering the room, who when he noticed Arundell left his companions and came across to join him.

"Well, my friend," the younger man cried out; "here he sits celebrating the Lenten season of sacrifice, stuffing himself with all manner of dainties."

That, indeed, was precisely what Arundell was doing, betraying the vulgar pleasure of the poor just come into money as he spent more of the duke's purse than was prudent. He grinned at his comrade and motioned to a place opposite him.

"Here, good Tom, it's as cheap sitting as standing."

"You have been strangely absent during our great excitement, Charles. We sent to you this morning and found you gone out."

Arundell murmured that he had ridden to St. Denis for the seasonal observances in the abbey there. Throgmorton inquired no further, for he had a tale to tell. On Saturday at ten o'clock in the night, he had been with Thomas Morgan in the latter's rooms when a party of soldiers had burst in and carried Morgan off. There had been sixteen royal guardsmen

and an officer, accompanied by an English intelligencer named Shute, whom he believed to have been sent from Ambassador Stafford. They had attached Morgan in the name of the king of France and removed him to the house of the lieutenant of the Provost del Hostel. Throgmorton himself they had left standing in the middle of the room all but unnoticed. He had not been in their warrant.

Arundell pretended to surprise at the news and asked the reason for the raid. The earl of Derby, his friend replied, had recently arrived in Paris for a ceremonial occasion; King Henri was being inducted into the English Order of the Garter, by way of cementing that long amity the two realms enjoyed. In the course of his diplomatic business, Derby had conveyed his queen's insistence that Morgan be arrested as an accomplice in Dr. Parry's attempt against her life, and the French king had felt constrained to comply when such a serious charge was laid.

Arundell was hardly astonished at the turn of events, but fully expected that the Welshman would be free again in short time. Despite mutual expressions of sympathy, neither the French king nor the English queen proceeded very energetically against each other's refugees, English Catholics or French Huguenots, residing in their respective kingdoms. This case, involving an assassination plot already proved in court, required merely a bit more of that sympathy. In the meantime, Arundell found the man's detention very inconvenient, because he'd almost won from him the repayment of some money lent to the queen of Scots's cause in years past, which would much relieve his present want. He recounted again the money given him by the duke of Guise.

The following morning, another fine day, Arundell rose at mid-morning and made his way across the island to the right bank. Four boys were playing with a bright red ball by the edge of the bridge, and he stopped to watch them for a while. Then he turned west, worked his way patiently through busy lanes, and arrived finally at the point in the Rue du Bout whence he might enter through alleys into the Place de la Monnaie. He led his horse behind the house and left it to feed quietly in the stable, then approached the rear door, used his key, and ascended a narrow staircase to the floor above.

Stafford was at work at his desk as Arundell came in. Immediately the ambassador rose and greeted him, motioned him to a chair, then went out of the room for several minutes. When he returned, closing the door carefully, he offered his guest a piece of fruit from below and then began sifting through a chest atop his desk, seeking some papers there.

"Did you know that Morgan has been taken up?" Charles inquired.

"Yes, my lord of Derby spoke for him in her majesty's name. I'm afraid they tired of my ineffectual means. But God's bones, Charles, the Secretary has me complaining of so many things and so many men at every audience I can obtain, that the French king only takes my arm and smiles with tolerance of me and says, '*Mais oui, mais oui*, Sir Robert,' and proceeds to other matters."

"Sir Robert?" Charles asked in surprise.

Stafford waved the question aside. "Aye, he calls me Sir Robert; what can I do? One corrects a king once, eh? Thereafter one corrects oneself. You see that this is to my embarrassment, that they in England would go round me as if I were but a nobby put in this place only to play innkeeper to travelling gentlemen. The Council is sending over Waad to have Morgan called for home."

"I doubt they will give him up. Pray, Ned, who is the man Shute you sent to lead the soldiers to him?"

"None of mine, I know not who he is. He came to Derby from among your people here. I know him not." Sir Edward tossed over another piece of fruit and then pointed to a pile of printed sheets folded into the unbound leaves of a book. Arundell took them up. Lifting the pages until he found the title, he read aloud, "*Discours de la vie abominable, ruses, trahisons, meurtres, impostures, empoisonnements, atheismes, & autres tres iniques conversations de my lorde de Lecestre,*" and so on. He began to laugh aloud.

"I suppose you knew of this, your damned book of Leicester's life, or what d'ye call it. 'Twas bad enough in English, we must have it in French now, too. My wife will die of shame when her friends here come to read in it."

"I knew that it was coming, Ned, not that it had burst forth already. How came you by it now?"

"A street boy brought it, disremembering of course whence he had it. Your friends are in the mocking vein. I suppose your Throgmorton took it in hand, eh?" Arundell merely smiled. "Nuisance for me just now, you know, for I tell you, Charles, I am looked to straitly for every little thing that happens here. Already I am blamed for never setting Mr. Secretary's hands upon the first authors thereof."

He took the book and threw it onto the desk, pronouncing the entire libel a boyish exercise that only served as a distraction from the main business, which was to preserve the peace of Europe and free the English kingdom from the evil forces that were leading her to confusion. Arundell heard him out patiently and waited until he had composed himself.

Finally the ambassador reseated himself by the window. "Well," he said at length, "I suppose you have come out from the lion's den."

Arundell nodded. He reported first that he had learned of Dr. Parry's execution; Sir Edward remarked that he himself had heard no more since Walsingham's account of the man's trial. The Secretary's version ran thus, that Parry had come over a year earlier and gained an audience with the queen, in which he had informed her that he had been sent by Morgan and the Jesuits to kill her. In reward for his good care of her safety, Elizabeth had granted the man a pension and found him a seat in Parliament.

Some time later, however, he had broached the same plot to another man who had some grievance regarding an inheritance. As God in his love and care of princes would have it, that man had been what Walsingham coyly termed a "correspondent" of his own. Walsingham, always the fairest of men, had called Parry in and inquired whether, in order to discover dangerous leanings in any other man, he had suggested to anyone such a plot. Parry had foolishly denied the same, and Mr. Neville, the informant, had been brought in. God had then caused the fellow but two days afterward freely to confess all of his murderous intent. A fortnight later he was condemned. Now he was dead. Stafford knew that Parry had been Lord Burghley's agent while in France. He was convinced that the fellow had been a victim of Leicester's encroachments on the Lord Treasurer's ground, that the fool had thought he was acting within his warrant all the time.

But Stafford seemed to care nothing further about the matter, and he pressed Arundell for the details of his meeting with the duke of Guise. Accordingly, Charles turned his mind from Parry and began to recount *quasi ad verbum* the duke's description of the forthcoming

manifesto. He then described his own response to it, that in effect he disbelieved the English Council would move in any way against it. He told also of the meeting itself and of Mendoza's part in it, and ended with the duke's request that he try again suborning Stafford to the League's interests.

The ambassador said nothing for a time, considering the matter with some care. Finally he remarked that doubtless Arundell had been correct in his response to the duke and that he might subsequently report that he, Stafford, had expressed the same opinion in his hearing. Concerning the subornation, Arundell should report that he had playfully remarked to Sir Edward that there was money to be made in showing his dispatches, which anyway came from councillors he little loved, and that Sir Edward had lightly answered that money from whatever source would never be unwelcome, seeing that he was almost ruined by his queen's hard usage of him through Walsingham's means, and had not had a farthing to pay his expenses these seven months past.

"Let them think still that I may someday be their man," he said, "but not yet. I may move no further in this direction at this time, for I have asked again the queen's leave to show false dispatches to draw them on, and again Mr. Secretary has refused me, as he says in her majesty's name, but I think not. But here is something too which you must know."

He rose from his place and came to sit on the table near Arundell's chair.

"Mr. Secretary commands me in the queen's name to desist from any speech with yourself, for you are (says he) a known traitor and dangerous enemy of her majesty's safety."

Arundell leant his head back against the high back of the chair and closed his eyes.

"Had you written my name to him again then?" he asked.

"That is the nettle in the bush, Charles. Not after this time a year since have I sent to ask her majesty that I might employ your service. You know what Mr. Secretary replied to me at that time."

"And so the question arises," said Charles, "how does the good Secretary come to know of my resort hither to you?"

"That is the only question." Stafford arose again and stood by the casement. "This I will tell you, the knowledge comes not to him from any in my house."

"Whence, then?"

"Necessarily, from one of yours."

Arundell ran over in his mind as many of the English refugees as he could recall; though there were many whom he counted capable of any treachery, he could point to none likely to be in the Secretary's pay. But the informant need not be any paid agent of the Council; one could picture some small tired man, languishing in penury and half-mad with homesickness, writing unsolicited to Sir Francis offering every scrap that might win a bit of favor for himself.

"Whom do ye have in your very bosom, then?" the ambassador asked.

"None."

"With whom do ye correspond?"

"With none but well tried friends, for the most part, my Lord Paget among other, of events that do occur."

"None who is not known to you?"

"Yes, with several, from time to time, unknown to me by sight, but circumspectly; a few among the Frenchmen, and especially one called Hert on matters of the queen of Scots."

Stafford turned, blinking. "Hert?" he asked. "What, you have not told this Hert about us two?"

"Not the briefest word. It is all upon her money here, and Morgan and the other Paget, as also upon all the great designs for the freedom of our Lady Mary. Why, Ned, what d'ye know of Hert?"

Stafford began laughing at the silly complexity of the business. He shook his head from side to side in wry exasperation.

"My man Lilly has just come back to me from the court, and tells me what he learns from Phelippes, that one Hert is Mr. Secretary's chiefest intelligencer here in some particular affairs. They would gladly know more of him, too. I would you would show some more caution hereafter."

"Indeed." Arundell began laughing, too. "And who may the man be?"

"Certes, one of them in great trust among you, whoe'er he be, judging by the Secretary's opinion of his news. A very great man among the laymen here, which is the cause why Mr. Secretary loves him, for that he is such a hater of Jesuits."

Arundell thought over again the idea that somehow his frequenting the ambassador's house had become known to someone of his acquaintance. The fact seemed the more perplexing since that same man could have ended his visits, and possibly his life as well, simply by letting them be heard of in this town. He could see from the expression on Stafford's face that his friend's thoughts were following similar lines.

"You asked that I learn somewhat of the man sent over from Leicester to slaughter you."

"Yes, so the rumor ran among us. Have you news?"

"I have. I put it to my Lord Burghley as a damnable thing if true, to murder a man in a strange kingdom whether or no he were a traitor to his own, which, I told him roundly, you are not. This I received but yesterday. With the first clause my lord agrees, with the second he cries 'I suspend.' But he peered into it there and found that only one man went from Leicester overseas, and that was to buy fine cloth for his lordship's back, and shortly home again. I think the rumor was untrue."

"Doubtless so. A coin of Morgan's stamping. I thought I should have met with him before this if it were true. Did you not say his Dudleyship believed some others to have writ the book against him? I know no other reason he should wish to snuff me now."

"Well, the devil speaks in him. Sit in public rooms with your back to the wall, will ye not?"

"Ha, ha, yes I will do that."

Stafford retrieved the paper he'd earlier searched out and glanced it over once again.

"Look you, Charles, that is another thing. Walsingham in speaking ill of you again writes that you are to command an army of the duke's to land in Sussex. What, are you Hannibal, to lead armies; are you Caesar, to lead armies against your homeland?"

Arundell's face reddened. "That is but idle speech. It comes not from the duke of Guise, of that you may be sure."

"Whence then?"

"Oh, it is the common talk at tables everywhere among our disappointed fellows, one to land here, another to land there, nothing more ordinary among us."

"Well, were I to don my cuirass and helm for every warning I have of an enterprise against our shore," Stafford replied, "I should wear them out from within, with never stroke struck. But while Mr. Secretary learns of dreams like this, or schemes I would have said, you must be patient if he will not credit me when I write you are an honest man."

Charles sat looking glumly at the French book of Leicester's life again, and said nothing.

"But look ye, cousin, do ye keep a sharp eye to plots like these, for mark me, one day an army will come, whoever leads it in, and we of England must be ready for it on that day."

"No, Ned, you watch for armies. I mean to enroll me for an hermit religious."

"There is my man! The anchorite of Cheapside." Stafford rolled his eyes in mock exasperation, then grew serious. "They may ever say they come for religion only, Charles, but you and I are not ninnies. The good musters from the counties will beat them from our shores, but you and I will fight in our manner, which is by eye and brain and pens."

"And what still for my lady, Ned? How have you helped her? How has your Lord Treasurer come to her aid now? Now she is in still stronger durance, moved from castle to castle with bilious Puritans set to watch her. No more correspondence reaches her. Daily the trap closes more upon her, and how much time has she, think you, before the wicked have her in their jaws?"

"The queen of Scots remains alive, never fear for her. She shall have her day, and you her servants shall ride home with her in triumph. She is not friendless, Charles," Sir Edward said heatedly, "even amongst the great of England, and never shall she be delivered up to ravening bears. Only patience required, now as before. She is true heir, and she will have her own. Only let her not be brought into jeopardy of her head by some prince's army--believe me, Charles, these great kings would give not a penny for her truly, I care not what they piously mutter in your ears. They will come for England itself, and when they do, mind now! my lord of Leicester will have warrant to dispatch her before beak of ship strikes sand."

Arundell sat still in the dumps. He'd had learned enough of the duke of Guise, the queen of Scots's own cousin, to know what she might expect from the king of Spain, whatever the dreaming exiles hoped for from them both. He saw no way out, for her, for himself, for the others, indeed for anyone. The entire world seemed locked together like two mastiffs with teeth sunk into one another's haunches, snarling and whirling in a circle in the dust, neither able to give it over without finding the other in his throat.

"You have your religion, Charles, as each of us has his, and may God instruct us all. But most of all you are an Englishman, and will do right."

"Never doubt me, Ned," the other answered, "when once I know what right is."

"Well, look you now," Stafford began, his face taking a light as if some great new thought illumined it from within. "You know, the great Aeneas, who was the pattern and original of all great men since, was in a like case upon a time, and found himself rent between his great love for the Lady Dido and his duty to his country, when he would have sailed away to found his nation of Latium. And sure he doubted of his course as you do, but he sailed, to make his nation and preserve his countrymen, and never looked back."

Arundell smiled ruefully. "Oh, a casuist! For first, he did look back. And for another, the god came to him and commanded him to do as then he did. Ah, Ned, the god appearing never fails to make decisions altogether easier to make."

"Well, take me then for your Mercury and I shall command you."

"Thank you. 'Sail at once for Italy,' say you? Where would you be then for news, Ned? Ha ha. You god of thieves."

"Ha ha. Well, in the end it will come right. You will see, and thank me then."

Arundell was growing merry again and twitted his friend for his surly optimism.

"No, Sir Edward, I fear not so. You know, our England can never escape the fate of Troy and Rome in ancient times."

Stafford feigned surprised dismay.

"Why, do you not know 'Chaucer's Prophecy,' Ned? Do you not listen to what your people say amongst themselves? For by those mantic verses it is proved that England's glory is no more and she has bespoken her own destruction. Sure it is true. The ancient sage knew more than all our chroniclers, Ned, with his second sight.

When faith faileth in priests' saws,
And lords' behests are held for laws,
And robbery is held purchase,
And lechery held solace;
Then shall the land of Albion
Be brought to great confusion.

And these conditions we see all met now, do we not in truth? The priests ignored, the laws overruled. Oh Albion, oh England! The climacteric year of '88, Ned, as they prophesy. *Sic probo.*"

"Well, I maintain me still. I for my part expect old King Arthur shall ride forth again of Avalon, when we have most need. Get you gone, then."

As he rode through the late afternoon city, Arundell ran over again the vexing ambiguities and byways of reason of his present state. He could hardly say he was doing right--he could hardly say what he was doing. For England or for the church? For Mary or for Elizabeth? For war or for peace? For his friends, most of them traitors so-called, or against them? For the layman Catholics or for the priests? Against Leicester or against Morgan? For which laymen? For which priests? The truth seemed to be that he was more or less for nearly everyone and everything. But at least he had begun of late to feel that he was working to some end; if still he did not clearly see what end, yet he was working. He did not spend all his hours dreaming mawkishly of firesides with Kate.

He wished wistfully he had been born a zealot. Whether Jesuit or Puritan or patriot, warrior or pacifist, papist or devoted partisan of this or any queen or king, it mattered very little which, as long as very zealous. Wished he had been born one or could think himself into that blessed, excited state; but thinking was the hitch. Do zealots think, or do they divide their time only between adoration and plotting final victory over their enemies? And sometimes wished, alternatively, that he might make of himself a simple, good-natured opportunist, for which there were models enough about him now, a time-server, perhaps cunning, perhaps merely lucky, but seeking after his own comfort and profit only. Life seemed hard enough in its own nature without aggravating it with niggling doubts. Only to be either utterly absorbed in piety or on the other hand skeptical and indifferent, with that quality of *ataraxia* professed by the ancient philosophers; but he was neither as much as he would have liked to be either, and so must lurch from one to the other. Well, he was neither saint nor sinner, nor even, like some of the people in this town, both at once. He felt he was by nature nothing, only a creature who wanted to be something.

Waxing ironical now, Arundell sang over in his mind the old verse,

The wind is great upon the highest hills,
The quiet life is in the dale below . . .

Rather, the reverse were more true. For always it appeared that the great magnates, the kings and queens, the dukes, the leaders of armies and far-flung missionary brotherhoods, if they were blown by a strong wind without, had nonetheless roots and trunks to bear it up, and so the wind was naught, and only strengthened them. But in the dales the wind is great, too, from time to time, for now the storm is everywhere. And there the unprotected shoots are torn up and scattered, some to be blown forever maybe, some to cling to life with broken tendrils, or perhaps to huddle beneath some great tree in a vain hope of a period to this strife. He remembered his father dead, unnoticed, because great Somerset had taken a wrong step. It is we little people, Arundell thought, we groundlings, we supernumeraries, who suffer most, because when everyone is buffeted, the great ones may receive their buffets as marks of their own greatness. Their defeats are their victories, and finally they go to death as martyrs not as victims. His self-pity threatened to become the master of him.

The sun was declining as Arundell crossed the bridges to his own side of the river. Towards the roofs of the bridgefront shops the shadows ascended from the stones, claiming windows and hanging signs, story by story, as they rose above the little people and their houses to join the greater shadow spreading across the eastern sky. At passages between the buildings, the sound of the streaming river, invisible, but bubbling and washing by, rose to the street. The shopkeepers began hastily to close up their stalls and street doors, to retire to warm rooms within.

Arundell passed from the bridge of St. Michel into the great place at its southern end. He paused there before turning westward, observing across the square, among the hurrying travellers, a party of men in English dress bound for the Petit Pont. He edged his horse more deeply into shade. Doubtless, from their clothing, they arrived in the city from the south, a timely coming at the end of day. They rode across the square more leisurely than the citizens scurrying past them, as if they were hindered by fatigue.

Two of them Arundell knew by name. One, he saw with surprise, was Walklate, Lord Paget's man, whom he had not seen since his lordship had departed for the south. The second was a little man bent in conversation with another who rode with his back turned

outward. Aldred, the speaker was, an Englishman, professing to be a tailor, who dwelt in Lyons but made frequent journeys hither, where he had brought himself into bad odor as a turbulent and maledicent spirit. The late sunlight in the square fell full upon his puckered face, which worked animatedly as he pursued his point with his companion, heavy eyebrows keeping time with a waving fist of rhetorical emphasis.

The sight Charles found an unpleasant one. The nasty little man whose face he now saw haloed by the last strong beams was condemned by everyone for being a mean intelligencer, a mere spy, an odious creature of cunning and bad faith who could never be trusted by his friends nor even, it was said, by his employers, whoever they might be at any time. Almost everyone despised the treacherous, faithless fellow, and the churchmen in every city had been warned to refuse him any hearing. Yet this little ferret of a man, in his shifting disloyalty, was merely known to be what Arundell had secretly become, he who but a day since had been obliged to cover his movements with a bald lie to the good man with whom he lodged. What extenuations might be offered seemed sometimes only that, excuses, to conceal from himself the double-facing role he had assumed.

For a brief second, as the English party reached the bridge and Solomon Aldred left the clear square, the man with whom he had been conversing turned with a sort of sniggering laughter and faced the west. Arundell, though still unseen, saw him too now with the sunlight full upon his face, his face standing out alone against the semi-darkness all about him. The man's right eye writhed in derisive merriment; his left eye was a horrible dead blank, a milk-white globe that sat in its socket like a piece of glazed cake. And then the men were upon the bridge and gone from sight.

Arundell sat motionless, fixed by a strange disgust to his place in the shadows. The vision of the face pressed like a night bird's wings close upon his face. Only gradually he came to himself, then gave himself a thorough shake and galloped homeward.

Once arrived at his house, omitting to dine, he ran up to his empty rooms and paced the floor for an hour in a black funk, overcome by helplessness and restlessness. Then, fully dressed, he threw his long frame across the bed and closed his eyes. It was a long time later that he drifted uneasily into sleep, alone on the rough blanket, a tense line drawn above his brows even in that relative repose.

Outside the windows, full night came rapidly on.

XVII. THE DUTCH WARS

(1585)

"This instant of my song
A thousand men lie sick;
A thousand knells are rung;
And I die, and I die as they sing;
They are but dead and I dying."

Shortly before midday, Jamie Sharrock rode out of the French city of Cateau Cambrésis. Uncertain of his way, he turned mistakenly into the road towards Valenciennes; an hour passed before he recognized his error and sought correction. The sudden descent upon him of a patrol of Walloon militia told him that he had crossed into the province of Hainaut. He inquired the right road of the ensign of the troop, and then set off eastward towards Maubeuge, whence he would turn northward again in good hope of striking Mons.

The ordinary route lay through Tournai, where the headquarters of the Spanish military were stationed, but would have taken him through several other towns which, like Ghent and Dendermonde, both taken only within the past year, were still harassed by raiders from the rebel States. He preferred the safer road, the road which, with a lengthy river voyage, would take him through Malines. This town too had newly fallen, but was securely behind the lines.

Not three months since, Sharrock had been residing in the west, at his master's little house at Lutton, looked in upon from time to time by the high sheriff but otherwise left in peace. Over the nearly two years since his master's flight Sharrock had been quietly selling off what could discreetly be sold, sending small sums over the seas whenever carriage could be found. At last, however, he had done all that he could do, and so had determined, abruptly, to send himself as well.

Wrapping up his master's fortune and a few clothes of his own, he went down to the countess of Arundel's country house. There, in late April 1585, he was received not only by the countess but by her husband as well, who had been permitted these brief holidays with his lady, and he was let into the earl's new plan of escape. Dressed as common seamen, he and one William Bray met the earl in a creek mouth on the Sussex coast, whence they rowed him to a ship awaiting them just beyond Littlehampton harbor; they went aboard and set sail, praising God for his care of them, when Sir Richard Bingham, forewarned, came out to intercept them in the queen's bark, boarded them, and, with a sympathetic smile, conveyed the earl back to the Tower of London. Sharrock and Bray, first taken for seamen, were returned to Portsmouth and there examined, following which Bray and some others were arrested and Sharrock was sent on his way.

Following that fright, Sharrock recuperated a short space in the country and then came up to London. It was in his mind to find out a priest, from whom he might obtain advice, but without any friends he could find no priests. Finally, he went visiting in the Marshalsea prison, where there were priests in abundance. Those good men referred him to one Berden, near the Bell in Aldersgate Street. Nicholas Berden, as it turned out, had formerly under the name of Rogers (which was his real name no man knew) been a servant of Robert Parsons during the Jesuit's sojourn in the realm, and had come forward but recently to

aid the cause again. He was a small, fairhaired man whose suspiciously shifting gaze was belied by his soft voice, pleasant and melodious, and by his even temperament.

Sharrock first encountered Berden in early June. The fellow was most accommodating, promising to make the necessary arrangements for his travel abroad. At that time, the great fear among the Catholics was for Mr. William Shelley, who the Tower prisoners reported had been racked several times and was weakening in his resolution. It was doubted that he would soon begin speaking torrents, like a toothless gammer by the fireside. The earl of Northumberland was beside himself in the fear that his own part in the Throgmorton business would soon become known. He smuggled word out of the prison that his friends and servants were to scatter for their lives. A week or two passed without occurrence, whilst Berden put Sharrock off with delays he called inevitable. Then on the morning of 21 June came word that Northumberland had murdered himself with a pistol in his cell in the Bloody Tower; Berden sent Sharrock off to the Kentish coast with no more hesitation, armed with a letter of introduction from a priest Jamie had neither met nor ever heard of.

At Folkestone, awaiting his rendezvous with the shipmaster, Sharrock was joined by two others similarly sent down by Berden. One was Robert Poley, who explained confidentially that for many years he had served the holy cause from within the earl of Leicester's entourage, but was now employed upon an errand of importance to the Paris exiles, sent by Mr. Christopher Blount to consult with Mr. Morgan about the Scottish queen's correspondence. He was a pale, thin man who was evidently well educated, yet spoke quickly and smiled convulsively as if unnaturally anxious to please. Poley's companion, whom it seemed he knew no better than Sharrock did, was a surly half-Italian Englishman called Captain Jacques. A day after their meeting, their ship sailed for France.

Originally the shipmaster had been instructed to enter Calais Roads, but the appearance of the Dutch Sea Beggars off the coast induced him to turn into the wind and make instead for Boulogne, where they arrived under the castle guns just before the Beggars overtook them. The three men progressed by hired horses to Amiens, then in another day to Compi gne, where Captain Jacques's way divaricated toward Rheims.

Once in Paris, Sharrock and Poley searched out Charles Paget's rooms and stayed the night with him. The next day Jamie was shown to Fitzherbert's chambers, where he found neither Arundell nor his friends in residence. Two days later, Paget brought him and Poley to speak with Thomas Morgan in the Bastille prison. Poley, who evidently knew Morgan already, introduced Sharrock to him; Morgan, though with no great show of friendliness, accepted him as Arundell's man and spoke freely in his presence of their enterprise in progress, which was to hit upon some scheme to reopen communications with the queen of Scots.

During the preceding winter, Queen Mary had been transferred from Wingfield to the tighter security of Tutbury, and in the spring her new keeper, the strict Puritan knight Sir Amias Paulet, had taken up his charge. Since that time, her partisans had neither received nor successfully sent in a single secret communication, only the vacuous formal greetings that passed openly by way of the French ambassador through Walsingham's own hands. This unhappy state could not continue. To discount a host of compelling reasons, of finance and strategy and morale, for which correspondence must be got through, there was over them all the most important one; that without proof of regular consultation with the Scottish queen, the refugee leaders would lose most of their power and influence. Morgan would become superfluous.

Morgan, of course, did not have to explain all this to Sharrock. He had merely to indicate curtly that he was engaged in the business of princes and considered private men's troubles an imposition upon his time. In fine, in searching out Sharrock's master Morgan was no help. He could do no more than to direct Sharrock to Señor Mendoza's house, since that worthy man, Morgan remarked with some asperity, seemed nowadays more in Mr. Arundell's confidence than any of his own countrymen.

From the great prison, Sharrock rode to the Spaniard's house in the Rue du Peau Diable near the Hôtel de Ville. There, after stating his name and business, he was turned away by a secretary with the bare message that the diplomat was an exceedingly busy person, engaged in the business of princes, and would send. Sharrock returned to Arundell's rooms and dwelt there for an anxious week.

Finally, half through the second week of July, Sharrock received a messenger from Mendoza. Promptly he accompanied the boy and was led ahorseback seven leagues or more out of the city to a tiny village called Villame. The last five miles they rode with an escort of light cavalry that wore an almost uniform dress he had never seen before, but was sure it did not bear the French king's badge. On the farther edge of the town, he was brought into an inconspicuous house, and there to his horror found himself being announced to both Mendoza and the duke of Guise, celebrated scourge of Protestants.

There, while the two great men, whom in England Sharrock had only heard spoken of arranged with the devil as a third, merely stared at him, a more kindly subordinate took pains to calm his agitation, which threatened to overcome him and make him silly. Mendoza gave him a message and repeatedly tested his memory of it, and then he was sent to an early bed in the same house. The next morning, he was provided with a bundle of papers for the patrols, tested once again as to his memory, and sent away. Now, on his fourth day since, he crested a low hill and found the walls of Mons before him.

The region about Mons, because of its distance from the present lines, showed few signs of the eighteen years of warfare in this part of the country. Late in the day, however, as Sharrock progressed northward into the Brabantine flatland, he came across devastated villages and the charred ruins of farmhouses, the visible scars left by the skirmishers and raiders of both sides before Parma's troops had pushed the zone of battle as far north as the river Scheldt. Brussels itself he found not much damaged, for no direct attack had been made upon it. The suburbs, however, were in disarray, because whatever in the surrounding villages the besiegers had not been able to turn to their own defense they had levelled to clear a field of fire.

For this was the character the war had assumed. The new defensive architecture imported from the south had made almost the smallest town impregnable by direct assault. Gun-mounted arrowhead bastions, with crossfiring flankers that kept the enemy artillery at a distance; low, thick curtain-walls of brick and rubble that absorbed shot that would have shattered the mighty stones of ancient castles; wide, circumfluent moats, themselves defended by ravelins and earthen sconces--all of these had made traditional assaults through cannon-pounded breaches all but impossible. Where treachery from within, the most economical device, was wanting, there had to be starvation, which required a total blockade of long duration. Consequently, the besieging force normally built its own fortifications, a pair of circumvallations, the inner defenses against sallies from the besieged, the outer ones against relieving armies, and settled down to wait. When the blockade was successfully enforced,

the town came eventually to terms, but there were few sudden victories--Antwerp had held out so far for eleven months--unless the inhabitants came to blows amongst themselves and some of them appealed to the force without the walls, which not infrequently happened in this land of divided loyalties. Not many towns had a clear majority within of either Catholics or Calvinists, loyalists or rebels.

As a result of these conditions, there were few towns stormed and fewer pitched battles in the field. It was a war, on the one hand, of long, settled sieges and, on the other, of pillage and banditry, of skirmishes and flying raids upon relief columns, villages, sconces, and enemy patrols. Even here, near a city that had capitulated some four months earlier, there was no one residing in the countryside.

As he approached the southeastern gates of heart-shaped Brussels, Sharrock began encountering the soldiers of the Army of Flanders, loose comrade-bands foraging for food or seeking plunder overlooked, occasionally, nearer the walls, an *escuadra* or a full company at drill. Just without the city, the road took him through one of the bivouacs of those men unable to be quartered upon the citizens. Most of them seemed to be Walloons, Netherlanders, who wore the red sash of Spain over their motley shirts, and Germans, who did not.

At the gate, cowering beneath the huge guns that hung out from the bastion above his head, he proffered his warrants to the guardsman, who summoned a passing boy to lead the traveller into the heart of the city. There in a small black inn in the Rue du Lombard, not far from the Grand Place, he passed the night.

Departing at an early hour from the Schaerbeek Gate, Sharrock rode on across the low land until he reached the riverside docks where larger flat-bottomed boats set out for the northern towns. There he searched out the captain of the docks. An hour later, Sharrock was standing beside his horse in the bottom of a stout barge, near a pack train of victuals and casks of corn powder for the guns, floating down the slow stream northward.

In due course, he discovered the military activity along both banks to be increasing. Besides a large number of stragglers and small bands camped along the river, twice he saw whole companies of Burgundian infantry in bright colors marching downstream. Troops of lancers were to be seen hastening forward, both along the banks and away across the marshy ground. Once the barge came abreast of a slow-moving column of the awesome Black Riders, an independent company of German heavy cavalry, in their full armor despite the heat.

Near Malines, or Mechlin, which had capitulated only within the past month, Sharrock found signs of great disorder. Much of the siege camp was only gradually being broken up, and though the active soldiers had been ordered on, the wounded remained. Directly across from the quays, the maimed and ill were being loaded into lighters and poled over to the military hospital in the city. Sharrock, as his barge glided past them, stared in horror at the swathed heads and stumps of former limbs. Almost half the injured seemed to bear no physical wounds. They sat or walked (if led) like ambulatory dead men, with vacant gaze and features devoid of all expression. Many of the soldiers who tended them wore the badge of the defeated city on their shirts, but notwithstanding that, wore also the red sash or a red feather hastily pricked in their hats.

Some time later, the laden barge passed into the river Scheldt. Now the soldiers on the bank marched on one bank only. Across the flat land of Brabant, almost to the horizon,

small units of footmen, with sometimes their women following, plodded slowly onward towards a common destination. On the other side, in Flanders, the land was waste and virtually empty, birdless and almost treeless, with only a rare watcher standing alone upon a prominence from time to time gazing at them as they passed. The great river flowed in wide gentle curves slowly towards the sea. In the distance, after a while, one saw barely discernible ahead some bright objects rising from the platteland. That was Antwerp, queen of cities.

Well above the town, the barge was drawn in to makeshift docks along the Flemish bank. Beginning there, a line of earthworks, thinly manned by a company of shot from the Italian *tercio*, ran along the river and created a highway for the shifting of goods into the camp. Remounting his horse, Sharrock joined the stream of sutlers and noncombatants and followed the road out into the marshland away from the city walls across the river. At frequent intervals, the raised, hardpacked surface was protected by earthen sconces, with the barrels of demi-culverins bearing out upon the land. Soon he found himself within the camp, where hastily built huts were clustered round the black remains of campfires. The soldiers themselves, some, the veterans, in rags, others in expensive finery, lounged idly about or slept in the sun.

Sharrock pressed on through the crowded camp, past huts and past small companies at drill, until at length he came upon a short, full-bearded officer who wore, fantastically, a gentleman's high hat with plume atop the thick steel cap of a pikeman. As he gawked at the strange assemblage, the little man winked comically and made merry comments in an unknown tongue. Sharrock came to himself and began bowing to the man, saying "Señor" several times, and handed him his papers. The officer looked them over hastily, then handed them back, shaking his head and speaking rapidly again in his own tongue. Sharrock began saying "Parma," "Parma," over and over, at which the man looked at him quizzically for a moment, then shrugged and pointed further downstream toward a low bridge that snaked across the marsh and river all the way to the dikes on the far side.

With this construction, completed in early spring, the prince of Parma had cut off all resupply of the city from the Protestant sea-towns to the north. The rebel chieftain, the prince of Orange, whilst he lived, had foreseen as much and had instructed his deputy in Antwerp, Marnix de St. Aldegonde, in how to prevent that danger. His plan had called for the timely destruction of the Kouwenstein cross-dike and the Blaugaren dike, which would have inundated all the pasture land to the north, so that however thoroughly Parma might dominate the ground about the city walls, yet the ships of the rebel States, which controlled the seas, could never have been kept from relief of the town across the broad bay thus created. St. Aldegonde, however, a year ago now, had been unequal to the citizens. The city guilds, especially the butchers, who grazed their cattle in the nearby fields, had refused to let the dikes be cut. Parma had moved up swiftly and seized them all.

Hope of relief thus depended entirely upon the narrow river, and though few ships had dared to run before the prince's guns in any case, Parma had completed his circle by constructing a great bridge--of earth and stone across the marshes, of boats conjoined and fixed to pilings over the stream--which made finally impossible all communication between the city and its allies to the north. One great attempt had been made to breach the structure; the Italian's "hell-burners," hulks filled with explosives and rubble, had been released in the river to float down upon the bridge, and one had struck its target, only minutes after the prince himself had run to safety. But so great had been the surprise at the fury of the

blast that the sally from the town had not come out in time, and the repairs had been made unhindered. Antwerp was in its last days as a great rebel city. Already the prince spent most of his time negotiating with dissident factions within the starving town, and soon one of them would strike the flag and admit the Spanish forces.

The soldiers seemed to sense so much. Everywhere as Sharrock rode, he saw the men and their dependents, often as ill-dressed, as underfed, as miserably housed in rough *baracas* of their own construction from rubble and scrap, as Spanish soldiers, nay all soldiers, usually were, yet going about their work or play with light step and frequent bursts of laughter. In one camp, on the ground before the whores' hut there was a party in progress, with music, dance, and freely flowing drink, the revellers oblivious to the war, ignoring a half company of *corseletes* executing pike formations not sixty meters away.

At length Sharrock came upon a camp in which many of the huts were larger and more soundly built, and when he repeated Parma's name to an ensign or lieutenant, or *alferez* as they called it, the man rather than pointing him onward began to put questions to him. Sharrock proffered his warrants. The ensign bade Jamie dismount and follow him, and conducted him to a purveyor who was attached to the company. The purveyor's home was a rough-timber affair constructed in lean-to manner alongside a wagon, upon which was piled under wraps a sizable store of goods. He too was an Englishman, with the improbable name of Constantine Watchindroppe; he and his Walloon wife had lived in and dealt from this hut for the past eight months, making biweekly journeys either south or northward into enemy territory for revictualling and for selling away the plunder he had taken in trade from the soldiers. When food was scarcest and the pay longest in arrears, he found that he could buy up treasures for a few loaves of bread, and he therefore loved his work.

Sharrock learned that he was in the company quarters of the prince's own sergeant-major. Watchindroppe obligingly left Jamie in the care of his wife and went off to find some other English who would know everyone who came or went. When the sutler returned, he brought Ralph Ligons, whom Sharrock had known long ago when the man had been a servant of the earl of Northumberland. Ligons, though he did not recognize Sharrock, yet read over his warrants and offered to bring him to his master. With thanks and a coin for Watchindroppe, Sharrock set off after his new guide.

They found Parma's camp just under the western end of the bridge. Along with the regular pikemen and arquebusiers and their hovels, there were a few more substantial huts, and passing to and fro one saw men more smartly dressed in officers' habits and in the sometimes splendid garb of personal valets and squires. Ligons led him directly to a group of small huts nestled under an enormous tree just at the river bank. He called out for Mr. Arundell. Talking ceased roundabout and there was movement within one of the shelters, and then Arundell stepped out of the opening.

So long did Sharrock and Arundell stand slapping each other's shoulders that Ligons walked away, and the two who had come out with Arundell re-entered the hut smiling.

At last Sharrock produced the money he had so long carried with him; Arundell received it with a cry of pleasure and conducted him within. There Jamie was introduced to Thomas Throgmorton and to a short, blocky Welshman of nearly fifty with close-cropped hair, whose name was Hugh Owen. Owen, though he was paid out of the army *pagaduria* at the rank of *cabo de escuadra*, or corporal, was the chief of the English branch of Parma's intelligence service. Arundell passed over one of his new coins to Throgmorton, who laughed

delightedly and ran out. A fortnight earlier Arundell had been waylaid by some desperate soldiers between camps and robbed of all their funds, lucky indeed to have escaped with his life. Since that time, like most of the army unable to buy even the most basic necessities, he and Throgmorton had been forced to subsist on the army ration, a three pound loaf of bad bread every other day, in the quantity fixed as just sufficient to prevent starvation, and boiled water from the river.

Most of the soldiers lived similarly, for though the Spanish troops were assigned nearly the best wage in Europe, they were almost never paid it. The arrearages were reliably paid to the beneficiaries of dead men's wills, that is, when the chaplains had not got themselves written into the testaments as the price of the last rites. But for living men, the pay came either to their captains' pockets or not at all. If Antwerp did not surrender, they might eventually get rich plunder, but if it were finally to come to terms, they would never even see within the walls--the conciliatory Parma, unlike his predecessors, would occupy the town with Walloon troops, to avoid ill-feeling, and proscribe upon death all their hard-earned looting. The only real hope most soldiers had was that they might be maimed, when they would be pronounced unfit, paid up, and sent home on a litter.

At length, as the four men dined with grinning faces that these days seldom grinned, and as outside the hot sun quietly disappeared, Sharrock was plumbed for news of home. Word of Arundel's seizure and of Northumberland's death had preceded him; he knew nothing of Lord Harry Howard's treatment, about which he was particularly queried. But as Sharrock was about to come to the message he had borne, a scattering of shots was heard from not far off. The men scrambled out into the darkness, joining those from the other huts, and stared about.

From the dikes across the river came occasional flashes of musketry and lighter arms, with an irregular tattoo of reports, and the much fainter sounds of men yelling. The *alferez* came running through the camp calling the men to arms. The former sleepers stepped within to don their shirts; they put on their steel morions and their plated jackets or corselets if they had them, and began readying their guns. Both drummers turned out to begin beating out the call to make a front, and similar sounds came from other companies up and down the bank and across the bridge. Cooking fires went out all through the camp. Women darted out of the huts with long cloaks hastily thrown over themselves and scurried off to the rear.

Since the prince's unit was a company of shot, the men prepared by loading arquebuses and setting the matches to smoldering. They lay down upon the embankment with their weapons pointing out across the water. Two men carried old curriers, long firearms that discharged not shot but short arrows. Arundell and his friends rummaged for their pistols, which they loaded carefully, and Hugh Owen drew out a long petronel that he carried with both hands. They lay among the rest behind the low bank by the water's edge.

After a long moment of comparative silence, the crepitation of gunfire on the farther side diminished. Behind them, in the middle of their camp, they could hear a company of pikemen arriving from farther to the rear and rapidly forming up. The soldiers wore corselets which with their morions seemed to hang disembodied in the darkness in two dim lines above the ground. Hugh Owen gestured towards the black formation.

"*Los sacristanes,*" he murmured. The famous *Tercio* of the Sexton, the pikemen who went all in black. The Gravediggers.

Except for the lessening fire afar off, there was scarcely any sound. Occasionally feet were heard hurrying through the camp behind them, or a piece of plate jangled against another, or a muffled lapping came from out on the river, but the silence was heavy and increased the time of waiting. Everyone lay silently, all peering with full concentration, all hoping that the brief engagement was over.

Suddenly a dark, square form ran into the mud not ten meters before their eyes. Glints of armor appeared above it, then came the sounds of wood knocking and feet splashing into the water. The matches were blown to glowing and applied, great booming explosions began up and down the bank, to grow instantly into a single, long deafening roar. Men cried out and were heard tumbling into the river. Powder smoke billowed out from the bank and made a ghastly white fog just at weapons' ends. Acrid fumes burned into eyes and throats.

Then several guns on the barge started up, cacophonous, throwing tiny orange flashes through the haze. A *cabo* came running down behind the line of gunners, shouting orders. Arundell and Throgmorton, despairing of finding anything to shoot at, discharged their pistols in the proper direction and joined the arquebusiers who were packing up their weapons and scrambling away from the embankment. The yelling and shooting from the river continued. Owen set off his petronel and grabbed Sharrock's arm, hauling him back with him.

A few steps to the rear of the embankment, they passed through stiff ranks of black-clad pikemen moving up to take their places. Owen and Sharrock, and a few musketeers who gave up trying to run with their accoutrements and dropped them in the dirt, just made it through the lines, for the Sacristans were already lowering their long pikes to the horizontal, fifteen foot pikes in the first rank and those of eighteen feet just behind, preparing to receive the shock of a charge. Immediately behind the pikes came a line of men in leather jackets carrying short swords and javelins, ready to dart among the locked pikes and stab away at close quarters.

Firing began from the bridge, and from the flashes it was evident that another barge had struck the pilings below. A few short screams came from atop the structure, but from the sound of it, the Anversmen in the exposed boat were having very much the worst of it. The arquebusiers roundabout were busily reloading their weapons in the dark, and the Englishmen did the same. Arundell had lost his powder, so he dropped his pistols and drew out his rapier instead, a meaningless gesture that at least relieved him from having to stand emptyhanded. A few feet away a man's powder exploded as he was tamping it in, sparing him but killing the soldier standing next to him.

The thin shooting from the barge at the pilings could now be seen moving back up the stream. Another volley burst out from the top of the bridge. On the embankment near at hand a few pikemen were thrusting and shouting, but most were still standing at the ready. The barge had drawn off; there were furious splashes that sounded like armored men left behind, trying desperately to swim after it, and a few guns discharged from farther out in the current. The arquebusiers from the Sacristans' pike company, several men set on either flank, fired off together in a last stunning roar.

Thereafter, there was nothing to be heard but the cries of the wounded and the boats being rowed and poled back up to the city. From time to time, from further up along the embankment a single shot or two rang out, but the action was over, as abruptly as it had begun. After the loud melee but a moment past, the silence that lay behind the occasional cries

and groans seemed exceptionally queer; the men stared at one another blankly through the darkness. Smoke hung heavily in the air.

The pikemen ran down into the water and began hauling out the fallen wounded, whom they dragged roughly back onto land and away towards their own camp. Some of the enemy had to be carried, but it was done willingly, for as long as they were alive they had value. The prince's company, deprived of prisoners by the Sacristans' promptness, raised up the campfires and set about picking up the Spanish wounded. One of them was a drummer who sat holding his bleeding forehead and mooing like a cow; another was the man who had set off his gun while reloading it, and would lose his tattered arm. There were two Spanish dead from Parma's camp. One of the arquebusiers lay just behind the embankment not four meters from Arundell's hut; evidently caught while withdrawing, he had a small, clean hole in the back of his morion which only mocked the destruction of his face on the other side.

Arundell stared at the man who had been killed by the reloader. He lay as if sleeping, chest downward with his face to one side, with a dark stain smeared across the back-plate of his corselet. He seemed quite young. He might have been some Catalan peasant boy who had joined up to escape the plow; who had survived the sea voyage to Genoa or Savona, and the murderous marches over the Alps, round the Swiss cantons or through the Grisons, through Franche-Comté and Luxembourg into this field; who had weathered one winter, or three or five, with no pay and very little food, with disease all around; and had been shot through the back, accidentally, by one of his friends.

One of the dead Anversmen lay on the inner side of the embankment. None of the raiders had made it so far ashore under his own power; he must have died while being dragged off for ransom, and had been dropped on the spot, owing to the abrupt devaluation of his worth.

The purpose of the attack was far from clear. It was unlikely to have been a surprise attack upon the bridge, for the Spanish call to arms would easily have been heard across the water. Hugh Owen's theory was that the raid here had been planned as a diversionary prelude to the attempt upon the Kouwenstein dike across the river, that the timing had gone awry and the dike had been assaulted first, but that inexplicably the diversionary force had kept on anyway. Arundell's theory was that there was no explanation--the Anversmen had come out to kill or be killed, rather than starve indoors.

Far up the river, a few cannon boomed out from a camp opposite the city. The barges were regaining the New Town quays, and the Italian artillerymen were paying their respects. Arundell went out searching for his pistols, expensive machines he knew he should have difficulty replacing. He turned up one of them straight off, but never found the other, nor could he find his silver powdercase. He satisfied himself with finding all his limbs.

Round the fires, the soldiers were eating and conversing, not yet ready to return to their beds. Those who had wives had gone out to retrieve them from wherever they had been hustled to out of the way, and were returning now in little groups. The Englishmen crawled up on the black embankment near the riverside, from which they could now see a bright, glittering streak across the water from the newly rising moon. The smell of spent powder still hung faintly in wisps in the soft air, and black objects floated in the water some distance from the shore. Behind them, the camp settled down to dull fires, low whispers, and snores from nearby huts.

After nervous exclamations and partly accurate rehearsals of the action just fought, Sharrock took up his narration of his interview with Mendoza and the duke of Guise. The message committed to him was in English, though it was no more comprehensible to him than if it had been in Spanish or Turkish or the jabber of Cathay: "God has a new great friend. The wicked will soon be punished. Come home at leisure."

Throgmorton threw up his hands and barked an oath. Owen smiled grimly. Arundell explained the message to its bearer: evidently the French king and his mother had come to terms with the Holy League and struck a deal; his majesty would henceforth be God's new friend. A renewed war against the Huguenots would be inevitable, and the duke of Guise and his friends would be preoccupied with punishing the "wicked" in France. Arundell's present mission was therefore unnecessary, and he was to give it over.

"I shouldn't think the prince will be sorry at the news," Owen remarked.

The others agreed somewhat dourly. Arundell explained that he and Throgmorton had been sent to discuss with Parma some new plan for the invasion of England. As it had stood in Guise's mind and in Mendoza's, the prince of Parma was to lead a main force, a fifth or a quarter of his veteran Army of Flanders, perhaps ten or fifteen thousand of his best, against England itself. Simultaneously, the king of Spain was to send a large force against southern Ireland, larger than the last one five years earlier, which had perished to a man at Smerwick. The duke of Guise was to lead the League's troops against Scotland, where the young king James would be replaced under Catholic tutelage and all three realms might be united under his mother, the queen of Scots. It was but a variation upon the other schemes that regularly appeared and disappeared, all so far foundering upon King Philip's procrastination, Guise's other business, Parma's other war already in progress.

Those Englishmen who lived for the day when they might lead or follow a liberating army into their homeland chafed and stammered at Philip's irresolution and at Guise's shifting moods, but Parma they despaired of. The prince discussed the invasion when commanded to, and would invade if directly ordered to--or so everyone hoped--but he thought the idea of a sally against England foolishly premature and he told his king so, for he liked no distraction from his present task in hand. When the Low Countries had been reduced once again to their Spanish obedience, then, he said, then was the time for opening new wars. One job of work at a time.

As a consequence of the prince's impatience with such schemes, Arundell had been admitted to speak with him only once in a month in camp. Twice or thrice he had had sessions with high officers, and once with de Tassis, the new *Veedor General* of the army, who had come out from Tournai to hold the regular musters. The rest of the time the Englishmen had spent bubbling idly in the camp, playing cards and fishing, on three occasions forced to take a small part in the fighting, a task Arundell found unpleasant in principle and terrifying in the event.

Throgmorton spoke heatedly of the new delay. Somehow he had convinced himself, perhaps because it was the first time he had been personally involved in the planning, that this time the schemes would come to some fruition. He was of opinion that the duke of Guise was the key to the enterprise; as he argued it, if once Guise decided to move, the Spanish would have to come in to prevent the duke from annexing England to the French. Arundell, though he never said so, knew that this was not so. Guise was insufficient to try the invasion without Parma's aid, and knew it very well.

Similarly, Arundell dissented from the common view that the answer lay with the new pope, whoever might be elected to replace the late Pope Gregory. Already Parsons and Dr. Allen were preparing to transfer themselves to Rome, where they hoped to persuade the Papal Curia to sanction, indeed in large part to finance, the liberation of England, and to draw all of the other princes into undertaking the thing as a new crusade against the infidel. Arundell reckoned that Rome would never take the lead in an expedition that if successful would only increase the power of Spain. Nor did he trust the Spanish king himself, simply because King Philip had shown himself incapable of any large decisions. Charles believed, indeed, that the final answer lay solely with Parma. The prince commanded the greatest army in Europe, the only army fully mobilized. When Parma wished to make the invasion, the others, including his royal master, would be bound to help him; but as long as he discouraged it, they would not risk commanding him against his will.

And this suited Arundell's book perfectly. Just at present the prince was preoccupied with his Dutch wars, which he seemed finally on the verge of pushing to a successful end. When he had won here, in five years, in ten, perhaps by the end of the next season, then he would look naturally to England, the Protestant nation that had given so much covert aid to his enemy. At least there would be time for preparation.

Whatever lay behind the mists of future time, the present plan was gone the way of all the others. When morning came, Arundell, Throgmorton, and Sharrock arose with the rest of the camp and, after a hasty meal, walked over to the prince's headquarters, where they were referred to an adjutant in a field tent nearby. This officer wrote out the warrant for their journey and stamped it with the prince's camp-seal. He then proposed to provide them a small escort until they had come more safely distant from the front, and thoughtfully called up four men from an English squadron of light cavalry.

An hour or so later, the English lancers appeared before Arundell's hut, and Sharrock was sent off to bring in the horses. When they'd been loaded, the party spurred off across the western marsh, skirting the camp spread along the river by a road constructed of earth and rubble.

The soldiers escorting them were only partly fitted out; only one wore his morion, though another had his bumping behind him on his saddle pack. One trooper had no pistols, only a saber and dagger at either side. Another, with an enormous russet beard, held propped across his horse's neck a homemade weapon like a javelin in length, but cut from a broken pike, with its original head and blades intact. All four looked rather old, and they seemed to resent the men they were conveying, as they muttered amongst themselves from time to time, but kept together just behind and showed no inclination toward conversation. Probably they were veterans of many years' service here, men of no particular religion who had come over when this was the only war to follow; men who considered themselves to be soldiers of fortune, professionals without politics who did a job and made a small living from it, and disdained the exiles for religion whom they considered rather to be traitors to their country. When England should enter the war officially on the other side, their choice would be a hard one, whether to make war upon their own queen's troops or give themselves up to her law. For in the interval since their coming over, such service for the Spanish had been prohibited by law to all English subjects.

Some time since, they had passed the docks on the Scheldt where Sharrock had alighted. They continued now up the western side. The day was coming on excessively warm. For

some time, they rode southward not far from the riverbank on their left, observing the stragglers and small detachments on the farther side and, on this side, rebel sentries atop hillocks some way off. Eventually, however, as they were approaching their crossing, they saw bearing down upon them a squadron of light horse numbering twenty or more men from the States, all in leather jacks and evidently well armed.

The trooper with the demi-pike observed them first and gave the warning, and the party, finding a crossing impossible at this place, galloped towards the fordable stretch ahead. It turned immediately into a sporting race, for the distance each party had to traverse was nearly equal, and both rode hard to beat the other to the ford. Everyone who had them drew out and cocked one of his pistols, as the horses thundered over the turf where it was dry and splashed uncertainly where it was not. The rebel squadron was succeeding in heading them off, advancing on them gradually from the right angle, for the others were pursuing a roadway or track directly to the ford, while Arundell's party rode over open ground, more often sodden than dry.

Arundell felt desperation rising within him. The patrol would come upon them just before the ford and, with such numbers, would stop their charge with a single volley. Sharrock's face was blanched, his mouth hung open as if gobbling up the wind. They could not retreat the way they'd come, for they'd be run to earth long before they could regain the Antwerp sconces. In a skirmish of horse, it is the fatal sin once to turn one's back upon the enemy.

Had he had the necessary leisure, Arundell would have been kissing his soul up to God. As it was, his mind was blank of consequences. His fear was suppressed in him by the speed of the event. With a cold eye he scanned the column already almost crossing his path. He saw every plate in the jacks, every light cuisse upon every thigh, every dag held cocked and ready. From the ensign's lance streamed a bright red pennoncel, embroidered with a variant of the sign of George.

Beside him, the trooper with the short pike looked over and made a gesture with his head. Abruptly, when they struck a patch of solid earth, the man wheeled his horse to the right, precisely opposite to the direction of their enemies. Arundell leaned hard over and pulled his mount around, and glanced back to see that his comrades were doing likewise, though Sharrock's horse narrowly missed going down in the tight turn. Again the leading trooper angled right, fleeing from the patrol almost in the direction they had come. The patrol reined to a stop as suddenly as it could; several of the men fired off their pistols, though close, still too far away for accuracy, and then the whole troop set off in pursuit.

Meanwhile, the demi-piker leaned again to his right and persisted, inflecting his ostensible about-face into what became a tightening circle. The pursuers, having seen their prey turn to flight, reacted too slowly. Arundell, following his trooper, found himself galloping hard again straight for the ford, the patrol passing by his right side not twenty or thirty meters off spurring at full pace in the wrong direction. More shots were fired at them, but though they heard the balls whistling past, they took no harm. They made the ford almost at full gallop. Springing from the low bank, the horses reacted by lifting their hooves high over the shallow flats. By the time they'd reached a depth sufficient to slow them to a walk, the party was nearly out of range and hastening again to the farther side before the patrol had reached midstream.

A half mile off, across the meadow, a convoy of Spanish wagons was stopped in the road, its drivers and escorting cavalry observing the adventure. The escort came round

and formed up into a skirmish line. Perceiving this, the rebel patrol came to a halt in the shallows, stared and muttered for a while, then turned about and rode slowly away in the direction whence they'd come, disconsolate.

Arundell's escort had been ordered to protect him only to this point, near the confluence of the Scheldt and the Dyle. When the men departed, Arundell bestowed upon them the money he had promised them and the same again, considering that but for their aid he would be unable to put the money to any better use than he did.

Sharrock rode on apparently dazed by the action. Throgmorton looked rather grim. It was impossible to discern whether they had seen the pennants of St. George and recognized their pursuers as Englishmen. That was what took hold of Arundell. He had never got used to that order of violence--skirmishes, volleys of weapons fire, bodies of men dashing all about--but had seen it often enough to keep his head during it and to some extent his spirits afterward. Here, however, he had gone within hours from shooting at men against whom he bore no ill will to facing death at the hands of his own countrymen in someone else's war. Probably they had been Protestants, or something like, and he a Catholic, but he could prize no cause for enmity out of that. This great killing for creed which so roused all sides, always strange to him, seemed less and less comprehensible, began indeed to seem positively zany, as if these men on both sides had been rustic puppets battering one another with tiny brickbats over ridiculous epithets exchanged.

Not many years ago, Arundell had been sojourning on holiday in the English countryside, and at a market fair he had come upon some puppet players in a booth by the road. The piece they offered had been a truncated version of the story of Orestes, a tragical stageplay he had seen years still earlier performed at court by Lord Rich's men. In the original there had been much talking, shouting sometimes, some of it quite moving, as many there had testified. But in the puppets' version nearly all of the human speech was gone, and what remained of those ennobling passages had been only the insult and the obloquy, sufficient as a ready frame from which to hang the fustigations and stabado. The poetry had been excised to make space for brutish violence, and the farce had been hilarious at that time. Now the memory of those versions troubled his thoughts; the meaning was gone, and only the farcical violence remained. Arundell worried lest he and his friends and his enemies were becoming merely laughable.

Having passed the night in Brussels, the three men rode on the next day. They crossed the Sambre at Namur and ascended the rising ground eventually into the territory of Champagne, where they deflected their course from the valley of the Meuse and made westward towards Paris. When, the day following, they struck the Aisne and began making a better pace along the river path, they found themselves encircled by another armed patrol.

The ambushers were in irregular dress, but wore upon their shirts the arms of Mayenne. Since the exiles' papers proved their connection with the League's business, the leader of the troop at once left off his official coldness and became amiable. He advised them to accompany him to Rheims, there to await the formation of a convoy. By the agreement struck between the League and the king at Nemours a fortnight past, the royal patrols had ceased to disturb loyal Catholic subjects in their business. The present danger arose, he said, from certain mercenary bands the king had called in during the spring, Swiss and German adventurers who had neither good will nor a good faith and killed for mere pay. The holy duke of Mayenne had been forced *pro bono publico* to deal with these invaders smartly, but

many squadrons of mercenary horse had escaped the League's vigilance and remained still in France, roaming about in open banditry and preying upon citizens' wealth and lives, their captains claiming to have the king's warrant still in force. The Englishmen quickly thanked the man for his courtesy and joined his troop.

Parting from the soldiers near the northern gate of Rheims, Arundell and his friends entered the town and made their way towards the great cathedral. The streets before they reached the central square were so narrow that they were obliged to dismount and lead their horses through the crowds. They entered a dark alley that issued after a long, arcuate course in the vicinity of the English College. Once there, they were enrolled as visitors and made tolerably comfortable at the collegial board.

Among the refugees frequenting the inn in the English quarter were Lilly and Moody, two of Stafford's men. The latter of these Arundell had been warned against, but he took Lilly aside and gave him a message for Stafford. Then the three Englishmen settled down for a rest in Rheims, joined by Godfrey Foljambe, now a courier for the prince of Parma's Council of War. Several times, too, Arundell spoke at length with Father Parsons. The Jesuit had quit Rouen but recently and was marking time at the college whilst Dr. Allen brought matters to a state where he could leave them. Thereafter the two were to travel on to Rome, hoping to gain the ear of Sixtus V, the newly chosen pope, in behalf of the English Catholics' plight. In conversation Parsons descanted long upon the theme of retribution and seemed to have progressed over the past year from dreaming of England's liberation to relishing the thought of her destruction.

When they'd been a week in the city, Arundell and Throgmorton arose one morning to find everyone abuzz with the news of a great victory for Spain. Antwerp had fallen, and the prince of Parma was master of the cynosure of urban Europe. The disarmed garrison had been sent on its way peacefully, the Calvinists within the town had been given a period of years to sell their properties and retire; the prince's lenity would no doubt encourage still more towns to open up their doors to him. An English column had been coming in relief, under the command of Black Jack Norris, but failing to arrive in time, had turned away again. All of the southern Low Countries had now been reclaimed; no one believed otherwise than that from this base Parma would have completed his reconquest by the end of another few seasons' campaigns.

The next news came a week later, as August was drawing to a close, the tidings which for months everyone had looked for. England had come in for the rebel States. The terms of the treaty signed by the queen at Nonesuch were garbled and unsure here; no one knew clearly how many men of foot and how many of horse she would send, or when, nor quite what she would have in return; but these were immaterial. To Arundell this news seemed to proclaim all but the final victory of the earl of Leicester, to have at long last won his niggardly, timorous mistress to join an open war, as for years he had striven to do, against the Catholic part. Certainly, when the English force came over, whenever that should be, the Great Bear would be riding in command of it, splendid in his trappings all of silver and of gold.

Arundell and Throgmorton were dining in The Cut Horse, the college food having been found monotonous, a bit "religious," for their layman's taste. The host was entertaining the inquiries of a priest and another man near his own great chair, while a sprinkling of guests were spread in twos and threes about the room, and a general quiet pervaded the place above the murmuring voices. The second man, a stocky fellow of middle height with a set-

tled air of indolence, wore a quasi-military style of dress instead of a gentleman's doublet and ruff, breeches and hose, as if he had lately come from the wars. Throgmorton gestured instead towards the priest, who was a heavyset and rather fleshy man of early middle age with a coarse expression, pouchy lids and thick lips. With them stood another man whom Charles well recognized: he was my Lord Paget's man, who had come over to him soon after their flight from England. Walklate was his name.

Arundell followed his friend's direction and observed the priest looking directly at him while attending to the innkeeper's remarks.

"He is an Englishman," Thomas said, "but a' goes by the name of Jacques Colderin. I was in his company in Lyons a half year since."

Obedying the host's instruction, the priest and the soldier, and Walklate behind them, were making their way toward the diners. Arundell rose as they approached, but they motioned him to stay seated.

"Pray, resume your supper, Mr. Arundell," the smaller man said. The heavyset priest took up a stool and made a place for himself at the inglebench upon which Arundell dined. The other two did likewise.

"This is John Savage, Mr. Arundell," he said, inclining his head towards the military man, "and my name is Gilbert Gifford. I find not a little astonishment, sir, that we have not met till now."

At the mention of his name, Gifford instead of Colderin, Arundell smiled to see Throgmorton shrugging almost imperceptibly next to him. He nodded somewhat guardedly, but with the appearance of welcome.

"My worthy cousin is one you are acquainted with, I think," the man continued. Arundell began again to nod, a bit uncertainly. "My cousin William, who is professor in the seminary in this town."

Arundell had met Dr. William Gifford several times and had found him a temperate, bright young man. He said that for his cousin's sake he greeted the priest well, and he asked if he bore kinship as well to the Giffords of Chillington, who suffered for the faith at this day. The priest signified that Mr. Gifford was his esteemed father. A few more words passed upon the poor old man's trials in and out of English prisons. Then Gifford introduced Mr. Walklate to them; Arundell, wondering silently at the addition of the gentleman's title of "master," nodded politely to Walklate and asked pointedly how was the man's own master.

Walklate stiffened but replied courteously that he was no longer in Lord Paget's service, that his lordship, now once again remaining in Milan, did very well indeed.

After some other conversation about England's entry into the rebellion of the States, Fr. Gilbert came to his business, which was that he and Savage meant soon to enter England on the queen of Scots's errand and, having heard that Mr. Arundell kept excellent contacts in London, they wished to have his advice for coming into the realm and finding a place of hiding in the capital. Arundell expressed a dutiful concern for their danger in such a course, however great their holy zeal, for which they thanked him, and then he inquired what precisely was their business there. Savage replied vaguely that it had to do with reopening her majesty's correspondence, but both were disinclined to say much more. Arundell said that

he believed he might be able to help them to a man in London who would see them on their way, but for entering the realm they must make their own arrangements; it was Fr. Parsons, if he were still in town, or Charles Paget in Paris who might best aid them in that. He gave them the name of the man he used as his own contact in London.

Whereupon they thanked him for his generous care of them and made to leave. As they rose, Arundell asked Walklate if he might remain, to which the man assented, and accordingly the two others made farewells and left the inn to return to the seminary.

Arundell took on an air of casual conviviality as he resumed eating, and asked Walklate how he had been occupying his days since having left his lordship. Walklate would say only that he had been making his way amongst the English in Savoy and Italy, doing good where he could find the means. Gradually, Arundell worked round to his object, having asked incidentally of several other Englishmen residing in the south, and inquired whether Walklate knew of a man who bore only one good eye.

Walklate's naturally sullen mien narrowed a bit more, but he replied that he could call no such man to mind. Charles pursued the point, describing the fellow's bad eye, that opaque, milky orb that rested motionless in his ugly face, to which Walklate protested his unfamiliarity with such an unfortunate creature. Arundell then suggested that a friend had claimed to have seen Walklate travelling in the man's company in Paris but five months past, and besought him again to try his memory in out of the way nooks.

Walklate sat back in exaggerated show of recollection, and then ventured to say that he did imperfectly recall meeting such a man about that time, but he knew no more of him but that he had lately come out of England for conscience's sake, like most other men, and that he lived quietly amongst the Englishmen of Spain or northern Italy. His name, or so Walklate recalled it, had been given out as Sledd, or, as some others said, as Stinter, though Walklate believed the latter name to be a *nom de guerre*. Both names Arundell recognized as having come up in conversation in times past, though he'd had no reason to think they applied to the same person.

Arundell and Throgmorton, having stood Walklate to a stoup of wine, now took their leave of him, thanking him congenially for his companionship. He bowed slightly in return, as one who mistrusted whether his fellowship had been the object sought, but not knowing what the object had been could neither be rude nor, for dignity's sake, overly friendly. They left him eyeing the remains of their dinner.

A few days later, as the weather began to change, Throgmorton and Arundell tired of their idleness and began inquiring about returning to Paris. They learned that a party was being made up of merchants and religious that would depart in another day's time under guard of a column of League horsemen. Joining the convoy, they took their slow journey with some impatience.

In the streets of Paris, they came upon the residue of the recent controversies. Before the king's new compact with the Holy League, the bitterness throughout northern France, but especially in Paris, had nearly flamed into violence. The citizens, excited by the preachers of the League, had met in public squares to howl out the king's shortcomings. Here, pasted up on walls and hung from columns everywhere, one still met pasquinades decrying the king's effeminacy and calling for the heads of his pretty *mignons*, those new-born dukes and counts with curled locks and perfumed cheeks. Cartoons depicted Henri III mincing in a maid's attire being wooed by a slaving Calvinist cleric, while behind him on the one side

his courtiers struck bargains with a whole diablerie; on the other side lurked Huguenots in dark streets, full-armed, clearly labelled, poised to massacre the good citizens in their beds. In other scenes appeared the dukes of Guise and Mayenne (the Scipios of France), feet resting upon the accumbent figure of Navarre, each with a hand supporting the shining oriflamme of St. Denis, and the Huguenot chief howling in frustration.

Returning to their old lodgings off St. Andrew's, they found the rooms occupied by Thomas Fitzherbert, who had brought with him from Rouen a new acquaintance. Nicholas Berden, for it was he, greeted Sharrock warmly, and Sharrock related to his master how Berden's aid had been invaluable to him at a time when he'd had no one else to turn to. Berden had but recently arrived, equipped with recommendations from some priests in the London jails, and had put himself at their disposal. He and Fitzherbert had departed Rouen a week earlier on the rumor, found to have been false, that the English government intended a military thrust into Normandy in aid of the Huguenot cause.

The two men gave Arundell the latest news in Paris, that upon the new pope's bull against the king of Navarre, prohibiting him as a heretic from succeeding to the throne of France, a new war was thought soon to begin in earnest. As was well known, by rightful blood Navarre should succeed the present king when death came to him, and his Huguenot friends should then reign ascendant in the firmament; but the Holy League had argued, ever since the death of Anjou the former heir, that just as a monarch was bound to uphold true religion, a heretic must be excluded, and now the pope had come out in favor of their conclusions. So a peaceful succession no longer being possible, a new struggle in arms must shortly take place.

Arundell insisted upon having his old bed, and Throgmorton his, so Berden affably removed himself to a pallet in the morning room, where they had to shift hundreds of copies of the French version of *Leicester's Commonwealth* to make him space. So pleased was he to be at home again, insofar as this was home, that Arundell declined to dine out, and he and Sharrock ran downstairs to bring in a supper for all of them.

A boy had been coming daily for some time to seek them out. Promptly at dawn the next day, he appeared again and asked the gentlemen to hold themselves in readiness. During the day, another boy came up to ask Fitzherbert, Throgmorton, and Arundell to come round on urgent business to the house of the papal nuncio, Frangipani, the archbishop of Nazareth, on the morrow at such and such an hour. The gentlemen discussed the meeting long into the evening, at a loss to understand its purpose.

At the appointed time they rode round to the nuncio's house in the university quarter. As they neared the place, they came upon the Lord Claude Hamilton approaching from the other direction, and found a few more exiles awaiting them at the door, Mr. Tunstead and Mr. Foljambe, and one Clitheroe from Rouen. Some rigid men in ordinary dress, who looked as if they longed to be in the uniform of some Italian tyrant, relieved the gentlemen of their horses and bid them enter.

They were shown into a large, darkened hall, a beautiful panelled room with chryselephantine ornaments reposing here and there on slender tables and costly hangings on the walls. Enormous blackened beams ran across the half-ceiled roof not a foot above Arundell's head. In one corner sat Ambassador Mendoza, staring into nothingness, flanked on either side by his secretary Oberholtzer and a Spanish Jesuit squatting upon stools. Gilbert Gifford stood near the windows with Mr. Turberville and the priest Edmund Gratley from

Rouen, and with them was an unfamiliar man whom Sharrock would have known as Captain Jacques. Standing elsewhere about the room were a number of other Englishmen and a few foreigners, and at a long table several of the archbishop's clerks were scribbling out notes from a set of papers before them. In a few moments, two of the guardsmen appeared to show everyone to a chair or stool, and Arundell and Fitzherbert were placed by the great table near his excellency's own chair.

After a brief interval, a page hopped in and announced the Most Reverend Fabio Mirto Frangipani, the archbishop of Nazareth, the nuncio of the holy see. His excellency appeared and strode swiftly to his seat. He was an energetic old man with clear, intelligent eyes and rapid movements of head and hand; but for the habiliments of his ecclesiastical place he might have been a captain renowned for his courage and ingenuity. He began by welcoming everyone and explaining that as he came to his new office, he was glad of the opportunity of meeting many of those devoted men concerned for the welfare of the faith in England. He bowed to Mendoza and then to Lord Hamilton, and then begged Fitzherbert to look round the room and introduce him to the others. There were only a few whom Fitzherbert knew imperfectly well, and these men called out their own names.

When Arundell's name was spoken, his excellency bowed slightly. Then he resumed his introduction by remarking that the Holy Father wished him to express the great interest his holiness took in the affairs of the English, and said that he intended to make it his business to understand the English situation to the best of his poor ability. One matter, he said, had recently come to his attention; upon his arrival here, he had been greeted by several missives that wanted looking into without delay, and so he had undertaken to lose no time in coming to an understanding of the circumstances of the Englishmen in sanctuary here for faith. He had already made some inquiries, he said, but wished to sound the matter further at this time.

His excellency paused and signalled to one of his clerks, who passed over a handful of papers.

"Mr. Arundell," he said at last; "may I inquire the name of the man to whom your correspondence is addressed in London?"

Arundell started at hearing his name, but made a ready answer. He said that the man who now received such of their writings as he himself sent over was one Taylor, a grocer in East Cheap, though there were others used by others, he believed.

The nuncio looked across towards Gilbert Gifford, who stood up and tried to speak, but caught his voice from nervousness, then said, "That is he, most reverend."

Nazareth turned back to Arundell and said, "Fr. Gilbert has informed me that not long since, Mr. Arundell, you of kind care of him in a journey he wishes to make recommended to him this man Taylor, whom he hears by other means is an unwholesome man, unfit to be trusted in that place."

Arundell replied without delay.

"I think not so, your excellency. I have ever found him faithful."

The archbishop asked whether anyone else had knowledge of the man. Only a few did, and they all spoke up to say that they knew no evil in him, but always found him a trusted servant of the cause. Nazareth turned again to Gifford, but the fellow declined to follow his

suggestion by further details, and murmured that he was very glad to find his information to be in error. Arundell gazed at Gifford quizzically.

Then the nuncio took up another paper, and speaking quickly he asked Arundell whether he knew one Hert.

Arundell sat still. His heart began beating more rapidly, and feeling his face flush he wondered whether this were visible.

"I do," he said.

"What do you know of him?"

The chamber door opened and one of the guardsmen ducked in, followed by François de Mayneville, who silently took a seat and observed the proceedings.

"Almost nothing, most reverend. Only sometimes he has written me in the business of the queen of Scots her welfare, and I have answered him. I know not where he stays, for in each letter he has told me to address my next to him in such and such a place, sometimes in Paris or hereabouts, Tournai, Dijon, Milan or Venice, seldom twice the same. I have never met the man."

"And his matter is?"

"But bits of news, your excellency, small word of princes and great causes in various parts, and occasionally he asks of this or that man or the state of our hopes for the queen's freedom and success."

The nuncio held Arundell's eyes for a long moment.

"And is there nothing else at all then?" he asked.

Arundell clasped his hands together to prevent their trembling. He took a deep breath.

"There is one other thing, sir, which I did not mention to avoid giving scandal to any man."

"I pray you, tell it now, Mr. Arundell."

"It is that about Whitsuntide past this Hert sent one letter to me, wherein he wrote that he had a mind to go to England straightaway, and begged my voice in gaining the duke of Guise his passport through Normandy, whence he might take ship at Dieppe towards London." Arundell paused, and then committed himself. "His reason was, most reverend, that he had matters of greatest moment to impart to the Privy Council of England, and must use no delay."

The room remained utterly quiet. The nuncio had betrayed not the slightest perturbation. When he spoke again, he asked:

"Why, think you, did he make such a request of yourself, not of some other?"

"Because, your excellency--." Arundell cleared his throat. "Because, your excellency, he said he had learned from them of England that I was, like him, a friend of the Council, and would be content to do this for love of the English queen."

Some in the chamber began murmuring excitedly to one another.

"How came he to that strange opinion, Mr. Arundell?" asked the nuncio.

"I do not know an answer, your excellency."

"And pray tell us, what was your reply to this man Hert?"

Arundell cleared his throat again. He saw Mendoza sitting quietly in the corner shadows, staring expressionlessly ahead of him.

"I informed him that gladly would I do his wish, and I sent to him in Milan to say that I had written both to his grace the duke of Guise and also to the English Council to expedite his journey thither."

"And what then?"

"I heard no more from him, most reverend, and thought no more upon the man."

The nuncio sat back in his chair and read over several papers. On the back of one of them, Charles observed the broken half of his own waxen seal. A few feet away, Thomas Throgmorton was regarding him with a puzzled eye. Arundell smiled faintly at him, and shrugged.

"Well, Mr. Arundell, I am very glad to have heard you say these things," the archbishop said.

He held up another paper and addressed the whole assembly.

"I have notice here, addressed to my predecessor in this place, which was sent from one of the gentlemen among you whose name is Charles Paget. Posing as one by name of Hert, in a godly zeal to ferret out traitors from our midst, he cunningly represented to Mr. Arundell, whom for some causes he suspected, he says, that he sought his aid in coming to the Council of England, as before you have heard. He sends us also Mr. Arundell's reply to him, which is just as he himself has now rehearsed it. Let us penetrate to the bottom of this sore wound, and apply what medicines are needful."

Arundell had finally realized that the purpose of the entire colloquy was this suspicion of himself. Gradually, his nervousness began to leave him. The nuncio was speaking once again.

"---friendly terms with the English Council."

"No, your excellency, I am not."

"I ask you too, as you love God and hope for the reward of his Son's pain, whether you are friends or are in any friendly terms particularly with the Principal Secretary, Sir Francis Walsingham, or with Phelippes his man?"

"No, your excellency, as I love God."

"Or do you write unto them?"

"No, your excellency."

The secretaries scratched away at the papers spread before them.

"And now I ask you, Mr. Arundell, as you love God, what for then did you write to this Hert and say in your letter to Hert that you would procure for him from the duke of Guise and from Secretary Walsingham these passports to bring him to the Council?"

"I wrote so to Hert, your excellency, because he had confessed himself a traitor to me and I wished him to be taken up."

"But did you not inform those in Milan where he lay to take him up, as in duty you ought to have done?"

"No, most reverend, because I did not know his name to be Hert truly."

"But did you not inform his grace the duke of this?"

"I did, your excellency. I informed his grace of all I had done and received from him in June his passport for this Hert, to be shown the port master in Dieppe."

"Well, Mr. Arundell, I am pleased again to hear you say so much. We have sent to his grace inquiring his knowledge of these matters. I trust his grace will bear you out."

Mayneville rose from his stool near the door.

"Your excellency," he said, "if I may . . ."

He introduced himself as the duke's emissary and handed across to the nuncio's clerk a warrant to that effect. Arundell, who had not seen Mayneville arrive, smiled.

The duke's agent then made his statement publicly to all, which was that in June Mr. Arundell had written to the duke of Guise explaining all that had been said here, and in reply his grace had sent him a passport for this Hert, to be called for in Paris, and had at the same time put his men in Dieppe on the *qui vive*, with orders to arrest the man who should show that paper there. It was the duke's expressed wish that no shadow of infamy should attach to Mr. Arundell, for he had acted honorably in everything he did.

The archbishop spoke again to say that he considered this question well settled, and he was very glad of it. To sift the matter to the bottom, however, he must now mention a thing or two more, unpleasant to him personally, but necessary in duty. The thing he had to mention, which had been for Mr. Paget the first cause of his suspicion, was that Mr. Arundell was known to come very often to the English ambassador's house, who should in reason be no welcome guest in the house of the English Jezebel's own trusted agent here.

Arundell gave another pause. The explanation he must give was obvious, and would suffice. But some there might be in this room who could report his words in England, which might make much to Sir Edward's disadvantage there.

The nuncio was asking whether he did in fact frequent the ambassador's house in la Monnaie and occasionally meet Sir Edward elsewhere. Arundell replied that he did.

"The reason is, most reverend, because I have been entrusted to bring Sir Edward Stafford, who is my kinsman and wellwisher, to the use of his grace the duke of Guise and my lord Don Bernardino, by supply of money to him."

"For what purpose, Mr. Arundell."

"For the sight of his dispatches, your excellency."

"And has he shown you his dispatches in return for gold?"

"He has not yet done so."

"Then why do you persist, for this may give scandal to your friends?"

"I continue to resort to him because his grace bids me to do so, your excellency, and because in the mean space I may learn much of use to my lords while I am with him."

Mayneville stood again and in the duke's name confirmed Arundell's account in strenuous language. He pointed out that Stafford was known to have said to others, too, after Arundell's persuasion, that though he would serve his own queen loyally while she lived, for the afterdays he knew where the right lay, and in the meantime he would have in heart the welfare and care of the queen of Scots insofar as with due loyalty he could.

The archbishop received this testimonial quietly, and then turned to the ambassador of Spain. In slow, measured language, Don Bernardino said that what Mr. Arundell had said, so far as he could verify it, was quite true; he had bid Mr. Arundell resort to the English house and turn to good use any trust he might enjoy among its occupants. Neither had he any cause to doubt of Mr. Arundell's honesty. On the other hand, he said, though he knew very well what lay in his own mind when he sent Arundell to that house, he could never say certainly what lay in Arundell's mind when he arrived. With a hint of habitual irony in his voice, he said that he trusted God knew what lay in both minds, and would reward them accordingly.

The archbishop offered his own pious addition to Mendoza's sentiments. Then he turned again to Arundell and asked in bland tones whether he had not communicated to Sir Edward Stafford the particulars of the League manifesto of March ultima, before its promulgation. Charles answered quickly, as before, that he had been instructed to do so by his grace the duke--Mayneville, in the back of the chamber, waved his hand to signify confirmation; but how could such knowledge could have come to the archbishop?

The nuncio was proceeding to the last question on his docket. Had not Arundell informed Stafford in May that the English merchant ships in Spain were instantly to be confiscated, in reprisal for the raids of the privateers in America? If he had done so, for what reason had he done so, since it could only have served to warn the merchants away and so deprive his Catholic majesty of just reparations due him; and in any case, whence had he the news of that intent?

Arundell dared not hesitate. He said that just as in the other objections made against him his innocence was proved by the event. For in fact the English ships had not been warned away, but had been timely seized; he had, he said, carefully let drop the news of that intent only when it should be too late to avail the English Council, and could not be deleterious to his majesty's cause one jot. His purpose had been, as ever, to wind himself into Sir Edward's good opinion, the better and the sooner to have his confidence. They might all see very easily, he said again, that the ships had not been warned away in time, for he had been very careful in that matter, as he had been instructed to do. And in any case, he said, it was widely conjectured everywhere that such an attempt should soon be made, so that what he had offered had been but a kind of common knowledge. Hard it was, when a man should be called in question only for the performance of his duty.

The nuncio accepted his reply and moved to conclude the interview. He pronounced himself well satisfied of Mr. Arundell's innocence and good meaning and regretted that, *Hélas!* from time to time such investigations should be necessary even among the dedicated faithful, such were the times they lived in. He desired his listeners to accept his own contentment as their judgment in this case. If any remained indurate or held any doubt residual, he wished them now to speak. None spoke. His excellency expressed his gratitude for their

coming and dismissed them all, with only the afterthought that neither had he any wish that Mr. Charles Paget should in any way be blamed for his advices. The gentleman had only been doing his duty, just as Mr. Arundell was now well seen to have been doing his. Some men murmured their agreement with his sentiments as the nuncio gracefully left the room. The auditors made their departure unhurriedly, some greeting or conversing with one another, most of them passing over to greet Arundell or at least saluting him from across the room. Mendoza bowed to Charles as he passed towards the door, evidently congratulating him also but peering at him closely enough with his nearly blind old eyes to make Arundell look away.

As Arundell, Fitzherbert, and Throgmorton retraced their route to their chambers, not much was said, only passing remarks about some of those present or about their impressions of the new nuncio. Rejoining Berden and Sharrock in their rooms, they all descended to the Inn of Alemains, where they purchased a meal and carried it out to the sward by the water. The evening was a fine, cool one, with a gentle westerly breeze, and they dined spread out upon the green. Both Sharrock and Berden proved very interested in what had passed, and Throgmorton related all of the details, dwelling at length upon the encomia sent from the duke of Guise, a magnificent testimonial of that great man's trust in their friend. Truly, it had been a touching moment for Arundell, and he caught himself wishing he were worthy of it. Throgmorton betrayed a little hurt that Charles had never let his friends into his confidence, for they had had no inkling of how deeply he had entered himself into the duke's breast, but he mollified them by saying he had wished to spare them unnecessary perils. Again, they gratulated with him for having come away with so much credit.

"Fennel is for flattery . . ." Arundell quoted.

But one thing remained. He had explained all the actions laid to him – but one thing remained. The meaning to seize the ships at Cadiz and Santander he had not got upon instructions; he had learned of it in papers from the king's own pouch, found in the false table in Mendoza's study when Oberholtzer had thoughtlessly left him alone. The information had proved worthless; the ships had been confiscated before Stafford's courier could ever have reached the coast. But Mendoza was shrewd, too shrewd to believe entirely that Charles had made it up from common rumor--there had been no common rumor—or to fail to notice that Arundell had given no source any more precisely than that.

What proved still more worrisome, during the long night ensuing, was again the fact that the knowledge of his intelligence had come this way at all. There were many other bits of news he had reported to Sir Edward, some as it happened true, others as the event showed unreliable, but all found out without the duke's or Mendoza's knowledge. Unless he could learn how his activities came to be reported here, out of England or from Sir Edward's house, he could never be certain that any news he brought would not be traced home to him again, and he might not always prove so lucky.

But there was no help for it. He had no choice but to continue as he had begun; rather he allowed himself no choice. England, in this worsening climate of violence, remained in jeopardy. The queen of Scots lay in greater peril now than she had ever done, and for her safety it was essential that no crimes be committed in her name, no invasions be launched ostensibly to free her. For he had no doubt that if such a moment ever came she would be the first to die. Her safety lay in patience, in a careful vigilance to protect her from the Leicestrians at home and both the zealots and the traitors abroad. In time, if she lived, she would

come to the throne peacefully. The captive queen was all his hope. When she succeeded to the crown of England, she would remember her friends, and she would thank Arundell then for his seeming perfidy now. He hoped still, now it was almost all he hoped for, to spend his last years in a tranquil country house in the midlands; it was his only dream--at war with no one, fighting in no cause, fearing no man, espousing only his original creed of a kindly faith and a good table, an open door to friends, uncontentious men with no more ear for the quilllets of dogma nor the quarrels of state than he had.

The other gentlemen lay asleep. Through the open window came distant sounds of night business and the sound of a soft river breeze sweeping past the house. Arundell dreamed of the house he would inhabit when that time should come. The waking mind dispelled his constant fear that it would never come, as the somnolent mind constructed his house of the best features of the houses he had owned or visited over nearly half a century. From the broad terrace of his father's estate in Cornwall, which he had not seen these three decades or more, he could gaze into the gentle hills, golden in the summer sun, that rose about Paget's house of Beaudesert. He easily saw himself ascending a broad lawn from the stables towards his terrace of a warm evening; Mistress Anne Lee stood in the windows smiling down at him. Her white dress shone before the whited wall, and made her radiant. Her face took on the features, unexpectedly, of Kate, who was dead.

XVIII. THE REIGN OF AMBIDEXTER

(1585-1586)

"I often look upon a face
Most ugly, grisly, bare, and thin;
I often view the hollow place
Where eyes and nose had sometimes been;
I see the bones across that lie,
Yet little think that I must die."

-- Robert Southwell, S.J.

The ground ahead was only just visible, a flat expanse of two furlongs almost treeless, with a few dark rises and a shadowed trench running obliquely away to the right. The air was neither cold nor warm; there lay upon the earth a green-black patina of mud. He was crouched over in a shallow ditch, his joints aching from long continuance in the same position. Some sort of heavy helm or morion had slipped awkwardly over his eyes so that he could scarcely peek from beneath it. In his hands he grasped a javelin and a sword, both like his hands fouled with moist earth that clung in clumps and gritted beneath his palms.

He heard no sound save his own breathing. The first rays of the new sun were reaching into the sky before him, thrusting distinct lances of light through layers of ground mist which rose very slowly from the field. The mist had begun everywhere almost to glow. The number of rays increased until the entire eastern aspect began to shine, then the sun itself broke silently above the horizon behind the skeleton of a tree. He saw in the new light an earthen sconce directly before him, a low, flat mound still in shadow, surmounted by a drooping flag whose emblem he could not see.

From beside him in the ditch he heard a smart rattling and the hushed clang of armor. Forms stepped up out of the shadow and gleamed sharply in the sun. He felt a general rush over the low ditchwall and found himself being carried with it, lumbering heavily and unwillingly towards the sun's painful glare above the sconce. Still the only sound was a subdued, rhythmical jangling of plate and weaponry. A whole line of *corseletes* had taken up running over the ground, splashing through depressions in which mud sucked at their boots and threatened to throw them down. The brilliant rim of the sun seemed to draw him onward.

He soon found himself short of breath. The pace was slow, but he could scarcely keep his balance in the slippery spots, so quickly had his legs weakened from the effort of running. About him, however, the line was moving more rapidly. The orange sphere had risen higher; the writhing mists about their feet seemed already to be thinning. To his right, a man grunted as he stumbled upon a stone or hole in the earth; it was Lord Harry Howard, clad cap-à-pie in the same ungraceful trappings, breathing stertorously through half-opened mouth. The shadowy sconce began to assume some definition: two triangular ravelins protruded from its front, their angles pointed straight into the advancing force, and along the tops of the ravelins and along the top of the sconce one could make out dark heads and the glint of weaponry catching the light behind.

All in a burst of noise upon the rustle of the rush came a volley of gunfire, a single vast explosion all along the sconce that degenerated into a ragged series of late reports. White and black smoke commingled in a long, flat cloud rising slowly into the sun's light. Cries

of pain and dismay rang out sharply along the charging line, followed by an ascending chorus of shouts. Some few began yelling out the cry of "Esperance!" but most emitted rather groans as loud as shouts. He himself was making the same unholy noise, a bestial cry compounded of despair, bewilderment, and the mere necessity of making a frightened and frightening sound. Another fusillade broke out from the sconce, more smoke, and the hellish cry rose still louder, the pace of running increased still more. His legs encased in heavy cuisses dragged beneath him in a terrible kind of double-shuffle through the mist.

After the second volley the shooting broke down into a steady, irregular fire *ad libitum*, as the defenders began the ghastly dance of the firing line, each man stepping up to the bank to discharge his piece, then retreating hastily to set about reloading, making room for another in his place. From the field all that could be seen were the tiny billows of smoke bursting out horizontally and drifting slowly upward to join the heavy cloud already dimming the new sun, or rather than dimming it, throwing its sphere into relief and turning its rays to a sickly sheen over the whole ground. A staccato rhythm of small shot was set up to beat upon the advancing line.

The man to his left cried out and fell. He looked down and saw the face of Cuthbert Mayne, the quondam priest, in a new repose. Just beyond him Mr. Tregian grasped his middle and fell, with a sadly sympathetic smile upon his lips. Running as fast as he could, he was barely able to stay up with the line. With a shock he noticed the earl of Southampton, dressed in the plate and leather of the common conscript out of Norwich or Valencia, sprawling head downward into the mud to lie with arms outstretched. Francis Southwell, who'd come up to fill the place on his left, fell also, with a murmur, and with a squashing thud.

The rolling cloud of smoke grew denser still. The same continuous firing kept up from the sconce, and the line was growing thinner, the field over which it had advanced now strewn with dead and sobbing wounded. He reached the obliquely running ditch, a shallow, empty watercourse, and leapt across it, wishing rather he had the courage to lie down in it and cover his head with his arms. Lord Harry went down, fallen to his knees, toppling slowly over with his eyes closed. Before him a slight man was struggling beneath the weight of his accoutrements; overcome by exhaustion, he let fall his weapons and came to a stop. Within a second he had been struck by a ball and tumbled backwards. Francis Throgmorton could be seen plashing through the mire, but he seemed to lose his footing and fall, shot through.

The line was thoroughly thinned down. The earls of Arundel and Northumberland, the latter ridiculous in his colorful panache surmounting his steel cap, both fell abruptly and lay still on either side of him. He was nearly incapable of breathing, but seemed to be running on muscle fiber only, though his stride had shortened even further to what seemed a hideous waddle. Mr. Shelley, further down the line, spun sharply and fell without a sound. The ravelins seemed close, still spewing orange darts of flame and furious billows of dirty smoke in a pandemoniac din. He was running almost alone, directly into the rattling guns. About him there were but one or two clusters of charging men, no longer yelling, with a few more groups further along what had once been the brave line. He kept pumping his legs with all the strength he had remaining, but his arms had grown useless and beat idly against his breastplate; the javelin had slipped from his grasp, the sword still waved in the air by his shoulder.

Lord Paget drew up short, turned to look sadly at him, then dropped over. His eyes swept crazily over the sconce and caught again the enemy's flag upon its staff, but as it hung straight down amid the smoke it was impossible to tell what emblem was borne upon it. He struck a wet place and lost his footing; a hand prevented his falling and helped him regain his small momentum, but then its owner, Thomas Throgmorton, spun away and lay immobile in a pool of water. Fitzherbert, too, fell with a thud as they approached within twenty meters of the arquebusiers of the other side, and so too fell the others remaining in his party.

He came to a halt. The musket fire had diminished not one whit; the din was outrageous, the smoke rolled thickly out from the defenseworks. Dimly through it he could see the movements of the enemy, stepping up to fire, stepping back to make room, regular as a diabolical clockworks. He stood all alone. Overhead, God in his providential care of the right watched grimly. He turned back to stare into the guns. A thousand flaming orange knives stabbed out at him, the filthy, acrid smoke boiled round him. His armor was gone and he stood now in his open doublet and stained hose, waiting to be torn up by a shower of shot.

But his luck held a little longer, and he awoke.

The Channel sea pounded hard upon the strand, a great roar with each wave as it broke over the rocks and sandy shingle below, followed by a receding line of lesser crashes north-eastward along the coast. The booming and rebooming sea seemed almost like the din of modern battle. From the sky above the sea a flood of pale, new light poured into his chamber.

Arundell lay still.

The room in which he woke was the pattern of comfortable grace. His bed, where now he lay lowering over his dream, was a massive envelope of soft down, enclosed with a quadrate curtain of plissé. The writing desk and a set of chairs, delicately carved of a fine dark wood, stood beneath a pair of windows a bit larger than was custom. Even the chamberpot was of china, ringed with detailed depictions of the lives of saints. The walls were hung with elegant religious works and with portraits of various ancestors of the family of Guise, most of them in the habiliments of bishops and cardinals, hard bold faces wreathed symbolically with the True Vine or with cryptic mottoes and homiletic cautions, signed with dates reaching back nearly a century. In the cold fireplace sat an iron trivet cast in the form of three fishes.

The dream continued to disquiet him. He was impatient with the oneiromantic fancies of the peasants, which he considered to be like so much else of their lore, attempts to find small comfort where otherwise there would be none. But this dream was redolent of prophecy. So many of his friends fallen from him in a headlong rush through time, himself almost alone, his last friends perhaps falling from him soon, until he stood alone, defenseless, indeed.

It was equally redolent of ordinary fear, unworthy of him.

No good allowing dreams to rule his waking hours, too. He shook his head and clambered briskly out of bed, and threw a rug across his shoulders. The air in the château was freezing, and the brick floor set his legs to trembling. Through a service door he stepped into the adjoining room and woke Sharrock. Jamie arose and came in to blow up Arundell's

fire in the grate; he returned a moment later with his own clothing and dressed before the new blaze, then ran down to alert the house.

Arundell brought the warmed water from the trivet and set about shaving before a steel glass. His toilet knife was duller than prudence would have had it, and he nearly slit his throat with a trembling hand. He wrapped a linen scarf about the tiny wound before donning his ruff, which would conceal the mishap well. His hose and breeches he set across the fender and waited in his shirt beneath the covers till they warmed.

The day, though cold, was coming up clear, but with snow clouds in the offing. The gray Channel showed choppy and restless even from a distance, for there came over it a stiff northerly breeze. When he descended to breakfast, he found that Gilbert Gifford had preceded him and was already engaged upon his meal. The priest wore a rich gentleman's dress and was bundled up with additional padding beneath his doublet and, apparently, two pair of breeches one within another, so that with his natural heaviness he looked comical. This was the day when he was to go upon the sea, and he had dressed for the journey.

Gifford was travelling into England. With letters from Morgan and Paget, he'd been entrusted with the task of reaching the queen of Scots and discovering a new method of communicating with her. The challenge seemed insuperable, and Arundell thought it a fool's errand. She dwelt now at Tutbury near Derby under the careful eye of Sir Amias Paulet, a thorough Puritan who left nothing at all to chance.

The old channels of many years' efficiency, devised and followed in the fifteen years of Queen Mary's wardship under the kindly earl of Shrewsbury, were no longer workable. Her servants were forbidden all contact with the servants of the house, so no packets could pass that way. When she rode for exercise, no longer was she permitted to greet her well-wishers among the common people as she passed; the young gentlemen who joined those jostling throngs in order to thrust missives into her maidens' hands had now no opportunity to approach. Her palfrey, with the queen sidesaddle upon it, was directed instead over open countryside, away from the villages, surrounded by eight or ten horsemen armed with dags.

The problem that presented itself, for anyone who tried to reach her, was focused upon the queen's own domicile. Bringing her correspondence to and from the continent was easy; it could always be smuggled over by priests or gentlemen or sympathetic merchants, but even these shifts were unnecessary, because as Mauvissière, the former French ambassador, had done, so now Châteauneuf, these three months the new ambassador, would continue to permit the use of his diplomatic pouches for the purpose. Transferring her mail from the French embassy to the neighborhood of Queen Mary's house in the country was not much more difficult, but that was the end. Only once in the year since she had been removed to Tutbury in January 1585, a bearer had found the means to reach her secretly. Otherwise, in all that time, the only method had been for the French ambassador to turn her packets over to Walsingham or Phelippes, who would open and read them before having them handed in to the captive queen. This method was not useful.

There had been that one time, in August, when Robert Poley had found a means of reaching her, and no one in the queen's party quite understood how he had accomplished it; partly for that very reason, the queen had refused to trust him. Despite Morgan's letter introducing him, she thought Poley's attachment to the earl of Leicester in former years and to Walsingham's household now sufficient to disqualify him, and she had left for him

a polite reply and refusal of his services. And so for a full year there had been no secret correspondence with her. Now, in December 1585, of all the discussions, hopes, schemes, invasions planned in her behalf, by romantic partisans, by sober ministers of foreign states, she knew nothing but her own imaginings, nothing but the conjectures or confections of her secretaries, Curle and Nau. The squabbings among her partisans, the accusations of some by others and back again of treachery or unreliability, she had been spared; the uses of her money she remained ignorant of, which Mr. Morgan and Mr. Paget carried on with, in her name, bravely. When Châteauneuf had arrived in London, he'd inherited a carpetbag full of letters, and had still found no way of sending them to her.

Unless some man she would trust could find a way of piercing Walsingham's blockade about Tutbury, she would remain isolated utterly, unable to warn her friends of the increasing severity of her imprisonment, incapable of being warned of threats to her safety or of new attempts to free her. Her own great fear was that thus cut off and at the mercy of Leicester's favorers, she might be made away secretly, with neither the English queen's nor any other prince's knowledge. Regularly she wrote to Queen Elizabeth begging some relief, but her letters, delivered to her keeper and transmitted by him to Walsingham, seemed never to come to Elizabeth's eyes.

Gifford had no scheme for remedy, but he did have Morgan's introduction, and through the social standing and long suffering of his family he had the most Catholic of credentials. If he could once contrive to reach her, doubtless she would trust him. Disguised as a brave gentleman, he was to enter the realm and make his way to Staffordshire, and then to try his best wit and ingenuity. He had joined a party travelling north from Paris. Throgmorton had gone to Geneva to meet Lord Paget, Charles Paget remained in Paris near Mr. Morgan still in the Bastille, but several other Englishmen journeyed with him. Fitzherbert and Berden had stopped in Rouen on business there, but Arundell had brought Gifford onward through the duke of Guise's territory, as a sort of living passport, to Eu, where they slept overlooking the sea in the duke's house. There for almost a week they had awaited the day when the ship should meet Gifford in Dieppe, which was today, the very day upon which Arundell's own business should come to him in this same house.

When Arundell, musing upon his dream, came down to the warm kitchens, Gifford tried making cheerful conversation. Nothing about the man seemed quite right to Charles, nor did he sound really cheerful now; it was a forced, perhaps a sycophantic heartiness. Arundell replied politely, distantly. As always he avoided discussing anything of consequence with the man. The truth was that he had taken a strong dislike to the coarse priest even upon first meeting him, and so had Fitzherbert and Berden, but all three had done their best to hide that from him. The man was after all undertaking a dangerous mission in their lady's behalf; it would not do to show ingratitude or meanness. And in any case Arundell feared he disliked the man for unworthy reasons, for his physical vulgarity, rather than for any true cause.

After the meal, Arundell and Gifford, Sharrock and one of the duke's household men, bundled into greatcoats and set out for Dieppe harbor. Snow had begun falling and had accumulated to an inch or more, respecting which, the duke's man led them away from the cliffside path, which had grown treacherous, and towards the more circuitous highway. Well before the noon hour they arrived at the port. Arundell rode past the royal dockmaster's house and straight on to the duke's officer, who dwelt above a tavern on the wharves. Since the outbreak of the new French wars, there were royal garrisons in all of these northern har-

bors, but they were small companies, merely symbolic of the crown's alliance with the Holy League, and since they were here only upon the duke of Guise's sufferance, the merchants and travellers merely passed them by and spoke directly to the duke's own men.

They found the officer in the wineshop below his chambers. Glancing over Arundell's warrant from the duke, the master rose and guided them into the snow to the proper ship, sailed by a man named Nicholas de Hew from Calais, where Gifford made his final arrangements, thanked Arundell for his aid and begged him to pray for his success, then went below to await the captain's getting under way. Light snow hissing as it fell upon the water made the journey seem exceedingly forbidding.

Arundell and Sharrock returned to the dockside taverns and began making inquiries for the men he was to meet there. One of them, Captain Gay, they found immediately. He was a big, intelligent looking man, apparently a Scotsman though he used his flawless French to turn aside any inquiries about his origins. The captain's colleague, however, had not yet appeared, and the three men, when they had searched all of the waterfront inns, stopped in the best of them to dine. About midafternoon Captain Francisco found them out.

Francisco wore the expensive dress of a seagoing caballero; perhaps he was a Spanish younger son whose father had fitted him with a small command in King Philip's naval forces. That would have been some time ago, for he looked some thirty-five or more years old and he had long since forsaken the Mediterranean galley fleets and now spent his time in the North Atlantic and among the Channel islands, independent of any regular commanders but as often as not serving the duke of Guise. His small bark was nominally a merchant carrier, but she had a warship's lines and armament, and Francisco took more voyages in escort of other merchants or preying upon them than he ever did with cargoes of his own. The same was true of Captain Gay. There had been a time when both men could freely roam through all the northern seas, but since Admiral Winter's patrols of the English and Irish waters and since the Sea Beggars had come to dominate all the Dutch coastline, they sailed seldom above the Gulf of St. Malo or the Channel islands, and indeed cruised mostly in the Bay of Biscay preying upon Huguenot shipping from La Rochelle.

They had come up the Channel now, however, to confer with Arundell at the duke's appointment. While their seamen stood watch on their ships or took leave in the quayside havens, the two captains borrowed horses from the duke's officer and joined Arundell in returning to Eu. A few armed sailors accompanied each of them.

When they had regained the duke's chateau, the snow was falling more densely and dusk had come on prematurely. The servants of the house had lit lamps in the corner tower. Within, unexpectedly, Arundell found Berden and Fitzherbert awaiting him, and by the time the introductions had been made, the duke's people had spread an ample dinner on the board.

Berden and Fitzherbert were in a particularly jocund mood. They made an amusing pair, the former small and slight and softspoken, the latter as far above the average height as Berden was below it, his head as dark as Berden's was fair. They seemed already in four months' time to have developed great affection for each other, and indeed seemed two as honest and gentle men as one might meet. Likewise, the sea captains proved to be amiable companions, and altogether the evening, with the aid of the duke's good wines, passed enjoyably.

On the following day, Arundell and the seamen drew apart into the duke's study and fell to discussion. The matter was a toy of the duke's, which Arundell was obliged to pretend he took seriously, though it was just the sort of thing which if taken seriously might prove very dangerous. When the hostilities in France had broken out afresh, the duke of Guise had naturally turned his resources to defeating the Huguenot armies. As a consequence, his frequent plans for the conquest of England and the liberation of the queen of Scots had been thrust to one side, temporarily as he declared; for as the duke told Arundell and others in confidence, he fully expected from these wars not only to expunge the Protestants from the realm but also to emerge with the king himself firmly under his own "guidance." At that time, with Spain and a renewed France united in Catholic zeal, the reduction of England to the ancient faith should be but child's play, and he intended to accomplish the task himself.

Many interested persons, however, like the English Jesuits and their favorers, had finally given up their hope of the duke's support in arms, for they believed that, as he never had been, so he never would be free of such distractions. Consequently, they were fixing their dreams and their diplomacy upon the king of Spain, because though he had his own distractions in the Netherlands he might yet be got to see the invasion of England as a part of a larger strategy ultimately the most advantageous to himself as well as to God. England, after all, was now well into the Dutch wars. While the prince of Parma awaited the new season in his winter quarters in Brussels, English money and men had been crossing to the northern States; the earl of Leicester had been invested with the command of an expeditionary force that was expected to come over almost any day. King Philip ought in reason to be persuaded that the only way to stop this flow of reinforcements to his rebels, as well as finally to end the depredations of the English seadogs in his American colonies, would be to launch a great armada against England herself.

But the duke of Guise was not to be omitted from the English business. Whether from a sense of obligation to his favorers or merely to keep his thumb in the English pie, he was making a new proposal. If he could not now make an invasion, for which he had already obtained the papal sanction, he meant instead a less ambitious operation. This scheme he had charged Arundell to fulfill, deeming it quite rightly a great honor for the Englishman, and he had had Arundell broach the matter to both the nuncio and the Spanish ambassador. This Arundell had done, and Mendoza especially had approved the plan enthusiastically and offered to make some pecuniary contribution to its success. M. Simier had been suggested as a lieutenant.

The plan of course was a mad one, the creature of a fevered brain. Arundell, though he carried on in negotiating it, prayed the while that it would like most other such schemes die aborning. The duke called it his "roving enterprise": Arundell was to take however many ships he could get together, with some six or seven hundred men, sail from St. Malo around Land's End and up the Bristol Channel to land in Somersetshire. There he would march at double speed into the country rounding up as many of the gentlemen of wealth and worship dwelling in those parts as his men could lay their hands upon. Then, having destroyed whatever fortifications or large structures he could easily take, he was to regain his ships and set to sea, returning directly to France where the gentlemen would be held until their ransoms had been arranged.

Arundell had always dreamed of one day going home--this perversely mocked his dream. He had permitted himself to dally with the image of himself at the head of an invading

army; the common people flocking to him as their champion and liberator as he rode up Fleet Street; the home militia coming over to his standard with never a shot fired, the earl of Leicester and a handful of his base companions caught in flight in the midlands and hauled before him, as he sat near the grateful queen at Greenwich, for summary judgment. But his sober mind better knew how unlikely it was that he or anyone might conquer nations with no blood shed, with no cruelty of troops upon populace, victorious upon defeated. It was only his daydream, his Knight of the Lion or Amadis of Gaul, which amused him harmlessly. With the duke's new emprise, he seemed required to take this boyish chivalric task in hand in earnest, rampaging through England like Godfrey de Bouillon among the Paynims, despite its perfectly obvious foolishness to any man of sense. The only thing more foolish than actually leading such an expedition would be to tell the duke of Guise that the scheme was foolish. Zealots have a logic of their own.

So Arundell dealt soberly with Gay and Francisco about the sums needed to retain their crews, to outfit such other ships as might be required, to provide the marines the ships should have to carry. The seamen disagreed about the best time for sailing: Gay recommended midsummer, when the harvests were coming in and most of the English army had shipped across to the Netherlands; Francisco preferred the first turning of the weather, in order well to precede the Spanish fleet rumored to be in preparation against England. But they agreed in urging a revision of the duke's intention to send Arundell on to the coast of Brittany with them. They would canvass the possibilities for recruiting ships and men, while Arundell, they insisted, must return to Paris and argue for more funds, especially for their own retainers. Later he could join them in Brest, when once he had the money. These were intelligent men.

Arundell himself, *in petto*, thanked God and the stars for the delay. Self-serious negotiating over freely flowing wine in the duke's warm house was almost fun, but hiring ships for a flying piratical raid was something altogether different. There was many a slip 'twixt the cup and the Bristol Channel.

After luncheon, Francisco and Gay and their escort departed for their ships, and the others bundled warmly up and took a walk along the cliffs. Below, across the steel-gray sea, there was not a sail anywhere in sight, nor along the beach was there any human traveller. The harshness of the weather, bitterly cold and snowy to their boottops, and the vacancy of the seascape combined to bring in an agreeable sense of isolation, with corollary feelings of human insignificance and the terrible indifference of this great world to man. They discussed these themes animatedly and imperfectly quoted from the ancient authors, while Mr. Berden maintained that the gray ocean was but a mask which all-seeing God wore to hide his kindly smile, as a pleasant hour passed. Then they stuffed snow down one another's backs and hastened back to the fireside.

In the evening, they drank too much wine and reminisced about winters in England.

On the following day, they tipped the duke's steward with the duke's money and set out for Paris.



Captain de Hew's little ship came up the Rye Bay about two hours before dawn. Passing Camber on the right, the traffic from Winchelsea plainly visible on the other side, she entered the river and made under small sail up into the harbor pool. There were only a

scattering of other craft upon the water. The Frenchman loosed his anchors and ordered the boats to be dropped over the board.

Gilbert Gifford and several other passengers were rowed in with the first boat ashore. He alighted on the quays amid the offloading of other cargoes and the cries of merchants' factors about their business. As he had no more luggage than he could carry, he tarried no longer there, but took up his bags and strolled slowly up the docks. The queen's officer met all the newly arrived as they reached the end of the street. Gifford gave his name ("Nicholas Cornellys") and identified himself as a gentleman soldier returning from the Netherlands to attend to business before going to rejoin his company. His papers confirmed that story.

When he had safely passed the searcher, he left his companions and began walking away into the town of Rye. He passed down a row of busy shops, almost beyond the sight of the docks, and paused to purchase a pastry from a hawker. Two men stepped up on either side of him and addressed him in low tones. Gifford seemed taken aback and could be seen answering excitedly. They laid hands upon his arms. He shook them off and made to move away; a third man stepped from the doorway of a chandler's shop and blocked his path. He stared about him in evident frustration. Then all four men walked into a passage between the buildings, where four horses awaited them ready-saddled. They mounted and edged their way into the center of the street, then set off at a brisk pace along the London road, one man before, one at either hand, and Gifford riding evenly along, squarely in the middle.



In Paris, when Arundell and his friends returned in mid-December 1585, there were new tidings. The French spoke only of the shifting progress of the wars against the Huguenots in the south and west. The Englishmen however could speak of nothing but Scotland. The Protestant lairds hiding out in England had been permitted by the English Council to return home. They had ridden swiftly and surprised the young king at Stirling; the Catholic earl of Arran, who controlled him, had been deposed, and the Protestants were once again in the ascendant. Those who had been encouraged by King James's rapid inclining towards the old faith now expected soon to see him come to friendly terms with Queen Elizabeth. Those who had begun to look to him as the best hope of a Catholic successor in England in view of his mother's desperate situation, found themselves more than ever constrained to consider a Spanish invasion as the only chance left. The rumor was going round that the queen of Scots had willed her title to the English crown to King Philip if she should not be alive to claim it.

Lord Claude Hamilton was in a quandary. Though he lived in Parisian exile a devoted Catholic, yet his brother Lord John had ridden with the returning Protestants and was reported now to be in great power in Edinburgh. Lord John, though no papist, was well disposed towards Queen Mary in his heart and furthermore would welcome his brother's return. Some urged him to go home therefore, so that he might cast his die in what was becoming there an open game of hazard.

Not long after the first news of the Scottish troubles had reached their ears, the gentlemen planned a meeting to determine together the truth of them and decide their best course. The archbishop of Glasgow was chosen to play host in his capacious rooms, less for their capacity than because they seemed a sort of neutral ground. He was a kindly, elderly man who had been the longest in exile of them all, having served as the queen of Scots's ambassador here even when she had reigned in her own realm, twenty years ago. Since that time,

if he had lost the management of most of her affairs, still he held her trust and the trust of nearly everyone among the several factions. His own position was well known, though it was generally regarded as a merely sentimental one. He opened the conference by restating it: political cunning quite apart, the queen of Scots was the lawful queen of Scotland and the lawful heir of England, and as long as she lived he was bound to uphold her titles. For her son James, the young king, Glasgow prayed for him daily and hoped that God would care for him and bring him up aright, but for his own part, his loyalty, true and undivided, he owed to Queen Mary alone.

Mr. Foljambe and Charles Paget arose together to reply and quickly fell to arguing over who should speak next. The archbishop asked them both to be seated, for he wished his countryman Lord Hamilton to have the first response. Claude, as he began, praised the aged prelate's devotion at some length and voiced his own undiminished allegiance to the queen, but then insisted that it was well known--and here he gestured towards the earl of Westmoreland and several others of his friends--it was well known that Queen Mary's case, in sober fact, was hopeless, so securely was she hedged about by the Leicestrian English government, for nothing at all might be done for her but Secretary Walsingham would dispatch her at once; and if the Jezebel of England were suddenly to die, Leicester and Walsingham and the atheistic Puritans would kill her just as speedily, for they had learned that lesson too well in Leicester's father's time to think they would keep their heads if she should ever come to that throne.

There were murmurs throughout the room. Lord Claude raised his hand and went on to say that, their love for the queen apart, what mattered most at this time was the fate of Scotland itself. In its present state, ruled by the Anglophile lords, the realm should soon be "mere kirk", its Catholics persecuted as England's were, its young king a Protestant puppet whose strings were pulled by the English Council. If, on the other hand, matters could be turned round there, the whole realm might be saved for the Holy Church and, after the Jezebel's time, the young king would ascend the English throne in the right of his mother, a strong prince Catholic in his heart, backed by his own forces and by all the good princes of Europe. And therein, he said, lay the hope for Catholic England. He ended by advising that they continue to love the queen of Scots for her holy life, but set about presently, by intrigues, military projects, and the introduction of uncountable numbers of priests and Jesuits there, to reclaim the Scottish kingdom before the new changes became settled.

His penultimate words set up a hubbub of dispute throughout the chamber. The mere mention of Jesuits brought remonstrations from many of the gentlemen, who like Charles Paget and the priest Gratley grew into a rage whenever the fathers of the Society were named. Others, like Foljambe and Tunstead, defended the Jesuits nearly as vociferously. Simultaneously, Lord Hamilton's mention of military expeditions evoked a babble of opinion, less about the sites and size of any landings than about the old question of the auspices under which they should be made.

Some insisted that invasion by foreigners was unnecessary, that the English answer to England's woes remained as always a well-planned rising among the Catholic majority at home. Foljambe and the friends of the Jesuits, however, insisted upon looking to the Spanish king for the great attempt, through the instrumentality of his own fleet of ships and the prince of Parma's soldiers, and they avowed that it was only a question of time before the pope and the king of Spain should agree upon the terms. Westmoreland decried the Jesuits' meddling in Rome but agreed that King Philip should be brought to hold up his end. The

earl, however, had recently taken up a hatred of Parma, who seemed to hold his English regiment (or the earl's command of it) in some disdain, and so he much blamed the prince for being an ambitious temporizer and exclaimed that the troops could only come from that excellent Catholic Hannibal, the duke of Guise. He wished to know where Mr. Arundell was, who should speak to them of the duke's true meaning towards them and their cause.

At length, Charles Paget regained their attention and said that he could walk with them all who held for the need for a great landing. He agreed likewise that when a crusading army did arrive, all of the Catholics in England could be trusted to rise up to a single man and overthrow the heretics, so that it did not much matter whose army did the invading, as long as someone invaded, with at least sufficient force to cause the devout and the well-disposed Englishmen to take heart and rouse themselves. Let them therefore, he said, seek help everywhere, and cease quarrelling.

But Paget reminded them that in all their talk of war and uprisings, he had heard no more words spoken of the queen of Scots. He and Mr. Morgan held themselves firm for her safety above all things, and responsible for the same, and this, he said, was where all their efforts lay. Those who were in the bosoms of great princes, he said somewhat acrimoniously, might dream recklessly of leading such armies as the duke of Guise's to conquest, perhaps only for their own glory, if the truth were known, but he thought it much more needful that they should strive to bring her majesty to safety, and cease immediately to think of her as already lost. The great plots should come in good time after her majesty were well assured.

At the door, Charles Arundell and Nicholas Berden appeared, shown in by a man in livery. It was understood that Paget's disparaging allusion had been to Arundell, and everyone paused to watch his reaction. The two men nodded to their acquaintances and moved carefully to take up vacant stools. From Arundell's grim expression it was apparent that he had caught the sense of those remarks.

Mr. Foljambe spoke up to take exception to Paget's implications. They all cared for the queen's safety quite as much as he and Morgan did, he said. The fact remained that as matters stood nothing could conveniently be done for her without endangering her life, and it would be an injustice to cease working for the freedom of all Englishmen only because she lay beyond their reach.

"Excellent Mr. Foljambe," Paget said, pacing behind the archbishop's chair as if he were reading the lectures in one of the colleges in the next street; "I beg to tell you that your errors are manifest to all. For first, the freedom of Englishmen with God's help and good time is assured. No injustice done by us can prevent the triumph of the Lord's battle against heresy. I wonder that you doubt it. In the second place, my lady the queen's cause is not by no means hopeless. On the very contrary, we have every meaning to succeed in making her free and secure from harm."

Several in the room murmured in indignant assent to Paget's proposition, as if censuring a different kind of heresy. Foljambe made as if to reply, but Paget spread his hands largely and continued.

"For first, my friends, you must know that of any attempts for her good the good queen must be timely warned, and to that end we have not been idle. Our friend Gifford is engaged in renewing correspondence with her majesty, and should he fail, others will succeed. Likewise, there are those in England at this day who would hazard life and limb and all they have to bring her away from danger. I speak particularly of Mr. Anthony Babington and my

Lord Windsor's brother and their century of friends, all much loved at court but devoted wholly to her cause. You may easily believe that when they see their opportunity they will do much, all at our direction. And last, I will tell you that we have more friends, even in the bosoms of the Council's self, who warn us daily of what passes there to our lady's disadvantage."

Tunstead seemed incredulous. "Do you mean that there are spies in the Privy Council itself? Who are they, man?"

Paget paused melodramatically and looked about the room appraisingly, as if deciding how far his listeners might be trusted. "I am to tell you," he replied, "that we have friends in great places, who inform us of what is needful. More than that I may not safely say."

"Come, come, plain dealing," Arundell said. "Who are these cunning spies?"

"Mr. Arundell, for causes to himself best known, would have that knowledge which is most dangerous to our lady's most devoted friends. Will it not suffice that I tell you straight, there are some, whom Mr. Morgan and myself know well, and will not divulge it even upon the rack to put them in hazard of destruction, who will tell us if anything is meant against our lady, so that we may prevent it. And in the meantime, we will so manage ourselves and our friends, I warrant you, that in not too long time she will be free and maybe queen of England! For my part, I wish Mr. Arundell and others could say as much of themselves."

"Paget, have you not considered that there be spies among us as well as among them? Is it not most probable that the Secretary will learn of all your attempts before her majesty herself will hear of them?"

Again Charles Paget preferred to address the whole assembly. "My friend Arundell's doubt of spies among us is well advised. I grant to him a perfect knowledge of such things as spies among us. It may be there are some who to line their purses with English gold would basely deliver our lady to the very carnifex--perhaps he can point them out to us--but I assure him again that the business will be managed very secretly and none shall hear a syllable but them that we may trust."

"Oh, Mr. Paget," cried Berden, "this is too bad. You cast aspersions which are needless upon Mr. Arundell, whose only care is for the queen. For, think you, will you not bring her majesty into far greater peril by scheming ill-advised among yourselves? Let it be!"

Paget, who was growing quite angry at such outspoken criticism, replied heatedly from behind the archbishop's chair. "For the queen's safety, let me alone for that! Mr. Morgan and myself have been her majesty's best friends when you, sir, were safely at home in bed. I will tell you where her danger is! It is the duke of Guise and other such great men who would invade realms and fight pitched fields without a care i' the world for her life, that is where her danger is. Speak not to me of dangers. Every year a new plot for invading! Still she lies in prison."

He spun round and faced the middle of the room. "If Mr. Morgan had been of the duke's good counsel, as right was, we should never have had such mad schemes, barren of all issue. If Mr. Morgan had been trusted by the duke of Guise, I say again, and not some others who are present, and their Jesuitical companions, who woo him to lunatic designs careless of our lady's life. And who," he said still more loudly, "and who even now persuade his grace to keep Mr. Morgan in durance here!"

Excitement had been spreading outward over the assembly as a sort of expanding electrical field. Men had been sitting up straighter in their chairs and on their stools and nodding agreement or slapping their thighs in annoyance. At Paget's last words some of them set up uttering angry exclamations. "Why," said Paget, in mock surprise, "why, do you think Mr. Morgan should still be in prison these nine months because the English Jezebel only wished it? Because Mr. Stafford demanded it? Never believe it! It is the wholly Jesuited duke of Guise who works upon the king to keep him there."

Several men took up the theme of outrage and rounded upon Arundell with wrathful oaths.

"Quite true," Arundell shouted back, "it is quite true that his grace the duke keeps Morgan where he does less harm. For why, think you? Every man with eyes can see what the duke himself sees, with no man's advice, nor mine. Mr. Morgan is not sound!"

"Not sound!" The earl of Westmoreland stood up and shook his heavy, gray head in rage. "Not sound, say you?"

Arundell arose and stepped to the table behind which Paget stood. "Who is the man Hert," he cried, "that is the Secretary's great confidant?"

Berden, leaning forward nearby, interrupted in his friend's aid. "For shame, Mr. Paget, it is too well known that in the name of Hert you kept a correspondence with the Council to the near ruin of some of our best. Why does not the duke trust Morgan and yourself!"

Others were yelling "hear, hear" and "speak up." Paget appeared nonplussed by the suddenness of the attack, but he rejoined without hesitating.

"It is a public matter that in the name of Hert I kept correspondence with the Secretary. It makes nothing to the matter here to say so! My only purpose was to discover the traitors among us here and there at the court, and so I said freely to his excellency the archbishop of Nazareth."

"You spoke so much publicly only because you knew it was known already, and would come to all men's eyes anon!"

Arundell said this upon impulse, as the opportunity arose, and observed his antagonist to see his reaction. Paget seemed genuinely surprised by the idea, however, and almost convinced Arundell that his guess had been a bad one.

Nicholas Berden reminded Paget that his explanation for his actions was a most convenient one and must be understood in light of the nuncio's verdict for those Hert had "discovered."

"Well," Paget returned to him. "It is enough that Mr. Arundell, and maybe those who friend him most, do understand my meaning. The queen of Scots will know her friends when she is free."

Arundell thumped the desk with his fist.

"Master Paget! I am as true a man for her majesty as any man i' the world. Never, I say, willingly will I let harm come to her. Some of those who daily protest most for her may mean least for her! You know the proverb is, 'A long tongue is a sign of a short hand.'"

"This is too much," cried the earl of Westmoreland. He too tried to rise but fouled his hangers in his chair. Dropping back into his seat, he began to expostulate about Paget and

Morgan being made to suffer because they were not Hispaniolated lovers of creeping Jesu-its. Gratley immediately took up the identical tune, and the debate degenerated further into a babble of abuse. Everyone, it seemed, had one chief complaint, peculiar to himself, against some other man.

Foljambe shouted that Hispaniolation was immaterial. He wished only to know where had gone the queen of Scots's money entrusted to Morgan's care. It seemed always to disappear among his and Paget's friends and never reached the purposes meant for it nor her followers most deserving. Why was it, he asked, that any man who wished to do her service must do it only at Mr. Morgan's bidding or receive no gratitude for the same? It was not so when the archbishop of Glasgow had had the keeping of her business.

Old Beaton seemed to miss the mention of his name, but remained staring nervously with a benevolent or tolerant smile at the whole group. Others were not so unmoved. Those who had had similar trouble with their pensions chimed in with their own recriminations, whereas others took up Morgan's defense no less loudly.

Westmoreland, his face gone livid, was shouting that Arundell, far worse, had a stranglehold upon the duke of Guise's favor, and it was through Arundell's influence upon the Spanish ambassador that the prince of Parma had thrust himself and his picked captains out of their regiment. Did not Arundell, he demanded, did not Arundell control the duke of Guise and deflect him from the aid of worthy Englishmen?

"No," Arundell shouted.

At the same time, Paget was exclaiming that he and Morgan could account for every farthing dispersed in the queen's cause, to which Foljambe inquired about the sums of her money dispersed in their own cause. Tunstead required to be told why he had never had an lcu of his own pension, why Tom Throgmorton had never had a pension at all. Arundell asked again, as he had many times, where had gone the three thousand crowns of his own he had sent out of England in times past, by way of a loan to the queen of Scots's accounts.

Paget raised his hands and shook his dark head in mimicry of an Hebrew moneychanger. "The same old song," he yelled. "Will you never cease mewling about money?"

"Will you never cease your thieving and your lying? How are men to live, when their honest debts are not repaid?"

"Oh my avaricious gentleman, you shall have it, you shall have your moneys. *Radix malorum est--*," Paget called. "Restrain your gross cupidity whiles we sit in a holy house at least."

Arundell fought down his wrath at being spoken to so by this perfidious little man. The confusion in the room grew still greater, and there was some jostling. Before him, this sordid fellow, once all obliquity and feigned deference, stared impudently back at him, apparently grown absolutely confident of his position here.

"Damn me," Charles hissed. "It is not the money. It is being served so by such blackguards!"

"Well, what will you do then?" crowed Paget. The others roundabout left off their own disputes and turned to observe. "What will you do? Will you write off a line to your sweet coz the Secretary of England? Has he been cunctatory in paying out thy wages?"

Arundell gave a low growl and dashed round the table, shoving Westmoreland out of his way. From a sheath beneath his doublet he swept out a short dagger and leapt upon Paget with the weapon held high. Paget fell squealing beneath him, both hands clutching Arundell's wrist. Lord Claude Hamilton jumped forward and grappled with Charles's middle, trying to drag him off, as Nicholas Berden dove across the table, directly over the archbishop, and pulled Arundell's arm away. Lord Hamilton and Berden between them succeeded in lifting Arundell almost upright, but he clung tightly to Paget and brought him up, too, and the entire clutch of them began spinning slowly towards the corner.

The earl of Westmoreland with difficulty regained his feet, swearing fearfully, and tried to draw out his rapier. Somehow it became snagged in his belt, and he bent over to free it, giving Mr. Foljambe time to dart across and take it from him.

Lord Hamilton finally wrested the knife from Arundell's grip and threw it into the case-ment. With a great heave, however, Arundell tore himself free of those restraining him. He took hold of Paget's doublet with both hands and lifted him, then threw him into the wall, where he crashed down upon a table and lay in a heap staring up, much abashed.



Over gently rolling hills the frost lay like the mortal pallor. Beyond the river Trent, an icy haze hung in the sky above the valley, and the water flowed steely gray and uninviting. The scene was vacant of humanity. The wintry air, unusually cold even for the season, kept the simple folk indoors, and in the great houses throughout the country, the new Christmas holiday kept the gentry occupied with a round of festive gatherings.

Thomas Phelippes, no matter what people might say of him, was not immune to the cold or other pains. He was thoroughly well dressed, from a thick leather overjack above his doublet, surmounted by a lined riding cloak, to a pair of huge mitts, but he felt frozen through nonetheless. His small, slender frame trembled in the saddle. Across his pockmarked face and yellow beard he had wrapped a woolen piece which left only his eyes and the bridge of his nose uncovered. However the hard weather made him feel, it worked a miracle for his appearance. From the prominence upon which he sat atop his horse, he could see the young earl of Essex's house called Chartley. Thence in the earl's absence the queen of Scots had been removed a few days earlier, on the day of Christmas Eve, 1585. Tutbury Castle had grown unsweet, for the inhabitants were many and the facilities for sanitation no better than at any other house. Above Essex's protestations, Chartley had been chosen to replace it. Its furnishings had had to be enlarged, and for the purpose the crown had confiscated most of the household goods of Thomas the third Lord Paget, the attainted traitor who had fled the realm. Sheriff Gresley of the county had personally seen to the transport of fifty-six featherbeds, fifty-one coverlets, twenty common and eight standing bedsteads, seven pieces of old and ten pieces of new tapestry, six backed chairs, five taffetie curtains fringed with gold, four rugs and two turkey carpets, eighteen joint stools, eighteen iron spits, one frying pan, eight pewter chamberpots, one hundred and sixty pewter kitchen utensils, twenty-three halberds (some ceremonial), forty calivers and other light muskets, five barrels of gunpowder, ten cases of dags and smaller pistols, and ten pewter pie plates, among other things. He had also removed Lord Paget's son and sent him up to become the ward of one of Leicester's men. His lordship's aged mother and two of her daughters, Lady Anne Lee and Lady Ethelreda Allen, had been left to get on as best they could. Because Chartley lay somewhat more exposed, less easily defensible than Tutbury had been, the guard would have

to be increased as well. Whereas formerly there had been forty guardsmen recruited from the local country, quartered in Burton town to save room in the castle, more would soon be added to them. The six who were to stand watch at all times would be increased to eight or ten. The men could be hired without difficulty from among the destitute veterans dwelling as near as Derby; but that would be Paulet's task, of no concern to Phelippes now.

As he left the trees surrounding the house at some distance, Phelippes bent his head forward and tipped his leather bonnet over his eyes. The queen of Scots and some of her people knew him by sight. He had once tried, posing as a Catholic gentleman, to win her confidence and be entrusted with her correspondence, but somehow the queen had not only suspected his motives but rightly guessed his identity.

A small ice-covered creek ran diagonally down behind the house from the north, lined on either side with bare trees and low brambles. Beyond it, a layer of gray frost covered the meadow stretching from the rear of the house. The frigid air was soundless except for his own approach, his horse's breathing, the hooves crunching over the slope, the creak of his cold leather.

At the nether gate, he pounded at the door and was let into the tiny court within. Passing into the guardroom he divested himself of his outer clothing and got to business. The men of the watch told him that Paulet was out of the house, but shortly Brian Cave came down and joined him by the fire. Phelippes, as he warmed himself, handed in the letters he had brought from the court, and with Cave he discussed the new dispositions being made for the maintenance of the queen's household. He inquired particularly about the manner in which provisions would be supplied to the house from the nearby town.

The next day, Phelippes left his inn in the town of Burton and made his way to the brewery on the outskirts. Here labored the man who had been employed to furnish beer to the queen of Scots's household. By the terms of his arrangement, he was to travel to Chartley every Saturday morning with his wagonload of kegs, which he and his boys offloaded at the postern guard station, receiving in return the empty kegs of the past week. Because of competition in the neighborhood, the honest man had been in fear of losing his trade before this, but the addition of a regular business with the government fairly set him up.

Thomas Phelippes dismounted and sought the brewer out where he sat by his vats among his apprentices. They drew apart and spoke together in the stinking corner for nearly an hour's time, after which Phelippes bade him farewell and rode away towards the south.



Cog's bones, I am not in jest!"

Despite asseverations to the contrary, Sir Edward gave a great grin and seemed indecently pleased by the effect of his revelation.

"How a pack o' devils do they know that, now?" Arundell was surprised, indeed, but felt as well both frustration on the one hand and an oddly disengaged curiosity on the other. Several other patrons in their vicinity, mostly rivermen already well advanced upon the evening, stared at the pair stupidly.

"That I canna say, Charles, but they know it, aye. 'Twas put to me in the nicest detail--you and our ancient chum, that John Simyers, Simier, eh? the dancing fellow, off from Brittany with a master named Francisco. Mad jigs in Bristol, burning barns in Somerset. Ah, Charles,

what do ye do? I am ordered to have you clapt up by the authorities here upon hard informations of a harm meant to the queen."

"And will ye do me that great evil, Ned?"

"I already have done it, man. I spoke to Secretary Villeroy about it yester evening, the king being indisposed. I had quite a talk with him on that head. A' promised speedy action in the matter, indeed he did--the best reception I've had at court these five months."

"How exciting for you," Arundell said drily. He was not concerned about being arrested by the French officials just at the present. Stafford knew why.

"Y've nothing whatever to fear o' that, boy--not so long as ye stay in the grace of his grace, nor so long as the king and the duke stay in one camp each with other. Ye're quite well known, I find. I often think, Charles, if the king should ever stand on his own pegs at last and shake himself free o' that family of Guise, you will be the first to suffer, mark me. Disappear in the night, that is what y'will do."

Arundell had given thought to just that eventuality, and he dismissed it now. What struck him as important in this business, now the familiar puzzle but not less urgent, was how Walsingham and the Council had learned of his "roving enterprise" when not ten or twelve men besides himself and the duke of Guise had ever talked of it. Not even Stafford had he told it to, and the ambassador was less disposed to help him deduce the source of the intelligence than to twit him now with having withheld it from himself. Arundell took pains to assure his friend that he had never seriously meant actually to lead the expedition, but had to admit, when pressed, that if the duke had continued in his resolution he should certainly have had to follow the raiders in a leadership position. Which to all observers would have looked very much like leading it. Stafford appreciated the perilous delicacy of his situation, at least to the extent of finding it funny. He conjured an image of Arundell the reluctant privateer, dragged by his crew from prize to prize, from burning town to ruined fortress. As Sir Francis Drake was to the wide Atlantic, so Arundell to the lower Severn.

Charles merely growled acidulously, occasioning the observation from Sir Edward that he had gone far to becoming entirely humorless in the past eighteen months. Arundell assented to the proposition, but blamed it on the treachery he walked amid. Spies, it seemed, were everywhere--this "Hert" had tried to trip him up, another had put him in still worse odor with the English Council by this tale of the piratical raid; spies for the Council, spies for the Jesuits, for the Welsh faction, for the Spanish, the French crown, the Huguenots, the Dutch, spies everywhere--and he knew not whom to trust. Sledd seemed to haunt his thoughts, though he had not seen the frightful man in nearly a year. Stafford had been unable to discover what had become of the ugly footpad, nor, since the ambassador had none of the confidence of Mr. Secretary, had he learned whether Sledd was still an agent for Walsingham, for someone else, or not at all. No one seemed to know him anymore.

Stafford undertook to put Arundell's mind to rest. In his opinion, Arundell like many others was inclined to exaggerate the ubiquity of these determined secret agents. Some there were, no doubt, he said, who in the service of this or that paymaster infiltrated the conventicles of others and reported on them or subverted them or--who could say?--murdered their members foully in their beds. But these true covert agents were not many. Most news, it was his belief, came haphazardly, by voluntary submission from poor men seeking a gratuity or some small favor. He would venture to guess--and he looked at Arundell for a moment very earnestly--that not a single Catholic Englishman on this side the sea, or very few, had not

at one time or another penned a missive to Walsingham or Lord Treasurer Burghley or the earl of Leicester, begging favor and offering loyalty and service in return and filling the note with whatever news came readily to hand, in token of his future usefulness. Hardly one of them, excepting only some of the priests, he said, would not go home upon the instant if pardoned their sins and promised they might worship quietly in England. In the hope of earning that favor, they all sent news to the Council, some once, some regularly, while carrying on simultaneously their continuous scheming with every appearance of devotion to their cause.

Arundell, though he knew something like this to be quite true, protested that Sir Edward exaggerated cynically. The ambassador thought for a moment, quite serious himself now, then said that he did not exaggerate, that probably all of them (excluding the Jesuits, of course) sent letters to some great lord once in a way, but varied only in the truth or importance of the intelligence they offered. They often wrote to himself as well, pleading for his intercession; Charles would be astounded to hear the names of some who had sought his favor since he'd come to his present post. The quantity and quality of the information diverged greatly; some of it was quite general, or it was obsolescent or really obsolete or downright false; some of it was damnably accurate. Arundell's journey to the prince of Parma, for example, Stafford had been warned of by a man who signed himself "the Sibyl" and promised further intelligence on the same subject. Obviously the Sibyl had not been aware that Arundell went with Sir Edward's secret blessing, and in any case he had never again made contact. It was not important, he said, merely an exemplum of what every minister of state lived with daily: torrents of information, some good, some bad, with seldom any way of telling which were which until the event proved them true or false, when naturally it was too late to use them.

In any case, he bid Charles take heart from that. Since he had come so deeply into the duke of Guise's counsel, Arundell was inevitably a minor celebrity among the newsmonsters; his name would inevitably come up from time to time, sometimes in fanciful fictions, sometimes with embarrassing accuracy. This he might regret as a great nuisance, but need not fear as genuine treachery.

The effect of Stafford's speech was counter to his intent. Arundell seemed still more dispirited by this testimony to the careless faithlessness all about him than he had been by the spectre of resolute agents under every hassock. He observed that he could find "no book in a civil tongue"--as if every volume of ethics or faith or theory of states were written in some barbarous language. Stafford understood his metaphor, and he said that to his poor judgment, Arundell's perpetually melancholic mood came of his doubts of himself, not of those around him.

The server, responding with alacrity to Sir Edward's signal, placed two more mugs of porter before them. They ceased speaking until he had withdrawn. Then Arundell shook himself, as if to dispel the black fumes of moodiness, and drew out a purse of coins. The bag bulged unnaturally, so full had it been stuffed with money.

"The duke sends his gratitude with his money," Charles said with a touch of irony. "You and your lady may now dine well for a week and three days."

The ambassador received the purse and tucked it quickly beneath his jacket. He inquired casually how much it summed to.

"Three thousand *écus*, which he says is more than the figure mentioned. His good brothers the duke of Mayenne and the cardinal of Lorraine have made their contributions to this charitable fund."

Stafford nodded. He was thoughtful for a few moments, and then spoke rapidly. "You may inform the duke that the earl of Leicester has landed with his force. Even now he is enjoying triumphal progresses through the Hague and Amsterdam. The States salute him as if he were their king."

"That is known to them already," Arundell said. "The duke would wish particularly to know what plans they have for the campaigns of the new season, when these have been decided."

"I shall hardly learn of them at all. Nothing at all am I told of military matters there." Sir Edward thought again. "Well, I shall have somewhat ye may feed into his greedy maw when the time comes. What else?"

"He would know when Drake is to return from the Americas."

"I dunna know that. I think no man does. Drake returns when his hold is full or his powderkeg empty. Tell his grace that he is looked for in March or early April."

Arundell nodded. "The Spanish brag that he missed both the plate fleets in his passage westward."

Sir Edward noted that fact, for it was something he thought might not have been learned in London. He inquired mechanically about the reliability of the source, to which Arundell merely shrugged.

"Where is the French Jesuit, the duke's great friend?" Stafford asked. "The 'courier of the League'? I misremember his name. The Provincial of Paris."

Arundell laughed aloud and glanced about at his neighbors. Those who were not singing lustily their bargemen's ballads were asleep upon their tables.

"Father Claude, you mean. He has been 'retired,' as the phrase is among them. Back to the hermit's cell. Too much by half the cunning politico for his superiors in Rome." He laughed again. "God, Ned, even the duke found him unnerving. Lunatic zeal."

"I dare say," Stafford replied. "Where is the Marshal Biron's next sally out against the Protestants?"

"Ask me not. The duke knows not the same himself, but only has the king's promise, as great value as that may be, that the marshal will strike in force to Navarre's home country, directly the weather changes for the better. By mid-March at the latest. His grace is less exercised by Navarre than by the thought he has taken that the Swiss are coming in again. Someone has buzzed it in his ear that our queen has struck another bargain with them."

Again Sir Edward nodded.

"Is't true?" Charles asked.

"Dunno. Where lies the duke now?"

"Châlons-sur-Marne. Soon to ride for Orleans."

"Well." Stafford thought again.

"Where is the Lord Paget gone?"

"To Rome. Throgmorton has returned to us."

Sir Edward paused and reflected for several seconds. His hand, cradling his forehead, lifted slightly, and he looked at Arundell from beneath his palm.

"Something is afoot in the queen of Scots's cause. Know you what it is?"

"No. Where, here?"

"In London. A new compact of gentlemen to free her, it may be?"

"I know naught o'that. No word here."

"The name of one Babington?"

"Fails me now. Methinks I never heard the name."

"Or a secular priest called Ballard?"

"I know him not."

"Nor would you tell me, eh? You sentimentalist. I tell you again, she is safer by a long march if you divulge these fanatical ninnies to the Secretary before they descend upon her guards and bring in a general massacre." Stafford seemed both jocular and serious in saying this, and it was impossible to tell from his tone whether he considered that gruesome event a real likelihood.

"Always on the *qui vive*. Most especially for what may benefit Mr. Secretary to know." Arundell's tone, at least, despite his ironic words, was decidedly serious.

"Ah, ye buffoon," Stafford said, punching Arundell's arm affectionately. "Y'know your own trouble; I'll tell it to you. Whereas all your friends here, these faithless caterpillars who so inconvenience you, whereas they go amiss by being loyal to no cause, you, ye daft puny, you are loyal to 'em all! What a strange man are you. Ye'll come to no good whatever. Y're loyal t'everybody, Charles, y'slave."

"What an ugly, black mind you have, Ned, you eat too many herbs with your meat."

"Ha ha, and y'self, you've got the splenetic fog risen to your brain of late." Stafford went on laughing cordially at this gentle flying.

"Y'know, my good friend," he said, "I shall give to you a midgin o' the best counsel. Do ye recollect to mind an old play done at court now many years ago, later in print? A beastly written play it was, full of huffing and ruffing and snuffing in murderous verse and pious consequences, but there was in it the old Vice who was the best fellow o' the lot. Ambidexter he was called by, and that was his whole philosophy, which made him a merry fellow with never a one of the fears and dreadful doubtings which keep you in the dumps. One verse of his expressed it quintessentially, for when he once met with such a sour dedicated gentleman as you are, he gave out an awesome laugh and said, 'What! Can you not play with both hands, and turn with the wind?'"



Châteauneuf rose from his meal and stretched himself almost painfully. He liked very much the food he found in London and disposed of more of it than was strictly required by his health. In five months here, already he had begun to show a new tendency

to corpulence, the line of the jaw a little blurred, the cut of his doublet a trifle confining. He resolved to omit luncheon today, quite certain he would never keep his resolution.

The ambassador came out into the hallway by the street. He had risen late, and the mid-morning traffic of carts and horses and hurrying human beings along Fleet Street was in full progress. The day was cold, even for late January, a splendid day for staying abed and addressing one's correspondence upon a lapboard; but the business continued outside, and so it must within. He had hope of an audience with the queen in the evening, and he must arrive prepared.

Turning from the window, Châteauneuf nodded to the domestic who was cleaning the room opposite and went up to his study. Des Trappes was already well engaged upon his labors, and he nodded to his superior as the ambassador came in. From the look of it, with letters and his key spread before him on his table, des Trappes was deciphering the latest dispatches from home. Châteaufneuf came and stood above him, rummaging with his fingers through the completed leaves. The secretary gestured to him that he might take them away with him, and so he bore them to his desk and began poring over them.

Within a half hour's time, one of the servants came up to announce a visitor. Des Trappes rose and went below to inquire. Châteauneuf stared out into the yard below, by Sackville House. From the gates opposite, ice formations hung like translucent sculptures to the length of a foot and a half.

Des Trappes returned with letters from Thomas Morgan and Charles Paget in Paris introducing a priest by the name of Gifford, who was engaged upon the business of the queen of Scots and begged the reader's aid in that cause. On that account he felt inclined to grant the interview, though usually he discouraged the visits of fugitive English priests who might well compromise him.

Châteauneuf bid his secretary fetch the fellow up. He studied the documents in the meantime and satisfied himself that both were holographs in the familiar hands of Morgan and his crony; indeed, Morgan's handwriting would be a most difficult one to simulate.

Gifford appeared in the door, bowing deferentially, a small thick-featured man in the rich dress of a gentleman of fashion, almost of a courtier's extravagance. He introduced himself in excellent French and begged the ambassador to attend to his new plan for reaching the queen of Scots. Châteauneuf kept a non-committal silence. He had heard many new plans from the Catholic gentlemen of the court, none of which had proved itself out in the execution, but he gestured kindly for his guest to continue. The device he heard, however, made him sit forward, first in increasing curiosity, then with a real interest.

Gifford had successfully suborned the brewer in the neighborhood of Chartley, whose job it was to provide the house with its weekly store of beer. By that means, he proposed to smuggle into the queen of Scots's household all her correspondence, and to receive therewith all of her replies; a metallic cylinder would protect the missives as he fitted them into the bung holes of the kegs. He would wager his life and reputation for cleverness, he said, that the guards would never discover the same. He was assured, he believed, of the queen's good trust, both for the love she bore to Mr. Morgan and for the honor in which she held the ancient Catholic family of Gifford, and he desired only M. Ambassador's cooperation in providing him with her letters and in sending them overseas again to France, as his predecessors had been wont to do.

Châteauneuf found himself intrigued by the ingenuity of the scheme. As duty required, he questioned Gifford for a time about his actions and associations, but saw no reason to doubt him. He proposed at last to write a letter to Queen Mary recommending the bearer, and, he said, if her majesty approved the plan--if the plan worked sufficiently well for him to receive her approval--then he would instantly make bold to turn over to Gifford all of the letters he had held for her, accumulated over a full year's lack of means to forward them. If the device went successfully forward, he maintained, all Europe would live in Gifford's debt. Rapidly he wrote out the letter to the queen.

Father Gifford replaced his colorful bonnet, with its silver buckle and hat-badge, and thanked the ambassador in her majesty's name for his good offices. He swore that the scheme would succeed, that the queen of Scots would one day be free, and that all Europe would live in Châteauneuf's debt.



Charles Arundell and François de Mayneville rode steadily upward into the Morvan, the wooded peaks always before them as they rejoined the valley of the narrower Seine. The duke of Guise lay momentarily in Dijon, or was thought to lie there still. The message required speed. Mendoza and the duke's sister, "Silvio" as she was known in the dispatches, Madame de Montpensier, had reached some sort of agreement; they saw the opportunity to augment still more the League's power in the capital, to diminish again the power of the king of France. No delay was permissible in advising the duke himself. When twice Arundell and Mayneville had encountered signs of the enemy, they had left the road but not slackened their pace by a small step.

Just beyond a tiny village huddled round a mill, they found a venerable manor house the owner of which, a simple knight, seemed glad to give them shelter for the night. M. de Mayneville, when he and Arundell had been made comfortable in the main bedchamber, asked for all the keys to the house. Locking the entire household in was far easier than standing watch each of them for half the night.

A shaft of white light stabbed across the vault of heaven, surrounded to its whole length by a haze of gleaming mist. By slow increments the horizon took on a semicircular glow. No birds greeted it, no dogs barked, but with silent lentitude the rim of the white sun emerged above the black world. The first shaft ramified itself into a hundred, joined like luminous webbed fingers reaching upward across the sky.

Across the dark plain the ground fog shone weirdly. In absolute stillness the sun ascended imperceptibly, by imperceptible degrees the character of the land was altered. A black tree invisible in the black air suddenly shone out argently along one side, then the air too lightened about it and the skeletal trunk and limbs seemed actually to fade against their background.

Almost directly before the sun, as it edged above the mists, lay a low, black earthen mound, flat across the top. Gradually it became suffused with dull colors, a washed out green and a deep brown at its base. Particular features here and there stood out, and once or twice a brilliant gleam flashed out from it, as the light struck from just the correct angle upon some polished surface. In the interminable course of a quarter hour, the outlines of the sconce took on fullness; the guardsmen, standing watch along the wall, found definition. The enormous sun, hanging behind a dead tree like a candle's flame behind a wisp of straw, bathed

the prospect and the mists rising lamellate from the mud in a white sheen. The colors stood upon a flagstaff atop the sconce, but because they hung limply in the motionless air, it was impossible to tell whose colors they were.



Thomas Phelippes and Francis Milles sat beside one another at a low table, both dressed only in their shirts and breeches. Before them, between a pair of long tapers, lay a stack of flattened documents. Upon a similar paper Phelippes was gazing intently, dictating in bursts of translation line by line, pausing to read ahead for the sense of whole passages. Occasionally, he came upon an unfamiliar name that smelled of an allonym or outright fiction, from time to time a short row of arbitrary hieroglyphs derived from some primitive substitution table. Many of these he was able to decipher with scarcely any hesitation, either by the context of the passage or by one of a sheaf of ciphers he had come upon or had sent him by informers; when he could not do so, he had Milles put down precisely the symbols he found before him, hopeful that time might solve their puzzles. He dictated in measured English, but the documents he read from were in French, Latin, Spanish, Italian, and the uneasy English of the Scots.

In addition to their translations, they kept a register in which each of the papers had its entry. Places of origin and dates they listed there along with a brief epitome of their contents, and with the authors' names appended. In the pile there were letters from twenty-one packets, sent from Father Parsons in Rouen and Rome, from Sir Francis Englefield in Spain, from Hugh Owen and Ralph Lignons in the Low Countries, from the archbishop of Glasgow, several from Charles Paget and still more from Morgan, one or two from the prince of Parma, two from the duke of Guise and another from Savoy, one from the nuncio in Paris, one each from Charles Arundell and Thomas Throgmorton, another from Mendoza, all bearing dates upon them back to more than a year earlier. All were addressed to the queen of Scots.

When they had completed the last dictation, Phelippes began refolding the originals as they had come to him. He took no care to conceal his tampering with their seals, for the packets would have to be broken up to be fitted through the bung holes. He stuffed the bundles into a saddlebag to be given on the morrow to Gifford's substitute, a man of the earl of Leicester's who would ride with them to Burton. There was no need of Gifford's making the journey himself; once Mary had accepted him as her courier, neither she nor any of hers would have any way of knowing who waited at the other end of the honest brewer's wagonroad. Then he blew out the candles, and he and Milles retired to their beds.

Across Westminster roofs came the lonely cry of a waterman upon the cold Thames.

XIX. SUMMER FRUIT

(1586)

"My tale was heard and yet it was not told,
My fruit is fallen and yet my leaves are green,
My youth is spent and yet I am not old,
I saw the world and yet I was not seen;
My thread is cut and yet it is not spun,
And now I live, and now my life is done."

-- Chidiock Tichbourne

Sharrock took up a tomato, absently, and squeezed it; its juice spurted forth and ran down his leg like blood.

He tied his horse to a post near at hand and ran out of the markets to a stand of trees in the middle of St. Anthony's Great Street. In the distance, seven dark towers of the Bastille blocked the highway to the east. Ahead, in the square near the top of the rue du Peau Diable, the men were dining upon fruit in the open air, standing by their horses. Since leaving the Bastille, they had walked casually to this spot, as if aiming for no place in particular, with no program at all in view, as if marking time to some appointed hour.

In the early morning, these men had sat together in Paget's chambers. There they had been met quite accidentally by Fitzherbert and Arundell, who had come to inquire for news of Lord Paget. Charles Paget had replied with the same cold civility that had marked his attitude throughout the spring. Reluctantly, he'd had to introduce his visitors, all newly out of England: Gilbert Gifford, whom they knew, another priest named John Ballard, and a third man named Bernard Maude.

Maude, Paget had said, had just been released from the English prisons; he'd left the cause of imprisonment to be inferred--doubtless another heroic soldier in the war against the heretics' persecution. But the knowledge of his crime had preceded him: he had slipped an innkeeper's wife naked into the archbishop of York's bed at the inn, and then with the innkeeper had proceeded to blackmail the old prelate for two full years, until in 1583 he had drawn a term in the northern prisons for the deed.

Fitzherbert had congratulated Gifford on his success in the queen of Scots's business -- the reopening of her correspondence had been the great news since March, when her first letters in eighteen months' time had reached Paris. The man had acknowledged the comment with little grace and seemed indisposed to discuss the matter. All four of them had made outrageously inconsequential small talk until Arundell and Fitzherbert had frowned at each other, shrugged, and departed. Arundell's sense, growing upon him throughout the spring, that some desperate evil was in progress seemed almost to be confirmed by their behavior. He had discussed his doubts with Fitzherbert in the street, and then had asked Sharrock to dog the men's steps.

Sharrock had seen the four men mount and ride for the island at a comfortable pace. He had followed them all the way out to the Bastille, where assuredly they were conferring with Morgan in his cell, and had picked them up again when they descended. Now he stood behind the trees and watched them resume their westerly progress.

Sharrock left his horse behind and followed them. The four men strolled across the square, then turned up the lane and knocked at the house of Don Bernardino de Mendoza. They were shown in at once; while they remained there, Jamie sauntered up to their tethered horses and went quickly through their saddlebags, finding nothing of interest.

He took the opportunity to run back to the market carts and retrieve his horse. By the time the party left the ambassador's house, he was ready for them, hidden at the head of an alley that ran out from the rear of the Hôtel de Ville. He followed them again across the bridges and further south along the rue St. Jacques. There they stopped before a brothel that peeked half concealed from behind a row of houses; here had been Father Gifford's home when he'd lived in Paris, here he returned now for the night, and here Maude joined him. Paget parted from them and conducted Father Ballard back to his own house, where Sharrock, watching them putting up their horses for the night, concluded that his mission was completed.

Arundell, Berden, and Fitzherbert, receiving these reports in their own rooms, found themselves perplexed, distressed by the secrecy with which the thing was being handled. No doubt, the four men had been holding something back. They scarcely expected the confidence of Paget or Morgan or any of their friends--including young Throgmorton, who increasingly showed himself a party to their counsels and had moved out of Fitzherbert's rooms--for with every month the rifts between the factions grew still wider. Nevertheless, this present reticence was excessive. Here was the man who after a year's work by all had succeeded in getting through to the queen of Scots, whose happiness was their common goal; here was that man himself arrived in Paris, and Arundell had learned of it by chance.

As they spoke, the woman from downstairs, Madame Lacour, came in with dinner for all three of them. Formerly it had been Sharrock's task to bring in their meals. The woman's husband, however, had fallen ill, and they gave her the work as a form of aid. She was a frowzy woman of something more than thirty, worn out with too much work, too many children, her dark eyes once bright now obtunded by penury to a lifeless stare. She came in two trips up the stairs, carrying in each hand a slab of board with a few pans of stew from the inn across the road, with bread, wine, and cheese, bowing mechanically without meeting the eyes of anyone.

When she had descended again, they resumed their conversation. All three had come to the same conclusion, that something unsavory was afoot about which they were being deliberately kept in the dark. Arundell remembered that Stafford had inquired after Ballard by name and linked the priest to the name of Babington in England. Sir Edward had heard some whisper of a plot or enterprise of some kind, but had said no more about it. That bare mention, and hints heard elsewhere about the readiness for action of some gentlemen at court, had prompted Arundell to make inquiries of his own and figuratively to hold his breath throughout the spring, half expecting any day to have word of some maniacs' raid upon Chartley or another shot taken at the queen of England. His inquiries had turned up nothing. No raid had been launched. The queen of England carried on as durably as ever.

Early the next morning, Arundell went round to see Mendoza. The ambassador greeted him politely and led him into the study, where he inquired immediately what urgent news brought Charles out at such an hour. Arundell replied that he had no news on this occasion; a shadow of discomfiture passed across Don Bernardino's face, for he hastened to the conclusion that his agent was in want again and had appeared to press for payment of his

pension. Arundell's allowance, unlike those of most of the refugees, was not paid out of the army's fund but directly from Mendoza's embassy accounts; these accounts were seldom kept up, however, so the pensions were seldom paid out either. For most of the men whom Mendoza carried, this tardiness was a minor inconvenience to him, however great a hardship to the pensioners. His inability to keep Arundell paid up, however, caused him some embarrassment. His only remedy was to keep granting bonuses for special merit, which the king of Spain was disposed to approve, though to pay out no more promptly; at least, if it cured no hunger, the method prevented questions of ingratitude.

Arundell guessed the problem and assured the ambassador that gold was not in present question. Mendoza revived markedly at the news. But he wondered the more at Charles's urgency and begged politely to know how he might serve.

Arundell told him straight out that he was troubled about the sudden appearance of Gifford, Ballard, and Maude and desired to know what their business had been with the ambassador. Mendoza expressed himself as mildly surprised at Arundell's importunity, for their interview had been nothing at all out of the way. Mr. Paget, he said, had introduced the others as men bearing a message from the Catholic nobility of England. These noblemen and gentlemen for whom they spoke (especially Ballard, who had visited in England from house to house throughout the country), these men wished to carry out an uprising against the heretical regime, and they wished for the ambassador's promise of an invasion force in aid of their godly enterprise.

Arundell was scowling as he heard the report, and he muttered darkly that he had feared as much. The ambassador spread his hands in deprecation. It was nothing, he said, that he had not heard a thousand times before; such schemes were as common as fruit flies in summer and invariably ended nowhere. They had made all of the venerable arguments to him, how the invasion of England would resolve King Philip's differences with his own Dutch rebels, how the time was never more propitious, the earl of Leicester being out of England with all the chief captains and the discontentment of the Catholics at home no longer restrainable. Only two proposals (if that were the best word) were fresh and new, the one that the Lord Claude Hamilton, now in Scotland, would seize the king of Scots and deliver him to the king of Spain's hands, and the other, that Charles Paget had said that the whole designment would not prevail as long as the queen of England lived. Arundell groaned aloud, which caused Mendoza to chuckle a bit uncomfortably.

To Charles's next question the ambassador replied that he had been, as always, politely noncommittal, mildly receptive but hardly encouraging in any way. He was only too aware of the harm to be sustained by any premature actions, and he had advised Ballard to continue his preparations and to come to him again when he had irrefragable evidence of a Catholic force in England, sufficiently strong, reliably prepared to make its move. Then he would call upon his king for such a promise of assistance. This was his wonted strategy, he said; it had never failed to keep the isolated braggart, who claimed tens of thousands at his back, from troubling him again. The plot, he insisted, was an empty one, "like the thousands that had gone before". Arundell made no comment in reply.

Later in the day he talked over the business with Berden and Fitzherbert. They shared feelingly the premonition that the present intrigue was not quite like the thousands that had gone before.



On Whitsunday, the 22nd of May 1586, the seminary priest John Ballard and his colleague Bernard Maude arrived in London. Ballard sought out some of the young gentlemen of the court who were devoted to Queen Mary's cause. With the help of Mr. Edward Windsor, he arranged a meeting for a few days hence at the London house of Anthony Babington.

Mr. Babington, who was but twenty-five years old, was a handsome boy more than a little blessed by fortune. His young wife resided very comfortably on his wide lands in Derbyshire, joined by her husband on those rare occasions when he was not following the court. As an adolescent he had been placed as a page in the household of the earl of Shrewsbury; he had at that time been won wholly to the service of the earl's great prisoner, the queen of Scots, and had become a Catholic, too, in consequence. Since that time, through his social position, his fortune, his good looks, his familiarity with the captive queen, not least his romantic fervor, he had become informally the head of her partisans at court, almost none of whom were much older than himself.

All of the gentlemen were anxious for the opportunity to do their patron lady some great good. When told by Mr. Windsor that Ballard had returned from France with news of moment, they gathered eagerly in Babington's rooms in Westminster to hear what the priest could say. The brothers Habington arrived first, Edward and Thomas, sons of the queen of England's cofferer. Edward Windsor, whose brother Henry was the new Lord Windsor of Stanwell, came in with Henry Donne and Mr. Salusbury. Maude came, too, and John Savage came, and young Chidiok Tichbourne came up later, bringing with him the mysterious Captain Jacques. Robert Poley was already present, for in recent months he had become quite friendly with Babington and often stayed in his rooms; since he was in the employment of Sir Philip Sidney's wife while that knight served in the Low Countries with the earl of Leicester, Poley was forced to dwell in the house of her father, Secretary Walsingham, and he was very grateful for the opportunity to stay with men of his own persuasion when his services were not required by her ladyship.

For a full year the gentlemen had been tormenting themselves to devise a gallant and worthy enterprise for the faith. They had courage in abundance but so far no ideas. They listened receptively as Fr. Ballard, who bore letters to the same effect from Morgan and Paget, recounted the substance of his conference with Don Bernardino de Mendoza. The ambassador, he said, had promised sixty thousand soldiers by the end of summer, but had charged them also to accomplish heroic deeds of their own. To assure that the invaders might land unimpeded, the gentlemen must arouse that great nobility so ripe for rebellion; they must draw up lists of the best ports for landing in, and appoint that armed bands should meet the invading parties there. And they must free the queen of Scots from Chartley, neither so soon as to raise an alarm nor too late after the invasion to have her out of reach before the government made her away to a surer prison. Good planning and sufficient resolution, said Father Ballard, were all that were required. After long awaiting, the moment for action had arrived.

Mr. Babington, seconded by several others, including Maude and Poley, wondered whether the whole enterprise were not doomed to failure as long as the queen of England lived. Some others in the room stiffened at the suggestion. Ballard said not to worry, for his friend John Savage had taken an oath in Rheims, before coming over the previous year, to kill the heretical queen mercilessly as soon as the occasion was offered to do so. Savage nodded in grim affirmation. From young Tichbourne, in the back of the chamber, came the

reflection that the murder of anointed monarchs was not universally held to be a worthy act for religious men to undertake. Some discussion of the point ensued, with acknowledgment of the fact that dry philosophers still debated the issue in their books, but the general view was that heretical monarchs who had been lawfully excommunicated and deposed ruled only as tyrants, to be rid of whom was a meritorious deed in the Lord's eyes, not to mention in the king of Spain's. But it was also the general view that Mr. Savage, however celebrated for his military prowess, was insufficient to the task himself, for in a properly timed enterprise, nothing so crucial as bringing in chaos to the seat of government could be suffered to go awry. Accordingly, it was decided that he should have help.

What remained then was only for the details to be supplied. The men present, and their friends absent, must construct a likely plan and then swear a solemn oath before God to carry it out faithfully. Then the whole device had to be communicated to Mendoza and, of course, to the queen of Scots herself, for their approvals. The end seemed almost to be in sight.



A few weeks earlier, roundabout the first of May, Mendoza had learned from his contacts in the French court that the king of France was secretly seeking a separate peace with the Huguenot enemy. Marshal Biron had been instructed to strike a truce with the king of Navarre, the rebel leader. Such a truce might very well unite those two great forces against the duke of Guise and his Spanish friends. Mendoza naturally sought the counsel of his own king, but the duke of Guise also wished to have a trusted man of his own to go to Spain, in order to learn reliably whether King Philip would support him against the Protestants even if his own king would not. The man he wished to send was Charles Arundell.

Mendoza was amenable to the idea, and he thought he might well put the journey to an ancillary use of his own. Impatient with the men who increasingly spoke for the English exiles, Morgan and Paget and men of their stripe, the ambassador wished to have Arundell report personally on the condition of English affairs to Idiaquez, the Spanish Secretary of State, as a balance to the representations continually being made by briefs and brochures from the others. Thomas Lord Paget, who had intended to leave Rome anyway, was asked by Fr. Parsons to go to Spain as well, where he should meet Arundell and offer together with him a proper assessment of the English situation, to aid the king's deliberations on the question of invasion.

Very quickly the word got round in Paris that Arundell was soon to depart. Promptly Don Bernardino began receiving unsigned messages advising him that Arundell was a spy for the English government, that he made the journey with money provided for the purpose by the English queen, and that his real intention was to scout the Spanish coast and cities in his way for signs of naval preparations. It was still widely suspected that with secret festination some great armada, scrambled together all hugger-mugger, might be got under way before the summer ended. Arundell, they wrote, was to report any evidence of this intention to the queen of England herself.

These wild charges, coming whence they came, rather served to confirm Mendoza's trust in Arundell than to derogate from it. Coincidentally, they were true. Stafford too had approved the journey and had given Arundell just such an errand to perform, though with none of the money the informants had claimed went with it. The English queen herself, of

course, if she remembered Arundell at all, knew him as that kinsman of hers who had so awkwardly got himself into hot water and had gone away somewhere.

Arundell was exceedingly reluctant to go anywhere. He knew that some monstrous evil was on foot, but had been unable to discover what it was. Ballard had disappeared from Paris; he may have gone to Rheims, to Rome, with his crackbrained plots, but Arundell feared he'd gone back into England. Once there what mischief he might work bore no contemplation. Gifford, so far, remained in Paris; Arundell and Berden spent fruitless hours following the man everywhere, and following Charles Paget too and as many of his visitors as they could, but they had learned nothing at all for their pains. Nor could Arundell ask Sir Edward Stafford's help, for the ambassador would be bound to report his suspicions as news and might unwittingly precipitate precisely the catastrophe Charles feared, if Walsingham should be put on the scent of some crazy plot involving the queen of Scots.

There was nothing to be done but to persist in trying to find out what was going on and who principally was behind it, and then to invent some way of undermining the business before it came to light. In no other way could Queen Mary be saved from these busy schemers, some mad, some foolish, some downright pernicious, who if they went the whole way might bring her to the block. He could hardly persist from the highway towards Madrid. He had to go the journey, however, for to refuse now would arouse suspicion indeed. If matters would hold off for the present, he should be back in Paris by September. Perhaps, if necessary, he might try a journey into England at that time. For the moment there was nothing he could do. Almost his only alternative was to trust in providence to bring everything to the best issue. His experience with providence did not conduce to peace of mind.

One possibility presented itself just before his departure, when he had returned to Paris from the duke of Guise with his instructions. Nicholas Berden, who had meant to accompany Arundell into Spain, offered instead to return to England, at considerable danger to himself, in order to track this Babington down and learn the depth of the intrigue. Arundell was hesitant to expose his friend to that peril, but at the last he acquiesced and hastened to arrange for the man's crossing and safe reception in London.

That done, Arundell met secretly once more with Sir Edward and took his leave of Lady Douglass. He met again with Mendoza, then made his farewells with Berden and Fitzherbert, charging both of them to have care of themselves and keep an eye open for any sign of change.

Then he and Jamie Sharrock purchased two extra horses and a new brace of pistols, supplied themselves with the necessary provisions, and set out on the very long road to Spain.



Gilbert Gifford closed his pouchy lids and listened carefully. He sat in Anthony Babington's rooms, within sight of Whitehall Palace, and his host was reading over for him and his other guests the letter they had just written. Robert Poley, pale and thin, sat by the window near young Mr. Tichbourne, both likewise listening. Mr. Savage paced nervously behind them.

For the past month these men and more than a dozen others, lately joined by Gifford, had argued, cajoled, threatened the renitent among them, restrained the over eager, thought as hard as any of them was able to do, to conclude this plan for their enterprise. What was

required now was the guidance of the queen of Scots herself. Only she could tell them what would be the best and safest method of effecting her escape. Only she could approve their designs and give them the authority to proceed. In any case, the general plans had been drawn up. The assignments had been made. It remained but to finish drafting the letter in Babington's name, for the queen already had Babington in her confidence, and then to deliver it to one Barnaby, the man whom Gifford had appointed in his place to carry packets from Châteauneuf to the brewer of Burton and back again.

Babington read aloud the draft as they had jointly written it.

Most mighty, most excellent, my dread sovereign lady and queen, unto whom only I owe all fidelity and obedience. It may please your gracious majesty: I held the hope of our country's weal to be desperate, and thereupon had resolved to depart the land, determining to spend the remainder of my life in such solitary sort as the wretched and miserable state of my country did require, daily expecting (according to the just judgment of God) the deserved confusion thereof. The which my purpose being in execution, and standing upon my departure, there was addressed unto me from the parts beyond the seas one Ballard, a man of virtue and learning and of singular zeal to the Catholic cause and your majesty's service.

This man informed me of great preparation by the Christian princes for the deliverance of our country from the extreme and miserable state wherein it hath too long remained, which when I understood, my especial desire was to advise by what means with the hazard of my life I might do your sacred majesty one good day's service. Whereupon, most dear sovereign, according to the great care which those princes have of the safe delivering of your majesty's sacred person, I advised of means according to the weight of the affair, and after long consideration and conference with so many of the wisest and most trusty as with secrecy I might recommend the safety thereof unto, I do find (by the assistance of the Lord Jesus) assurance of good effect and desired fruit of our travails.

These things are first to be advised, in this great and honorable action, upon the issue of which depends not only the life of your excellent majesty but also the honor and weal of our country, and the last hope ever to recover the faith of our forefathers and to redeem ourselves from the servitude and bondage which heresy has imposed upon us, with the loss of thousands of souls. First, assuring of invasion of sufficient strength in the invader; then, ports to arrive at, appointed with a strong party at every place to join with them and warrant their landing; the deliverance of your majesty; and the dispatch of the usurping competitor; for the effecting of all which (if it may please your excellency to rely upon my service) I vow and protest before the face of Almighty God that what I have said shall be performed, or all our lives happily lost in the execution thereof, which same vow all the chief actors herein have taken solemnly and are, upon assurance by your majesty's letters unto me, to receive the blessed sacrament thereupon, either to prevail in your majesty's behalf or to die for that cause.

Now, for as much as delay is extreme dangerous, it may please your most excellent majesty by your wisdom to direct us, and by your princely authority to authorize those of us who may advance the affair to be leaders therein; for which

necessary regard I would recommend some persons unto your majesty as fittest in my knowledge to be your lieutenants in the west parts, in the north parts, South Wales, North Wales, the counties of Lancaster, Derby, and Stafford, all which countries I hold as most assured and of undoubted fidelity to your majesty.

Myself with ten gentlemen and a hundred of our fellows will undertake the delivery of your royal person from the hands of your enemies. For the dispatch of the usurper, that English Jezebel, from the obedience of whom (by the excommunication of her) we are made free, there be six noble gentlemen, all my private friends, who for the zeal they bear to the Catholic cause and your majesty's service will undertake that tragical execution. It resteth that according to their infinite good deserts and your majesty's bounty, their heroical attempt may be honorably rewarded in them (if they escape with life) or in their posterity, and that so much I may be able to assure them. Now it remaineth only that by your majesty's wisdom it be reduced into method, that your happy deliverance come first, for thereupon dependeth our only good, and that all the other circumstances so concur that the untimely beginning of one do not overthrow the rest. All which your majesty's wonderful experience and wisdom will dispose of in so good manner that I doubt not through God's good assistance all shall come to desired effect, for the obtaining of which every one of us shall think his life most happily spent.

From this present, I will be expecting your majesty's answer and letters, in readiness to execute what by them shall be commanded. From London, this six of July 1586, your majesty's most faithful subject and sworn servant,

Anthony Babington.

When the others had approved the thing, nodded solemnly to one another, and departed, Poley also having returned to Lady Sidney's apartments in Walsingham's house, Babington penned another note to accompany the first. This shorter one was intended only for the eyes of M. Claude Nau, the queen of Scots's secretary, and would go with Barnaby's whole packet down to Chartley.

Mr. Nau, I would gladly understand what opinion you hold of one Robert Poley, whom I find to have intelligence with her majesty's occasions, recommended to me long ago by Mr. Morgan. I am private with the man and by means thereof doubt somewhat, but fear more. I pray you deliver your opinion of him.



To another man, perhaps to the same man in different circumstances, less riven by doubts, less preoccupied by his fears, less ashamed secretly of the achievements he was honored for publicly, in short, to another man, the experience would have been exhilarating. To some men, it might have seemed the happy fruition of a life's work. To Charles Arundell, it was a terrible ordeal.

The days and weeks preceding it, the great event itself, passed timelessly in a phantasmagoria of absurdly petty concerns of propriety and formality, of niceties of dress and phrase, passed also in a bewildering round of interrogations and conferences of state, of state dinners and conducted tours of cathedrals and colleges, great libraries, palaces and markets. Arundell, though he moved and spoke automatically just as he was expected to do, passed them all as if in a daze.

Having accompanied a merchants' party which (to avoid the Huguenots) had descended the Loire to sail from Nantes and land at Santander, Arundell, Sharrock, and Pierre Blanchet, Mendoza's courier, had crossed the northern mountains just as the first fruits of summer had been coming in. Across the steppes of the Castilian interior they proceeded at more than a comfortable pace, leaving the merchants behind them in pursuing the courier's reflexive haste. In Valladolid, the Englishmen passed two days with the English students of the university, leaving Blanchet to finish his journey alone. Then on they travelled to Segovia, over the Penalara, and finally down into Madrid, the new capital city, a fortnight and a day after having left Paris.

Arundell had been made welcome by the Englishmen who dwelt there, principally by old, blind Sir Francis Englefield, who knew Arundell very well, he said, from Fr. Parsons's good reports. The aged knight, who had been the Principal Secretary in the days of Queen Mary I, served now thirty years later as a spokesman for the English petitioners to the Spanish court; about him had gathered the few men of his nation, besides the handful of students and religious, who were able to support themselves in this alien land. In conversation with Sir Francis, Arundell returned persistently to the subject that occupied his thoughts, dropping one hint after another in the attempt to learn whether the man, with his vast reticulum of correspondence across the continent, had caught wind of a new project in aid of the queen of Scots. Englefield, however, responded to none of those suggestions.

In the palace, too, Arundell received a more formal welcome from King Philip's under-officers of state. The king himself and the entire court had already removed to the Escorial, whither it was proposed that Arundell should follow as soon as the Lord Paget arrived. In the meantime, the Spanish officials kept him altogether occupied with a proud display of the city's sights. A few days later, happily, Lord Paget did arrive.

Then had begun what for Arundell seemed an ascent into some magical realm of dreams and allegory. He and Paget set out upon a day's ride back to the northwest, up into the Guadarrama, to the king's new edifice, the Escorial. Already distracted by his conviction that events of the greatest moment were unfolding elsewhere, he found himself disoriented by the incredible Spanish court. From the plains below the great building, ascending the plateau, they were dazzled by the dome of San Lorenzo, which caught the afternoon sun upon the mountains to the west. When they emerged from the hills above the western front, they paused astonished before the vision that confronted them.

King Philip's new establishment was as different from the Italianate châteaux of France as the windy steppes upon which he had built it were different from the valley of the Loire. At the center of a bustling town of sheds and shops, markets and corrals, rose a monstrous quadrangle of gray granite, square towers with peaked tegular roofs ascending from each corner, twin belfries in the center flanking the enormous dome of the church of San Lorenzo el Real. The entire complex might have been laid out in the figure of St. Lawrence's gridiron, the emblem of his martyrdom; the after-end of the church itself protruded out behind for its handle, and the long buildings within were broken up by square yards of various sizes interspersed with geometric regularity. El Escorial resembled no church Arundell had ever seen, nor any palace, nor any monastery, nor college, nor city, yet it was all of these, a great stark block, unrelieved by a single curve, squatting ponderously atop the plateau, as if prepared against the last assault of the demons in the final battle for the world.

The great western façade, in the center of which opened the main doors, flanked by eight immense Doric half-columns and surmounted by the king's heraldic arms and by a high niche, soon to be occupied by some statue, was fronted by a wide paved plain bustling with traffic now that the court was in residence. Troops of schoolboys marched smartly by almost in formation. From beneath tents and umbrellas, stately matrons offered food stuffs and ornaments for sale. Soldiers strolled idly together, or singly made love to admiring maidens. Long files of Hieronymite monks passed solemnly out of one small door and in at another as if on some sacred patrol. Prelates, in brilliant orphrey, bent their ears to suppliant clerks and artists requiring patronage. Having come up only moments earlier from the silent, vacant steppes, Arundell found this frightful concourse of people almost daunting.

Passing through the west gate and dismounting just within the portico, the travellers were accosted by keepers who received their messages and bid them wait. In moments one of the clerks of Secretary Idiaquez ran out to bring them into the palace. In a group they traversed the Patio of the Kings, a rectangular courtyard some seventy meters long, closed in entirely by flat white walls rising four stories high on either side. At the farther end, up a low flight of steps running the width of the court, stood the face of the great church, five deep, black arches capped by a row of pedestals, four of which still stood empty, but two of which bore gilt and marble statues of Solomon and Jehoshaphat, two of the kings who had built the temple of Jerusalem. Courtiers and soldiers, monks with breviaries and clerks with ledgers, hurried back and forth across the pavement quickly enough to suggest some emergency befallen when there was none.

Having been brought into the northeastern quadrant, the offices of the government when the king dwelt there, Arundell scarcely left it for ten days' time. When he did, it was only for a recreational ride in the orchards, following which he was back immediately to the palace. Part of each day he spent idly in the chambers given him, waiting to be called out, but once each morning and again each afternoon he was summoned to appear in some other part of the palace. Often enough it was merely to the presence of some English- or French-speaking clerk, usually an elderly monk in white robes and brown hood, who put to him an open question and then without another word took down his reply at length.

Several of these dictations Charles made concerning the duke of Guise's message and questions for the king, several more he made, as Lord Paget did, on the state of English preparedness for defense, the terrain and port facilities, the number and disposition of the Catholics of account. In these matters, Charles replied in very general terms, and he was surprised to observe that, when sometimes in the afternoons he was called before the eristic noblemen of the Council of War, amid their quarrelling among themselves and their disinterest in the matter itself, he was never pursued any more particularly about the imprecision of his depositions. The questions put to him there were usually in the form of sweeping propositions made by some councillors for the benefit of the others, then more by the latter for the former, and he was merely required to assent or deny. Only when closeted alone with Don Juan de Idiaquez was he cross-examined with embarrassing specificity over his remarks.

In the evenings there were less onerous duties, or at least so Lord Thomas found them, for he regarded his introduction to the life of the Spanish court as a medieval explorer might have done the anthropophagi of the far antipodes. The long festival of Saint John had passed in June, but there were still a perplexing variety of religious exercises in which the entire

court participated. Beyond that there were almost nightly balls, in which the great lords and ladies, in finery worth thousands of acres, paced solemnly about to epicedian music and put themselves through such a fantastic array of ceremonial niceties that, to a blunt Englishman at least, this play seemed far more demanding than any form of work. Lord Paget threw himself into the business with a hearty will and spent his spare hours bowing hispanically to Twinyho, prancing a bit to indicate mirth, trying to reduce the infinitude of forms of address to a mnemonic jingle. His health seemed never better. In the evenings he exhibited his new skills so perfectly that the courtiers, who had seemed disposed politely to ignore the foreigners among them, began to mark him out as a figure of fun.

Arundell had no facility for the crazy ritual of the court. He had had little enough for the ritual of the English court and there he had thought such things proper and important. Here, among the bows and curtsies, the whole dictionary of meanings to each attitude of the body, to every tilt of one's hat, he felt more useless than a fletcher in a company of shot. But it was one of the more fixed expectations that a guest of the king might not decently retire until a certain hour, quite late. Consequently, nearly every evening, after a day spent with Idiaquez or the Council, his thoughts still turned almost entirely to the queen of Scots, he stood by the wall in the palace courtyard or the great hall, speaking polite inanities to those gentlemen who knew sufficient French to try a compliment or two in passing with the respected stranger, managing uncomfortable smiles for the ladies who batted their eyes curiously and coyly in his direction.

Certainly it was true that Arundell was being treated, if not with the deference owed to the great nobility, at least with noticeable respect. He was sure he was making himself of absolutely no use to the Spanish statesmen, but notwithstanding that, Idiaquez himself, many (though not all) of the councillors, and every one of the servants behaved towards him as to a valuable and trusted friend of the monarch. As a consequence, the courtiers and ladies, too, who missed very little, likewise looked upon him almost as a social equal, which for the Spanish nobility was a difficult thing to do. Arundell, in his lucid moments, when he was not thoroughly bemused by it all beneath his mask of equanimity, noticed this treatment with great surprise, for he came after all in very nearly the habit of the common courier. And Lord Thomas remarked upon it also, somewhat resentfully. It seemed that, for one reason or another, Idiaquez genuinely liked Arundell, and on several occasions before the Council the Secretary spoke up for him to some of the more hostile officials.

When the Englishmen had lived at court for more than three weeks of depositions, examinations, tours of the public walks of church and college, library and galleries, balls, and masses said daily, Idiaquez came to Arundell's chamber very early in the morning. Charles, who to distract his busy brain had stayed late before the candle with a book, was still abed, and with Sharrock's help he dressed himself from cap to boots in fewer than five minutes. The Secretary led him out and walked with him across the church porch and through the empty cloisters. After thanking Arundell for the time he had spent in making his advices to the Council, he presented him with a purse, which he hoped would make a partial token of King Philip's gratitude for his loyal service. Then Idiaquez said that at the end of the week, Charles should meet the king directly. Arundell stared stupidly at the news. Thrice in as many weeks he had seen the king, each time from a great distance, kneeling in his stall far back in the high-choir during the church services; at no other time, so far as he knew, had his Catholic majesty left the royal apartments behind the basilica.

If he was speechless upon hearing this, the next news rendered him insensible. Arundell, along with a few captains from the army, two civic officials from Aragon, and one impecunious poet, was going to be knighted.

The rest of the week passed feverishly. The ritual involved in an investiture of Spanish knighthood was so intricate and extensive as to make learning it seem a lifetime's profession in itself. Arundell spent each day from morning to night with a herald specifically trained in the art, engaged in an elaborate propaedeutic in order to fit himself for the task of being honored. He got himself knighted countless times by the herald, trying to remember when to stand and when to kneel, what to say for his parts of the responsio, each time by not adverting to the Latin cues or by transposing elements of the service making some oafish blunder which, if committed on the big day, would scandalize the Spanish empire spread around the globe.

At last the big day arrived. To Arundell, the thing was perfectly lunatic. To have devoted the great part of his life to trying to win honors from Elizabeth, and then to be raised to an order of knighthood by her worst enemy; it was almost more preposterous than he could bear. He suspected a joke. Perhaps because he'd already worried himself half to madness over the queen of Scots's situation, he found himself now, as he dressed, breaking into short fits of laughter at this jumbled heap of ironies. Wherever he had tried to give good service he had brought ignominy to his name and trouble to his house; when deliberately he gave bad service, dukes and kings vied who should reward him the more liberally. He sat alone in his chamber, very close to tears.

When finally he was fully dressed, with all that that implies, considering the quantity of black and silver regalia he'd been required to buy, he pressed Sharrock's hand and left the room. Sharrock's eyes were glistening, as if he could have wished for nothing more devoutly than to have lived to see this day. In the church porch, Arundell met his herald-mentor, who led him across the nave up into the high altar, backed by a beautiful retable, with three tiers of paintings and gilded statuary, rising ninety feet nearly into the dome. Gathered on the dais they met the other candidates, all looking as abashed as Arundell must have looked, each with his own herald, and Idiaquez standing among a number of noble lords and brown-hooded monks.

To the right of the altar, along a gleaming rail above red marble, a small door opened, and King Philip came out of his bedchamber with several attendants. He looked extremely old. In telling contrast to all of his subjects nearby, he wore a stark black doublet, relieved only by his emblem of the Golden Fleece depending from a chain, with an unadorned black cape, hose, and boots; even his sword hilts were black. The king's white beard had thinned to a few wisps over his protruding jaw, and his eyes were red-rimmed, as if from insomnia or overwork. He ascended the steps tiredly, like an old peasant home from the fields, his thin frame slightly bent and his hands shaking as he held them out for his noblemen to kiss.

King Philip acknowledged the presence first of a few grandees who knelt near the altar. As they rose, he turned to the candidates; the herald introduced each of them by turn, and each, as his name was spoken, without looking up shifted from one knee to the other. Philip bid them rise and welcomed them in a thin, hesitant voice. Then he calmly bid them again to rise, and they all stood up together. He inquired whether they found themselves comfortable in their apartments--they did not reply--and then when he asked again, they all bowed and assured him they were very comfortable. The king looked upon them all

with a vague, benign smile. His eyes fell upon each of the men in turn in such a way that he seemed to be speaking directly and specially to him, but at the same time something in his gaze seemed abstracted from the situation, as if part of him were elsewhere, praying or reading or reflecting upon policy.

He wished they might all stay long at El Escorial, though he would not presume, he said, to interfere with their plans; he knew that they were busy men. Still, if they might just stay a fortnight longer. . . . For the peaches had not come in yet; they were already more than a week overdue. Spring had come late. He had had some peaches served him only the night before, he said, but one would not have known what they were if the gardener had not come along to identify them.

He had not been able even to eat them, let alone enjoy them.

He laughed gently at this, and they all smiled politely. Turning half round to look up at the altar, his majesty remarked in a loud, thin voice that he was bold to claim that his peaches were worth waiting a few days for.

His majesty paused for several long seconds, staring at the altar, all of jasper and red marble. The gentlemen and ladies of the palace were entering the nave behind and taking seats. Philip turned slowly and with a subtle twinkle in his eye asked the candidates to follow him; they walked behind him as he left the dais and entered a corridor behind the retable, the noblemen and his attendants close to him and the others farther back.

Secretary Idiaquez approached very near to Arundell as they waited to pass through the door. He leant over and whispered in French, "His majesty is very pleased with you. I told him that you were named in honor of his father."

Charles smiled and whispered back that as a matter of fact he had been. For indeed, at the time of his birth, his own father had been much taken with the great Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, the enemy of heresy, and had named his second son after him. Idiaquez laughed quietly at the coincidence.

They crowded into a tiny vault behind the altar. On gleaming ornamental tables all about stood scores of precious boxes, reliquaries each of which was worth a small kingdom, of chryselephantine, with intricate enamel work, some of delicately carved fine wood or golden, encrusted with glyptic emeralds and lapis lazuli. The king went to several set together in a corner, where evidently they had newly arrived and not found permanent arrangement. Gently he took one up and placed it before them. A small handle on the side was turned and the lid raised. Inside, in deep blue velvet, lay a greenish yellow anklebone with a crimson ribbon tied about it.

Arundell looked up quickly to the king. His majesty's eyes swept slowly over them all; there was unmistakably a lambent glow of pride in them.

"San Lorenzo," he said.

Carefully the king reclosed the box and replaced it on its table. He then tried to lift another receptacle, but found it too heavy for him; besides its greater size, it bore a massive base upon pedestal legs. Philip paused and tried again, decorously, but with no more success. Then one of the noblemen standing near him moved to lend his aid, but very gracefully, as if he had not noticed, his majesty glided sideways and stepped in front of the man, who drew back sharply with the air of having been caught playing out of turn.

"Fray Sigüenza," the king called out.

A guardsman outside the chamber called the name again more loudly, and as they waited they heard it repeated several times further and further off. Moments passed, as the king gazed kindly upon them all one after another, without the slightest hint of impatience. Everyone stood silently with not a muscle moving.

At length, King Philip, as if it had occurred to him that to explain might be a pleasant duty, smiled courteously again at the candidates and said in Spanish, "Keeper of our relics."

After a short while, footsteps were heard running down the gallery. They stopped suddenly just outside the door, and then a monk, Fray Sigüenza, entered with the firmest composure. He was a very handsome man, with steady, intelligent brown eyes over strong cheekbones and a well-groomed goatee, his brown hood thrown back from a circle of gray hair fringing his tonsured pate.

The monk, finding his master with his hand upon the reliquary, saw instantly what was the matter. He moved promptly, but with ceremonial dignity, to take up the case and transfer it to the table before the visitors. Then he touched a spring in its base and the lid lifted very slightly.

King Philip took the keeper's place over the box and looked from one man to the next. Fray Sigüenza, taking his cue, stepped forward again and announced, "Hermenegildo the Martyr"; and the king swept back the cover, and there in red cloth was a dreadful ancient brown head, not much larger than a big apple, rugose leathery skin stretched over features collapsed upon themselves, bleared soupy sockets below long tufts of gray and dirty white hair, the lips drawn back in a hideous yawn.

Some of those in the room gave a gasp of veneration. Nearly everyone gasped. Arundell, who had never even heard of Hermenegildo, never mind the miraculous virtues of his earthly shell, began to weave on his feet; his blood-drained face felt heavy and slack, as the mahogany chaps danced before his eyes. King Philip beamed, as if by the performance of a simple miracle he had converted a tribe of heathen.

After the holy head had been carefully replaced, the candidates followed the king into the corridor. There they parted and passed into the church.

Arundell filed into a row of benches among his fellows, feeling somewhat revived but not much more at ease. At the proper place in the proceedings, he rose mechanically and followed the others onto the dais. There he knelt before the king and a bishop, with Idiaquez behind him as his sponsor, receiving the questions he had learned so well and answering solemnly in each place that he swore upon everything nominable to uphold to death the pope, the king, the blessed host, the cruciform gonfalon, and a legion of other sacred knick-knacks. He stood at the proper times and knelt and stood again, knelt and received communion, individually professed his faith in words prescribed and memorized, and at the last, after more than an hour of it, his majesty the king of Spain laid a black-hilted sword upon each of his shoulders and named him *miles hispanicus*, a knight of Spain. On a rolled charter given him then were lettered precisely those words, with his own name, subscribed with the quavering signature, "Yo, el Rey."

Arundell had his reward, the fruition of his labors.



When Anthony Babington's letter had gone to the queen of Scots, Secretary Walsingham, through whose hands it had passed, dispatched Tom Phelippes to Chartley to await her reply. On the 18th of July 1586, her answer, written a day earlier, came out in the kegs.

In it the queen thanked Mr. Babington for his labors and wrote that she could not but greatly praise his heroism. She advised him before proceeding with his scheme to examine what forces he and his friends could raise in England; what towns and ports he could make safe for the landings; what foreign troops could be relied upon and where they would land; how much money and armor would be required--what would be the surest means to compass the death of the English queen. How best he might free the queen of Scots herself and promptly make her secure. Lest she find herself in worse case than she already was, she instructed Babington to set her liberating party in place and to establish several routes of post, by which her deliverers should infallibly be alerted the moment that Queen Elizabeth was dead, before her keepers could learn of it by couriers; and she described three several methods by which her guards might be diverted and overcome, and herself extricated from the house. Finally, she warned him not to proceed in freeing her until all other elements of the plan were assured, for if any part misfired and she herself were retaken, "it were sufficient cause given to that queen, in catching me again, to enclose me forever in some hole forth of the which I should never escape, if she did use me no worse."

It was a moment for which Phelippes had long waited. He sat in his chamber in the far wing of Chartley, rereading his deciphered copy of the letter which had travelled out of the house to the honest brewer of Burton and back in again to his own hands, and would now travel straight on to Walsingham. He could imagine the Secretary's feelings when he should see it. At last, after nearly two decades, the sure means presented itself to be rid of the most dangerous enemy by which England and the pure gospel had ever been menaced. For Walsingham and Leicester it would be the fulfillment of a dream, a triumph over those of the Privy Council who were less careful of their sovereign's happiness--the fruit of their long travail.

Phelippes bundled the letter and copy into a pouch and set out at once for the court at Greenwich. He arrived there the following evening and burst in upon the Secretary with the news. A slow smile spread over Walsingham's face as he read the missive. He finished it and sat back, speechless.

Phelippes was quite ready to proceed to the arrest of all the plotters who were known, but Walsingham disagreed. Instead, he directed his man to add a postscript to the letter in the handwriting of the Scottish queen's secretary, telling Babington in the queen's voice that she could advise him the better if she were informed of the names of all the participants, especially those of the six gentlemen "which are to accomplish the designment." As Phelippes pointed out at once, the risk was great that so unsubtle a device might arouse suspicion, but Mr. Secretary was adamant, for he would have more than enough evidence against everyone involved; he would have the names in writing, he would have the very lives, of everyone who had any part in it. Phelippes added the passage, artfully resealed the letter, and passed it on to Barnaby for delivery to Mr. Babington.

A few days later, Fr. Gilbert Gifford stopped at an inn in Holborn and retired to one of the upper rooms. There came to him Mr. Francis Milles, Walsingham's secretary, whom Gifford informed that the priest John Ballard had told him he knew of all Tom Phelippes's deceitful-

ness and that the queen of Scots's letters had been tampered with. Ballard had acquired an open passport for all ports, and he meant to use it; Gifford believed the man may already have flown. Milles returned to Walsingham with the news. The Secretary sent word at once to Gifford commanding him to find out Fr. Ballard and bring him to the hands of Francis Milles who should arrest him immediately. Gifford observed to himself, in some agitation, that the trap was beginning to spring shut.

Since having written his letter to the queen of Scots, Mr. Babington had been having tepid second thoughts. Earlier, before Ballard's first coming, he had been trying through Robert Poley's good offices to obtain a passport from the Secretary; in early June he had decided several times to try again. Twice Poley, by virtue of his employment in the Secretary's house, had been able to arrange interviews for Babington, who had offered in return for passage over the Channel to do good service in sending intelligence of foreign matters. Walsingham, on these occasions, had expressed himself as moderately interested in furthering the suit, if he might know more particularly what service, what intelligence, Babington could offer. Recently he had sent Mr. Secretary word that he might soon send reports of the whereabouts of two priests who had just entered the realm, as a token of his honest meaning. Walsingham had returned him some encouragement.

Young Mr. Babington was diffident.

Deep, deep within himself, he doubted whether when the moment came he would find the resolution to make any raid upon Chartley, to signal the assassins when to perform their deed. Sometimes he knew that he was made of the genuine stuff of heroes; he could imagine himself with equally great pleasure standing by the queen of Scots at her coronation in Whitehall or dying gloriously of a hundred wounds, murmuring to the enemy who had been too many for him, "*J'ai les mains nettes,*" as the assassins missed their aim, the invaders never came, and he expired in a muddy field in Derbyshire. At other times, however, he trembled violently even to recollect some of the words he'd uttered in other men's hearing. Recollecting to himself the public executions he had seen, his bowels deliquesced and his perspiration spoiled his shirts. When he read over the queen of Scots's letter to him, he felt a sensation of suction whirling him down into some dark pool.

It was two days before he even showed the queen's missive to any of his friends. The postscript did not put him on his guard, as Phelippes had feared it would; rather, the whole import of the queen's acceptance of his plan, her cold-blooded expectations of him and her marked tone of urgency, brought every fear he'd harbored marching out in regiments to daunt him. Some of his friends seemed now to be acting strangely; he wondered at the sudden absence of Bernard Maude, who had gone away into Scotland; he remembered that he knew nothing of Captain Jacques, who had become inseparable from Mr. Salusbury; it seemed odd to him that Robert Poley found so little difficulty in arranging his interviews with Walsingham, and he wondered why he had received no reply from Nau about Poley's acquaintance with Queen Mary's people. Everything, indeed, began to seem strange to him. The very air of London began to seem thicker, harder to breathe somehow, and everyone, merchants and seamen, courtiers and housewives, seemed to be staring at him when he was turned away. For four days consecutively he went round to Gilbert Gifford's dwelling for consultation, but never found the man at home. He thought at last that if he could find no comfort or assurance very soon, he would do best to get clean out of it, before someone's powderflask ignited and he went with the rest of them into a billow of black smoke and a terrible boom.

Accordingly, Babington resolved, alone, with a crazy grin, to leave the realm if he could. Ballard held a blank passport, he remembered, but he soon discovered that the priest was nowhere to be found. Savage he had not seen in weeks. He communicated to a few of the other gentlemen his fears of some mischance, but as the month of July drew to a close, nothing changed; he seemed thoroughly cut off. He was afraid to reply to the queen of Scots. He was afraid to try passing the ports without a warrant. He sent another note to Secretary Walsingham, requesting a safe passage, but he received in reply only a message from Phelippes inquiring what particular service he might render. Anxiety told upon him. On Monday, the 31st of July, Babington met Robert Poley and instructed him to tell Walsingham that he, Babington, knew of a horrible great plot to murder the queen of England, that an unsavory priest named Ballard was the setter on of it, and that he meant to do his duty to reveal it entirely.

In his tiny room in Greenwich Palace, Thomas Phelippes remained of the opinion that the business should be ended before the hour grew too late. Mr. Secretary delayed still, bearing the young gentlemen in hand, persisting in the hope that any day a reply might come from Babington to the queen, listing the names of all the conspirators in his own handwriting, making confessions hard wrung or special eloquence of the attorneys altogether superfluous. No reply came, however, Phelippes was growing still more nervous, and Walsingham too had begun to lose patience. Mr. Milles had sent Gifford after Ballard, but that had been almost a week ago; Ballard's whereabouts remained unknown, and Gifford himself seemed to have preferred caution over the strictest loyalty--he had never come back. Ballard's passport, however he had obtained it, if once he reached the coast would see him safely to sea without a second glance from the port-searchers. It was essential that he be found and laid in custody at once.

Phelippes and Milles descended into the forecourt to confer with one of the Secretary's best agents, a man who had newly returned from assignment in France, the man most able of any they could think of to track Ballard down and lay him by the heels. Together they crossed to the guardroom of the western gatehouse, where they had appointed to meet him.

Nicholas Berden rose as Walsingham's men entered the little room. Quietly he received his instructions and made to leave. He refused their offer of a description of the priest, for he knew the man already. By late the following morning, though he'd not yet found Ballard himself, Berden had learned where the man was expected in a few days' time and had settled down to wait.

Anthony Babington received, by Poley's means, a note from Walsingham inviting him to visit him on Thursday, the third of August, and tell him all he knew of any plot. He was surprised by the Secretary's apparently casual attitude towards the thing, but supposed that the press of state business prevented greater promptness; there had been rumors of French and Spanish fleets off the coast, and all the militia were being got out, all the coastal beacons being put back into order. On the morning of the third, however, he received another note, requiring him to put off his interview until Saturday the fifth. It dawned upon him suddenly that he was being strung along. Something told him inwardly that everything had come out and that he was being held in hand while the bushes were beat for others. His first thought fell upon Maude, who had disappeared into Scotland; he drew out a sheet of paper and penned a hasty note to the queen of Scots, apologizing for his silence and warning her that through the treachery of Bernard Maude the complot was broken off, but only for the

moment: for "dismay not," he conjured her, "neither doubt of happy issue. We have vowed and we will perform or die."

He spent a sleepless night and felt himself becoming ill. The next morning he hurried round again to Ballard's rooms. This time he found the priest returned, but accompanied by a man who was introduced as Mr. Berden. He felt quite relieved to be in Ballard's presence once again, for the priest seemed always to know just where he was going, but he became alarmed at the insistence with which Berden pressed him to remain for companionship's sake. In consequence of that, he took his leave as soon as with civility he could. As he left the house and started away, he saw Francis Milles and two other men enter at the main doors and run bounding up the stairs. Moments later they reappeared with Ballard, his arms bound, fair-haired Berden following behind, smoothing his doublet down.

Babington dashed the whole distance home and with furious haste wrote a letter of complaint to the Secretary, remonstrating with him for having arrested Ballard before he, Babington, had had a chance to lay the whole situation before him. He demanded to know the meaning of it. Two hours later his boy brought back a reply. Walsingham informed him that Ballard had been arrested without his knowledge, but because he was a seminary priest, rather than as any plotter. The Secretary's great fear now was that Babington too should be arrested as a harbinger of priests unless he took refuge instantly in Walsingham's own house, where the common pursuivants could not touch him.

Babington, without troubling to put on his hat, ran down into the street. There he met Robert Poley coming up, and he shouted as he passed, "Nay, it is all out. We must flee for our lives!"

Poley, instead of fleeing, overtook his friend and tried to stop him. Babington tried to explain that he had a safe place to run to, not to fear for him. But little Poley was not listening; he was simply trying to hold Babington down, almost as if trying to capture him. Babington shrieked when he realized that Poley was arresting him, and he shrieked again as he threw the man into a cart standing near and dashed away in terror.

Walsingham's servants admitted him and informed him that the master was expected shortly. Sitting with his legs bouncing in the Secretary's sideroom, Babington tried to calm himself, and belatedly he took thought. It occurred to him that he had arrested himself. He slapped his forehead. Quickly, he darted to the door and saw that two of the servingmen were sitting by the front entrance, obviously stationed there to guard him.

Babington thought for a long moment. Then he adjusted his clothing and forced onto his face, rather painfully, an expression of nonchalance. He re-entered the hall and stretched himself before the servingmen, then swore that he was damnably hungry and wondered whether they, while awaiting the Secretary, would like to join him for an early supper at his expense. The servants looked at each other, shrugged, and agreed. They called a third man forward from the rear of the house, and together they strolled across to the tavern three doors down the way.

The men, in kindly regard for their new friend's generosity, dined simply, and Babington, laughing at their amiable stories, almost forgot the circumstances he was in. At length, however, they finished their meal, and all three of his guests began trying to persuade him to let them contribute to the paying. He refused in the grand manner; pulling out his purse he walked back to settle with the host. Quickly he counted the coins into the man's hand,

then stepped into the stores chamber in the back. There were no other doors, but a window stood open. Babington bounded through it.

Appropriating a horse that stood at the farther end of the garden, the fugitive dashed away from town up Hampstead Road to the northwest, collecting Windsor and Donne as he progressed. They hid themselves in St. John's Wood and there remained for a considerable time, looked for but unfound. Finally, almost overcome by hunger, they emerged from the forest at the western edge and made for Mr. Bellamy's house in Harrow, where they found the pursuivants waiting to take them to the Tower.

The brothers Habington were taken in a haymow on their father's estate in Worcestershire. Captain Jacques brought in Mr. Salusbury and Mr. Tichbourne and then disappeared. Robert Poley and Nicholas Berden ran down the elusive Mr. Savage, and Mr. Milles had the man attached. Bernard Maude returned to hunt up two more gentlemen who'd fled southward, turned them over to the sheriff of the county, then he too disappeared discreetly. Barnaby Macgeogan, the courier between London and Chartley, simply disappeared. Gilbert Gifford was discovered to have slipped away to France in disguise, bearing a license obtained from the French ambassador. His friends among the exiles there congratulated him for having escaped out of Walsingham's net.

Mr. William Waad, Clerk of the Privy Council, had gone to Chartley to consult with Sir Amias Paulet. They met in the open fields to preclude being noticed by anyone in the queen of Scots's household. Paulet made some pertinent suggestions, and Waad bore them hurriedly back to Walsingham. When Ballard was arrested, the Secretary believed he had sufficient matter in hand to convince even Queen Elizabeth of the gravity of the moment, and he sought and won her permission. On the ninth of August, Mary, queen of Scots, was invited to chase deer on Sir Walter Aston's grounds at Tixall. To her delight, Sir Amias let himself be persuaded to allow her to attend. She rode with her party and guards to Tixall and hunted quite enjoyably till she tired of it. Then she decided to return to Chartley, but was forbidden from doing so. She realized at once what the meaning of it was, and she screamed.

In her absence, Mr. Waad, some other agents of the court, and a few of the local officials, had entered her apartments at Chartley, arrested her secretaries, and seized all of her papers from their cunning hiding-places. Her papers, along with the letters intercepted and the gentlemen's copious confessions, would prove finally to be capital.

In his cell in Beauchamp Tower, Anthony Babington was still troubled by waking nightmares. He saw his friends being disembowelled on Tower Hill. He saw himself, hanging from a gibbet before a mob howling execrations and hurling filth. He saw the executioner swinging his bright axe down to sever the queen of Scots's head, which rolled away and bounced along the scaffolding like a giant piece of fruit.

XX. JULIO AND THE THIRD PARTY

(1587)

"This is my choice; for why I find
No wealth is like the quiet mind."

The queen of Scots was dead. Her friends the young gentlemen, Babington and Savage, Ballard and Donne, twelve of them in all, had perished pitifully, in barbaric manner, on the public scaffold in September 1586. The lady herself had been tried at Fotheringay by a commission made of English peers (not, as she had pointed out, *her* peers), and she had been convicted of complicity in their attempt. She was sentenced to death, but the queen of England, anxious at the prospect of executing a fellow monarch, hesitant to let slip her reputation for clemency and compassion, refrained from signing the warrant.

The French king sent envoys to the English court to plead for mercy. So too did the Scottish king, and supplications and threats arrived daily from all over Europe. Walsingham and Leicester and all their friends worked just as hard to persuade her majesty of the need for firmness, lest misplaced kindness be mistaken for weakness and breed further plots. Still Elizabeth hesitated. The Parliament petitioned in November for the execution of Mary's sentence; Elizabeth thanked the members for their care and returned them the answer answerless. The earl of Leicester, newly home from the Netherlands, suggested to Walsingham that the queen of Scots be quietly poisoned, but Walsingham was shocked by the idea. Queen Elizabeth hinted to Sir Amias Paulet that his prisoner might be quietly poisoned, but Sir Amias indignantly refused. December passed, and nothing was done.

Then still another plot rose belly-upward to the surface. Mr. William Stafford, Sir Edward's younger brother, confessed that des Trappes, secretary to the French ambassador, had suborned him to enter a design upon the queen of England's life. Châteauneuf himself had approved it, he said, and Stafford had arranged des Trappes's meetings with Michael Moody, formerly a spy in Sir Edward's household, then a prisoner for debt in Newgate--Moody had offered to be the man to set a bag of gunpowder under the queen's bed and blow the thing up with her sleeping majesty in it. Des Trappes was arrested in his flight to the coast; Châteauneuf was ordered by the Council to confine himself to his house, and his correspondence was shut off. Walsingham laid before Elizabeth the awful reach of this horrible scheme to save the one queen by disposing of the other one, and Elizabeth took fright, shed tears, and signed the warrant for Queen Mary's execution. Mr. Davison, the second Secretary, carried it to Fotheringay.

On the 8th of February 1587, Mary, the queen of Scots, putative heir to the English throne, was decapitated. The Council apologized to Ch>teauneuf for what appeared to have been a mistaken suspicion and released des Trappes. Stafford was accused of having invented the tale of conspiracy for the purpose of extorting money; he was reprimanded and imprisoned, quietly to be released a year later, having presumably learned his lesson. The twenty years' duel was finished. The queen of Scots would no more trouble either England or Walsingham by inciting the young bloods to insurrection and desperate deeds.

Charles Arundell was scarcely surprised by the news, when finally it reached him. For him, the queen of Scots, to whom he had dedicated the greater part of his adult life, had died the moment he had heard of Babington's arrest. The autumn passed slowly for him. On three occasions he was told that her execution had already been accomplished, only to

find soon afterward, from a man he had suborned in the entourage of Pomponne de Bel-lièvre, King Henri's emissary to Elizabeth, that the matter still hung in the balance. When at odd times, late at night, he began to feel a small, lingering hope for her, his intuition of disaster suppressed it, and he continued on his way by a sort of blind inertia, with neither purpose nor reflection in his actions. As too often happens, despair proved the best prophet of events.

The month of January had seemed uneventful to his dulled imagination, awaiting daily the report of her death. But it was not so in fact. Many things had occurred, none of them good, which should have kept his mind from morbid dalliance. The wars in France had been resumed once more, and the king of Navarre was gathering in the south his greatest army yet. The queen of England had now come in on the Protestant part; on the 11th of January, her commissioners had signed a compact with Prince Casimir and the Protestant mercenaries of the German states, who, at England's expense, were to invade French lands in the summer, there to link up with Navarre and crush the Holy League in a concerted campaign. The League captains were preparing for the worst and, distrustful of their king's intentions, the duke of Guise and his fellows had increased the volume of their propaganda against the king and his minions. The pulpits of Paris rang with exhortations.

In the Low Countries, the stalemate of the last campaigning season had been broken belatedly with no blood shed. The earl of Leicester, who had shown a genius for alienating his commanders and refusing sound advice, had installed at the head of garrisons two men whom he professed to trust above all of the quarrelsome veterans who made themselves so troublesome to him. Sir William Stanley was a proven soldier of great ability who was, however, a known Catholic; him the earl, before returning to England in November, had placed in command of the city of Deventer, which had successfully held out against Parma throughout the preceding summer. Rowland Yorke, formerly a friend of Arundell's at the English court, was both a Catholic and a man deeply in debt; him, despite the protests (possibly because of the protests) of his own advisers and the representatives of the States, Leicester had placed in charge of the Zutphen sconce, in relief of which Sir Philip Sidney had lost his life a few months earlier. On the 28th of January 1587, both of these men, one for conscience, the other for pay, turned their positions over to the Spanish. All over Europe the question was debated: what part of loyalty did the soldier owe to his nation and what part to his faith? In the Catholic regions, their decision was generally held to have been correct.

Nearer to home, something else of consequence occurred as well. Sir Edward, despite having been forbidden many times from using such tactics, decided that the moment had come to approach Mendoza directly, instead of continuing to deal with him only distantly through the League. He feared that now the great threat to England had shifted so conclusively from the duke of Guise's military whims to the king of Spain's armada, he would lose valuable time unless he were in proximate contact with the Spaniard himself. He had devised a plan for establishing himself with Don Bernardino directly: Arundell was to report that he, Stafford, had intercepted a special post from the king of Navarre to his own queen. In it, "Bearn," Navarre's code name, had inveighed against Stafford odiously as a traitor for having supplied vital information to the duchess of Guise. (That Bearn had written such a letter, as a matter of fact, was true.) Arundell was to represent Stafford as having flown into a desperate rage, swearing that he should never be satisfied until he had been revenged upon both Navarre, for meddling, and Queen Elizabeth, for having invited such reports to his derogation.

Arundell was also to make the point that he knew the ambassador to be financially on the wrong side of his ledgerbook, in consequence of his unrepented habits of gambling. Stafford had laughed uncomfortably while concocting this part of it, probably because this too was quite true. In any case, he was to urge upon Mendoza the suggestion that, Stafford's present disaffection and his debts considered, there would be no time like the present for suborning him and bringing him in to the service of the king of Spain.

In earnest of his future usefulness, Sir Edward gave Arundell a first piece of information to bear along with him, which was that a fleet was being prepared in English ports for use later in the spring in aid of the Portuguese pretender, Don Antonio, against his enemy King Philip. Arundell questioned the wisdom of this fabrication, for, he thought, only a few months' time would suffice to prove it false.

Pursuing his instructions, in late January Arundell made his nocturnal way to Mendoza's house and delivered his message. The Spaniard was grateful for the suggestion, and though he demanded the opportunity to consult with his master, he bade Charles continue to play upon Stafford and to hold out the possibility of some two thousand crowns or such a sum to come his way in short time. Arundell departed with the feeling that affairs were taking still another nasty turn. The game he played between Guise and Stafford seemed desperate enough--now to be involved in the sale of embassy secrets directly to the Spanish enemy seemed beyond the possibility of any explanation, should it ever come out. Nearly everything seemed eventually to come out.

Likewise in January, prompted perhaps by his resignation to the final defeat of the queen of Scots's cause, perhaps also by his fear that, as war with Spain became more inevitable, his own ambiguous role should become untenable at last, Arundell began once again to give thought to retirement. He wondered to Stafford whether if Sir Edward were to write home a full explanation of his service, Walsingham might not agree to procure him a free passage to enable him to live quietly on his own lands in the country. Stafford looked at him soberly. Such a thing was out of all question, he said, now and possibly forever, since his oath would probably be insufficient even to clear himself from suspicion, let alone a wanted man like Arundell. He bade Arundell sadly to put the thought of pardon altogether from his mind, certainly until after the approaching conflict with Spain had been resolved, probably until after both Leicester and Walsingham were under the ground.

Simultaneously, however, Arundell was investigating another idea. He had sent a message to his friend Nicholas Berden in London, inquiring whether it might be possible someday to arrange some very rural hideaway for him in the back rooms of some quiet Catholic household, where he might spin out his last years in wooded walks and pious contemplation. So far had he descended from his dreams of returning one day in triumph that now he was half prepared to spend the remainder of his life in hiding, just so that it was quietly in England that he hid.

Berden replied with alacrity. He wrote that the thing was as good as done, that he had arranged a suitable retreat for Arundell's habitation (and he had, too), and he urged Arundell earnestly to come across on such and such a day, when he should meet him personally upon his landing and convey him to safety. Arundell was tempted, and very nearly acceded to the plan, and might have done except that he was unprepared to act in such haste without longer time for reflection. There were many factors which had first to be well weighed;

there always are. He wrote to express his hearty gratitude to Berden, but asked him to defer the idea to a future date.

As a matter of chance, Arundell was dining with the Staffords on the night of 17 February 1587 (the 27th by the new calendar), when the official post brought the news of Mary's execution. Earlier in the evening, for once there had been no talk of policy, nothing of espionage or war, only a rather desultory reminiscing over a mutual past grown hazy with time and alteration. The weather without was frightfully cold, but the fire was high, and the four of them--the Staffords, Arundell, and a pleasant French lady whom Lady Douglass had brought along to complete the party--sat comfortably before the hearth to a late hour. The bearer summoned Sir Edward out to hear the news. In short time he returned, noticeably out of countenance, and announced the awful tidings to his friends. Lady Douglass swore an oath. Charles continued gazing into the flames with no change of expression. He seemed more disturbed, indeed, when he learned the rest of it, that Stafford's brother William and his folly had been the final agency of the queen's dispatch.

Arundell then excused himself and rode round in the early hours to Mendoza's house. Thence the news travelled swiftly, to the Spaniard's friends in France, in Rome, in his own country, and soon afterward to all the courts of Europe. The principals of the Holy League lost no time in fixing upon their own version of events. The English Jezebel had committed her blackest crime in a black career, and she had been abetted by that secret Calvinist, King Henri III, who (acting with Huguenot counsel) had dispatched Bellièvre not to save the martyred queen but to hasten her death. Once again the pulpits rang out. Portraits of the royal victim, draped in black, hung from nearly all the windows in Paris. The League version was the one the bishop of Bourges chose to thunder out in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, in the presence of the timid king himself, at Queen Mary's obsequies a fortnight later. Mendoza's letters ensured that much the same interpretation would be communicated both to the pope and to his own sovereign, and the call for holy vengeance against England sounded loudly and insistently in many parts of the long, wide world. Stafford was advised to keep indoors.

The English promulgated their own version. The queen of England had been pressed by the importunity of events to sign the warrant of death, but had never meant it to be carried out. That had been done without her consent by the immoderate hardihood of one man, a busy Puritan, her second Secretary Mr. Davison, who on his own initiative had transported the warrant to Fotheringay and had the execution (nay the murder) committed with neither Elizabeth's knowledge nor her wishes. She was as surprised by it, indeed as deeply grieved, as was anybody else, and accordingly she had had Mr. Davison clapt up in prison for his labors. There he would remain forever. But, alas, the past could never be undone. (Davison was released eighteen months later, had his fine remitted, and drew his salary for many years after.)

This interpretation found little credence in Paris, Rome, Madrid, or anywhere, but at least it spared King James of Scotland, who had little taste for giving up his English pension, the necessity of using anything more than harsh words in retaliation for the death of his troublesome mother.

Arundell watched thereafter almost stupidly as the climate of anxiety continued everywhere to worsen. From Spain and through the English Catholics in Rome came incessant rumors that the Spanish king had finally made up his mind. Whether in the selfless spirit

of divine vengeance, as was frequently claimed, or as more commonly believed because the queen of Scots's death finally freed him to conquer England without having to turn it over to her, Philip was said at last to be resolved, finally to have ordered hurried preparations for his great Armada to set its sails in the spring.

In the Low Countries, there was new activity in Parma's camps. In Paris, King Henri found the streets unsafe, and retired to the country, where he and Joyeuse his minion were preparing to venture an army to the south. In the south, Navarre prepared to receive them. In the east, the German and Swiss scouts were seen investigating the convenient routes into France, and the League was preparing to take the field once again.

And in England, there really was a fleet being fitted out by Drake.

But Arundell watched stupidly, for he seemed almost not to care. Sharrock worried about him; he observed his master dwelling long hours by the east window, gazing absently down upon the muddy street. Few others saw much of him at all, because with one thing and another most of his friends stayed away from him. Most of them were gravitating surely into Morgan's and Paget's closet, and whatever their private feelings they believed it unwise to be seen too much in Arundell's company. The strong-minded among them considered Arundell too shallow in his dedication to the causes of war and revenge; the opportunists, the time-servers, believed that the times were not opportune to be counted among his circle. Fr. Parsons, from Rome, took the trouble to write a special letter of condolence, kindly remembering how devoted he had been to Mary's welfare, and in it he advised Charles to continue placing his whole confidence in God's provision for them all.

As the month of March drew on, Arundell pursued his business listlessly. Mendoza informed him that his king was prepared to accept Sir Edward's service, and he wished an initial meeting to be arranged. Henceforth, he said, Stafford would be known in his dispatches as "Julio," also as "the new friend" or "the new confidant," whereas Arundell was to be designated "the third party." He looked forward to an amiable association with Sir Edward, whom heretofore he had known only in chilly passages in the corridors of various palaces; but, after their first meeting, he would work with him, he said, only with Arundell and no one else as intermediary.

Late in the month, Arundell was knocked up from his morning sleep by one of Stafford's stableboys. The message, in a hastily scribbled note, was that there were lately rumors that Arundell might be in some new danger. Two days later Sharrock, returning to their rooms, found a crudely lettered note beneath the door. It warned Arundell to look to himself, because some of those mayhap he best trusted were preparing to do him a wrong. Neither message in itself much frightened Arundell, for there had been such threats before. The two coming almost together, however, and from opposite directions as it were, made him uneasy, as well as to feel somewhat isolated and exposed.

The following day was a Sunday. In the evening, Arundell and Sharrock attended the vespertinal services at the quiet church near the Hôtel de Nevers a short way up the road, and were returning down St. Andrew's street to their rooms. The day had been warm but the dusk was coming over chilly, and a fog had begun gathering along the cobbled avenue. At ground level and in all the alleys a deep shadow obscured everything.

The street was broad in this place, since St. Andrew's was the major route of market travel between the Porte de Buci and the bridges in the center of the town. The two men walked unhurriedly down it, past a few horses standing idly before an inn. Casually they discussed

the preacher they had heard, a man noteworthy in the fact that he had confined himself to speaking upon theology and holiness, with not a word of political exhortation.

As one proceeded westward toward the city gate, one came first to a sizable street meeting St. Andrew's perpendicularly on the left, and passing that came almost at once to the rue des Augustins running obliquely away to the river on the right. Just beyond that lay the Hôtel of St. Denis, the fronts of which dominated the right side of the street for some distance further. In the center of the intersection lay the only patch of daylight still penetrating to the floor of the city. The two men, conversing at their ease, strolled out of the dull shadow of the avenue into the square.

As they reached the center of the light, a round detonation sounded out of the leftward street, quite close at hand. They stood in astonishment. Briefly they glimpsed a ball of gray smoke rolling upward past the windows of the first story. Another explosion came out of the rue des Augustins, from one of the alleys flanking the St. Denis, and they heard the missile slashing the air between them.

Arundell and Sharrock turned and dashed eastward along the way they had come, angling to the southern side of the street to avoid the center. Almost at once came another loud shot from directly before them. The smoke spumed out of a darkened doorway not ten meters off. Sharrock, his legs still travelling forward, spun off the ground with his left shoulder following the flight of the ball.

Arundell stood amazed. The image came to his mind of an angry bull encompassed about by snarling dogs in the pit, and he saw at once, what the bull knew too, that he must break out of the circle and find the means to face all of his assailants at once.

He drew his rapier and knelt quickly to see his servant's wound. Just as he did so, another shot came from the St. Denis, and he felt a smart tug at his high cap.

Sharrock rose unsteadily to his feet, supported by Arundell's free arm round his chest, both turned back to the west. In an instant their decision was forced upon them; they must traverse the square toward the man who had fired off both of his pistols.

Arundell clasped Sharrock and jogged a short step to his right. His timing was luckily accurate, for the eastward man had drawn another aim and fired harmlessly to the place where they had stood an instant earlier. With Sharrock leaning heavily upon him, running in a kind of huddled gallop, he rushed across the stones toward the Augustins.

A bright flash and a splash of powder smoke came again from the left, and the same rolling explosion reverberated from the house fronts. Arundell ran on. In another second he was past the angle of the southward street.

In a small service door of the front flanking upon the St. Denis he saw a short, pale man half exposed, working furiously with his tamper at the barrel of his dag. From an alley a few feet away, two men ran out and stared about in perplexity. Arundell dashed straight ahead, still dragging his friend, brandishing his rapier in great sweeps above his head.

The man threw down his tamping rod and grabbed at the butt of the pistol. Arundell ran straight at him. The man, his mouth and eyes agape, made a step forward, raised the pistol and tried to take an aim. Bobbing and weaving, Arundell swung his rapier and began screaming in a high-pitched cry, dashing on like the god Mars drunk upon blood. The

assassin quailed, staring with his gun raised to just below level, and then, in something like a paroxysm, he stuck the thing out, turned his head away, and jerked it.

There was a light thud and a flash of powder in the pan, and an instant later an enormous roar came out, white and gray smoke spewed forth in a cloud that enveloped the man entirely. In a second Arundell reached him. The man stood slumped against the stone wall – the dag had disappeared – his arm hung in streaming shreds from his shoulder, and the right half of his head had been blown almost cleanly away upon the masonry. As Arundell and Sharrock, and now from a few meters off several servingmen and citizens, watched him in horror, the assassin, amid his drifting smoke, sat slowly down upon the street, and then lay over in a heap.

Across the square, the gunman from the southward street had come out of the row and stood staring at them. Here and there heads were thrust out of upper windows to see what was the matter. Then the man from the far doorway and his accomplice from the bystreet set out trotting towards them across the intersection, into the light, each with two pistols held out before him. A woman just above let out a scream. Turning away, Arundell and Sharrock entered the doorway and found themselves in a black passage between two buildings.

In short space they debouched from the alley into a dark courtyard at the center of the block of the St. Denis. The main doors of the house were closed and unlighted. From behind came shouts of anger and dismay, as if the citizens had played turnabout and caught the assassins in a crossfire of their own, but a verbal one. Arundell stared about frantically.

Footsteps sounded from the passage behind him. Arundell hoisted Sharrock upright and lumbered him forward along the courtyard wall, staying in the shadows as far as possible. Then he bolted into the yard towards the main gate, which lay open upon St. Andrew's street. From behind, near the mouth of the alley, there came another detonation, deafening within the high courtyard. A glass window directly across the avenue came shattering out of its frame.

He ducked round the gate and tugged Sharrock obliquely westward across the street. On his left he saw the citizens running round the corner of the square, stopping when they saw him and holding off at a cautious distance. He called up nearly his last strength and bounded the final feet into the tenebrous depths of the ruelle du Foi. There, but a few doors down, he reached his own house and threw Sharrock up the steps. Pausing for breath inside, he heard more tumult from the street. Then he lurched forward and made his way up the staircase, stumbling as he dragged his man behind him.

Bursting into his chambers, Arundell bustled Jamie through the darkness across the morning room. Into the back room, he heaved his burden behind the door and bade him lie still, then ran to his locker and threw back the lid. At length he found his pistol and powdercase and bore them, with his rapier in the other hand, back into the morning room, where he squatted low behind the chiffonier in the darkest corner. As quickly and evenly as he could, he pinched powder into the barrel and pan, tamped it down. He expected momentarily to hear his pursuers come crashing up the stairs.

Arundell dropped in the shot and held his pistol up to prevent its rolling out again. Long seconds passed. His breath came spasmodically. The muscles in his aging legs jerked and twisted still, as if even now he were dashing down benighted streets. Crouching behind his slender cover began soon to seem intolerable to him. Even the weight of his weapon, held aloft before him, had become unbearable, and his wind came so brokenly that he feared he

should lose consciousness. He prayed that, though he had only one ball for two of them, they would hurry and come ahead.

But no one came.

Arundell went to the northern windows and peeked out from behind the wall. He could hear faintly the continued shouts of the neighborhood, but was unable to see what transpired in the street. At some distance, flickering candlelights arose in the upper stories of the St. Denis and danced from room to room.

Cautiously, Arundell hunted up a light and set it on a small table that he pulled into the center of the morning room. Then he retreated down the passage, keeping his eyes upon the chamber door. He found Sharrock sitting up with his injured arm held tenderly across his lap.

With some effort, he induced Sharrock to crawl to a place before the passage. He fumbled with a linen shirt he found on the floor, tore a strip from it and, with eyes upon the morning room, endeavored to bind Sharrock's wound high on the upper arm. Then he gave his man the dag and bade him keep the watch. From his bed-desk and writing table he gathered up his papers and stuffed them into a cloth bag. Behind the table he found his purse, which he shoved into his doublet, slinging the bag over his shoulder. Then, with some solicitude, he helped Jamie to his feet and relieved him of the weapon.

On the stairs, he waited, both of them listening carefully. With the pistol before them, Arundell eased noiselessly down the steps, pausing frequently to listen. As they opened the street door, they heard again the noise of a crowd on St. Andrew's street, but they turned away from it and made a rapid pace southward.

Some time later, having pursued alleys and black byways in a confusion of routes, they fetched up at the house of a doctor they knew of. The old man was still up. He pronounced at first sight that Sharrock's wound was far from mortal, and as he applied himself to it, Arundell slept fitfully, still in his clothes.

The next morning brought occasion for taking thought. He could not return again to his old flat. Henceforward he should have to live in hiding. Especially because he had no idea who had hired the assault upon him, he must restrict his acquaintance to men whom he knew he could trust--these were very few. It looked to be a hard life in prospect, skulking in alleyways and popping up unannounced, stealing away again just as mysteriously. If he had had plenty to surfeit of this work before yesterday, he was sick nearly to death with it now.

While Sharrock remained the next morning in the doctor's bed, Arundell searched about and took out new rooms for them. All he found, since he confined himself to crowded houses away from the avenues, were a bleak pair of chambers in a high story, with only one large window facing northward. They were really not more than two hundred meters distant from the ruelle du Foi, in a diseased old house in the ironically named passage du Bonheur, but through the tortured maze of ancient buildings and narrow alleyways, so far as finding went they might as well have been in Samarkand.

Over the next five or six days, Arundell and his servant contrived more or less to settle into their new existence. Sharrock, after a few days' rest, discovered his health to be as sound as it had been. Only his arm had suffered; he pampered it now, at the surgeon's direction, wearing it in a linen sling, but seemed otherwise hale. Generally, they stayed indoors.

By hired messengers Arundell communicated his whereabouts to Stafford and Mendoza, and both expressed concern for his mischance.

The spring came on steadily, as March gave way to April, and the Easter season was happily blessed by a succession of warm, clear days. Arundell and Sharrock slipped out of the city on one of them and rode into the country to pass a pleasant holiday in the western forest, by the river Seine. Only one connection with the old house did they put themselves in hazard to renew. Sharrock had encountered Madame Lacour in the market square near St. Elizabeth's by-the-wall, quite by accident. She had seemed as glazed over and lifeless as ever, but he had learned from her that her husband's condition had not improved, that they were destitute still, that she had no work save a little washing to take in and felt the loss of the gentlemen's kindness very sorely. Sharrock, with no affection for the woman herself, little wondering that she found so little work, still felt touched by her condition, and appointed to meet her in the market on the following day. At that time, he offered her their custom again, for their cleaning and meals, if she would now walk through a few streets to come to them. With neither gratitude nor any sign of interest, she accepted, and thereafter turned up almost daily.

Early in April, a note came round from the Spanish ambassador. In coy, cryptic French, it inquired whether "the third party" were now ready to effect an interview with "Julio." Arundell sent off to Stafford, who replied signifying his approval of a meeting for a week hence, leaving the arrangements to Arundell's discretion. He rode into the suburbs and reconnoitered the territory near an unfrequented inn to the south.

He picked his day and had replies from both men. At about three o'clock on the ninth, Arundell took horse and rode out southward, coming up to the inn some three quarters of an hour later. He went directly to an upper room that overlooked the innyard. Discounting a few farmers, there was no one else about. Charles threw open the painted shutters and sat in the breeze through the windows. In a short while, Stafford rode up with Lilly and another man, but, as laid down, he left his companions in the public room below and came up alone. The ambassador seemed nervous, as if he too sensed the extraordinary character of the interview, but he made light conversation so successfully that he put Arundell much more at ease.

Some time later, Mendoza arrived. Hans Oberholtzer and two other men accompanied him up the stairs and settled him comfortably into a chair, and then they too retired to the rooms below.

Arundell made a formal introduction of the two diplomats, one to another. Though the two principals greeted one another civilly, they did it with considerable chilliness, for they had a long accumulated enmity for each other that they were now determined to suppress.

The discussion began by Don Bernardino's presenting his king's compliments to Stafford, assuring him that whatever deplorable misunderstandings might now and then arise between their nations his majesty had always looked upon Sir Edward as a trustworthy man and a fair-minded one. Stafford replied that he for his part had long honored King Philip for his uprightness and magnanimity and learning, and for his extraordinary patience in the face of many provocations. The other then said that his king, knowing of Stafford's devotion to the international cause of peace, had long wished for a way in which he might express

his good opinion tangibly, and Stafford answered that he had long sought a way in which he might better deserve those gracious words.

The conversation continued, carefully, in just this manner: Don Bernardino expressed his sadness that Stafford, simply for pursuing the best interests of his country and Christianity generally, seemed to be subject to unkind judgments from his own superiors. This permitted Sir Edward to rehearse the injustices done him by Walsingham and Leicester, who in their Puritan zealotry and to gain power for themselves were forcing his peace-loving queen into a belligerent policy, and who despised him personally for refusing to join them in their game. Mendoza took up the burden of the song and railed against the war party in the Privy Council, against the pirates like Drake and Hawkins they encouraged to prey on other nations' shipping, the soldiers they sent out to trouble the king's possessions.

Logically this sort of thing might have gone on all day. When enough had been said, however, to fill the air with grumbling, Stafford began circling to the point. He said that he had come to the opinion, by careful study, that King Philip was now the undoubted heir to the English throne by right, following the present monarch. Though he meant always to serve his mistress faithfully while she lived, he considered that this relationship made it imperative that their two nations should never be disjoined by war. It was his hope that he might serve both his present queen and his future king by trying to prevent bad men from having it all their own way. He was the more willing to thwart these bad men, he added, because through their malevolence he had personally been reduced to a state of miserable poverty, doubtless deliberately, so that he should not be able to serve her majesty as well as she deserved.

Mendoza was then able to say that he encouraged Stafford in his Christian irenism and quite sympathized, and furthermore that he was prepared in his king's name, considering that they were really allies in the fight for peace, to help relieve his want brought on him by their mutual enemies.

Stafford expressed his gratitude at the suggestion and promised solemnly that he would study to deserve that favor. Mendoza then produced a whacking great purse, which he said contained two thousand crowns that he should like very much to bestow upon Stafford right away, confident that his master should never have cause to be sorry for the charitable deed. If anything could be done to frustrate these warmongers in their foreign meddling, he knew Sir Edward would be the man to do it.

Stafford thanked him and received the purse. He sat quietly for several moments, with no expression on his face, evidently thinking something over. Then he informed the Spaniard that he had just learned, the previous evening, that Sir Francis Drake had sailed from England on the second instant, at the head of some thirty ships.

Mendoza sighed. Ah, that Drake, he said, eyeing Stafford closely. Someday his preying upon innocent American carracks must drive his king to some impatience.

Sir Edward replied that on this occasion he was sailing, not to the Indies, but against the Spanish coast.

Mendoza appeared to be surprised. He straightened noticeably and exclaimed that this was too bad. Such an attack upon the homeland would surely drive matters to extremity. But alas, he cried, there were so many towns and ports, from Corunna to Gibraltar; how-ever should they all be defended against this madman?

Stafford stared at the man levelly.

"The mark he shoots at is Cadiz," he said.

The Spaniard appeared satisfied by this news. If the fleet should take a normal journey to its target, his warning might precede it, and Cadiz should be ready. If Drake's thrust could be parried, and no harm taken, the hot bloods of Spain should have no occasion to force his nation into war. Already Stafford had done much, he said, for the work of peace.

Here the conference ended. There was some discussion of the manner in which Arundell would travel between them as needful, since it was out of the question for them to meet again personally. It was agreed that any information, whether from rumors or from official dispatches, that might prove invidious to one or the other party was to be communicated promptly through Arundell's medium. Mendoza affected a new fondness for Sir Edward and swore that for his part he intended to see that a friend of his should no longer have to go disgracefully in want.

Then Stafford bowed his way from the room, gathered his men, and rode away. The Spaniard, after presenting Arundell with a small jewel in honor of the occasion, was helped to his horse and rode off likewise, and Charles was left alone to ponder what he had witnessed. He stared from the high window until the trees became dark across the windy road.

Ten days later, on Wednesday, the 19th (or 29th) of April, Mendoza's report reached his king at Aranjuez. At 4 o'clock on the same afternoon, even as Philip may have been perusing the dispatch, a sentry atop the castle of Cadiz observed a line of ships entering the channel in a long file, making their way into the lower bay. He called some of his colleagues to look with him. For some weeks ships had been arriving, albeit smaller ones usually and fewer at a time, Spanish and Portuguese ships, merchantmen from the Italian cities newly pressed into service, all bound ultimately for the Armada assembling under Lisbon Rock. While the sentries argued over the question whose contingent these new additions might be joining, Sir Francis Drake led twenty-six English warships into Cadiz harbor.

In the queen's own galleons, the *Elizabeth Bonaventure*, the *Rainbow*, the *Dreadnought*, and the *Golden Lion*, in the *Merchant Royal* and others belonging to the London trading companies, in a few ships of his own, in men-of-war, pinnaces, and a captured caravel, Drake and his captains came straight on. When the alarm was finally raised, the fort shot off a few of its guns harmlessly and the Spaniards came out in a line of Mediterranean galleys to slow the invaders' progress. The galleons raised their English banners, crashed through the tiny galleys and sent them scuttling away from their giant guns. The ships at anchor did whatever their crews could devise to save themselves; the tiniest ones slipped across the bay into the shoals, where the galleons could not follow them, some ran successfully into the upper bay; most could not move at all, for the impressed foreign ships had had their sails impounded on shore to prevent their defecting.

Without suffering a loss, while the garrison danced about trying to anticipate his place of landing, while his own fleet gradually caught up with him, Drake scattered the galleys and set about burning up the captured shipping. Throughout the night his men worked at the job, putting to torch everything they could not sail away with them. At dawn, as the Spanish brought up more soldiers and worried about his place of landing, he ventured into the upper bay and destroyed the great Armada-bound ships that had taken refuge there. At noon on Thursday, preparing to depart, the English found themselves becalmed; for twelve hours their ships lay idle, as they worked energetically to fend off galleys and fireships, and

then the wind came up and they sailed away, with scarcely a man lost, with no landing even contemplated. The castle's governor swore that if the Sea Dogs had tried to come ashore, he would have made them very sorry for it. The Spanish naval commander sent after Drake a basket of fine wines as a token of his esteem.

Word of the attack reached Paris a fortnight later, and was followed by the news that Sir Francis remained ranging unopposed along the Spanish coast, preying upon stragglers. Many a heart sank. It was recognized by everyone that there would be no great Enterprise of England to sail this season, that there might never be unless this damage could be made up. Arundell's distress was as great as theirs, but had another cause. The raid, against all probability, had been against Cadiz indeed. Stafford's intelligence had been genuine.

He burned all of his papers, wrapped up his money, packed up his saddlebags, summoned Sharrock, and rode out of Paris without a word to anyone.



In the sun-drenched valley of the Loire, birds sang. Small animals scampered under hedges. Shimmering heat rose from a meadow that descended a gentle hill. Along the dusty road, just where it ran in upon the banks of the river, an elderly hedge-priest and his boy went rounds on tiny ponies. Near a one-room cottage by the stream, in a grove of trees, a peasant woman hung out washing.

On the highest hill, the castle shone almost pink in the sunlight, its corner towers rising upward as if pointing to where cooling clouds ought to have been, but, today, were not. Nearer at hand, the sound of insects, with the birds, made the only intrusion upon noon-time silence.

Arundell had carried a book with him to read from on the riverbank. The beauty of the mid-summer's day, however, made him place it near him on the turf. For two hours or more he sat still, shirtless, hatless, with a vacant mind, and with a faint smile. Beads of perspiration stood out all over his chest and shoulders. The broad, cool river began to look so inviting that he stripped off the rest of his clothing and waded into the water. There for another hour he paddled lazily about, emerging only when the sun began westering down the valley.

He dressed unhurriedly and sat down again upon the bank, taking up the book and leafing through it. It was *Quod nihil scitur*, a new work by Sanchez, the professor at Toulouse. His friend had given it to him as his next assignment, as it were, in his little course of study. It made in an urbane Latin style the classic Academic arguments that certainty about the world is quite impossible, and demonstrated this conclusion, though sometimes very wittily, yet rather too dogmatically for Arundell's taste. Nonetheless, he enjoyed reading it, but only in the evenings, when the light remained after supper, or on inclement days. His Latin was too slow and the matter far too weighty, and the problems of Aristotelian science sometimes too remote, for him much to relish laboring over the thing on golden afternoons. He greatly preferred tennis with his friend, or the hunt, sleeping or paddling in the slow waters by the riverbanks or punting out in the current, and seemed always to find sufficient excuses for carrying his books unopened.

At length he walked back to the house. Jean de Simier spied him from the doorway and called to him to hurry on for supper. They dined simply but well, and then adjourned to the lawn, where archery butts had been erected against the wall of a crib. Sharrock brought

out longbows and shafts and joined his master in challenging their host and one of his men to a contest. Shooting in turns from stands increasingly distant from the butts, they tallied points at each flight and made nominal wagers on the next one. Sharrock, despite his bad arm, shot well, and Arundell succeeded at least in avoiding disgrace, but Simier and his man were both such excellent marksmen that it was a contest only insofar as gave form to their exercise.

After the game, two of Simier's servants carried Sharrock off with them to the nearby village, where since his arrival three months earlier Jamie had become quite a favorite. Simier took Arundell's arm and led him in a leisurely turn through the garden. This residence, in the Loire valley district of Orléanais, near the castle of Sully, made a gracious home, though a small one. The Frenchman owned bigger houses on manors in several parts of the realm, some come to him with his patrimony, two given him by his former patron the duke of Anjou, and one bestowed upon him by the king; but into this one he had gathered the best of his furniture and hangings, servants and service, pictures and books, and here he lived virtually all the year round. He preferred the modest exterior and remote location of this house for one reason only; it made him inconspicuous. In a larger place, where what wealth he owned would have been more obvious, he would have drawn, as flies to honey, any of the bands of ranging troopers that passed through the valley from time to time. In a castle, had he possessed one, he might have drawn whole armies, whose commanders might have believed its destruction stone by stone to be a military necessity. As it was, though armed bands passed sometimes weekly and butchered one another virtually in his back yard, he lived undisturbed.

It was to this peaceful retirement that Simier was trying to convert his companion. Arundell had come to him in the spring, much dismayed by the events of that time, and, calming his old friend by trying to show him these events *sub specie aeternitatis*, Simier had opened his house to him. His hospitality alone had gone a long way to win Charles to what Simier considered a healthier attitude towards all political and religious struggles--to avoid them utterly--but he tried to supplement the summer's peacefulness by tendentious conversation and selected readings.

Simier too had once been much entangled in the vicissitudes of politics. He had tried both body and brain sorely in the interests of Anjou and his king, he had suffered the ingratitude, perfidy, risk, and losses that go with political service; he had suffered, too, the frustrations and still greater uncertainties that go with religious partisanship. Always he had returned to the battle, hopeful again, shortly to have ample evidence thrust upon him of the futility of public endeavors. And then, while on an errand in Bordeaux, he had had the fortune to be introduced to Magistrate Montaigne, the mayor, and soon afterward to read some of his essays. For Simier, meeting Montaigne had been like Simon and Andrew running into the Lord by Galilee water. He felt as if a weight had been lifted from him. Likewise, the *Apologie de Raimond Sebond* began to serve him almost as a bible. Before long he could cite it chapter and verse, and he quoted it sententiously for every occasion. Montaigne's essay had led him back to its sources, and he had sought out a copy of Estienne's edition of Sextus, the *Pyrrhoniæ hypotyposeon*. Before long, he should have described himself as a thorough Pyrrhonist, had there been such a word at that time, or rather one of what soon would be called the *nouveaux Pyrrhoniens*, since he was still a Catholic by inclination. He purchased or borrowed from his friends other works in a similar vein, skeptical works like the recent one by Francisco Sanchez that Arundell had in hand, or older books against the Academicians,

which could not conceal the strength of the positions they described in order to refute. And in order to read all of these and because he had read some of them, he had gone into retirement, no longer able to pursue causes or follow banners that he had no more confidence in than any others. Doubtless Dante would have found a place for him in the vestibule.

This was Simier as Sir Charles Arundell found him. The genial skeptic had recognized the symptoms of Arundell's malady. The men who followed the active political life in these tormented times had either (in his opinion) dangerously too much confidence in their opinions or contemptibly too little conscience in their actions. Arundell was one of the few Simier would have hated to see paying the price of engagement in the foolish causes of this time. Not only had he opened his house to Arundell, he had undertaken to free his mind of troubles as well.

Carefully, Simier had described to Arundell the Pyrrhonist habits of mind, that in matters of the *adela*, the hidden realities of things, there seemed to be no sure knowledge apparent to us, and that indeed the truths over which dogmatists seemed most inclined to go to war seemed often to defy all common sense. He counselled therefore that one did best to suspend judgment, and maintain *aphasia*, a kindly silence about metaphysical realities, and try living a normal, peaceful, and dispassionate life, infused with that tranquility of soul, that serenity of mind and absence of fanaticism, that *ataraxia*, that comes when once one ceases disputation.

He had explicated the formulaic sayings of the Pyrrhonists, like "no more" ("no more" reason to believe this than to believe that) and "to every argument an equal argument is opposed," and the symbol of the balanced scales. And he had explained the Practical Criterion for living one's life: following the guidance of nature, the compulsion of the feelings, the traditions of laws and customs, and the instruction of the arts. This gentle rule, of doing what one's better nature dictates, what one's fellows do, in the absence of any good reason for defying them, saved one from, as Montaigne had written, "rolling constantly," removed the necessity of chasing after every novel notion, every new construction of a passage of scripture.

Luckily Simier was no preacher. Like a Pyrrhonist by temperament he would never have insisted even that one cannot know the truth of the *adela*, saying only that it appeared to him, in his present circumstances, that he did not. But over the weeks of Arundell's residence with him, their conversations gave shape to many of Charles's own misgivings, some of them lifelong. Certainly he found himself feeling much less guilty when he was uncertain of where final loyalties ought to lie, with pope or queen, church or nation, much less the freak for not having ready answers always upon his lips. The disposition which had grown in him, to let matters take their course, work themselves out if they meant to, without any more of his stumbling interference, found a color of justification in this gentle, kindly philosophizing. If he did not attain immediately to *ataraxia*, he felt much improved just for having stepped out of the arena of intrigue and war, for having taken the opportunity to gaze upon it dispassionately, from a distance, as if it were rather an intellectual puzzle than a perilous and bloody battle.

Contemplating matters dispassionately was not always easy to do. In August came word of Parma's success at Sluys, the coastal town in Flanders, which evidently he had invested with a view to procuring a staging port for a journey into England. For two months the prince had kept the town cut off from all relief, and had made ridiculous all of the earl of

Leicester's inept attempts to come to its aid. Now it had surrendered at the last. Arundell grew into a mild agitation over the event. Simier made light of it, and wondered how Arundell could so exercise himself over the fact that the worst enemy he had on the wide earth had suffered a reverse, and Charles had no answer to give him.

As the lazy summer progressed, at ease in the warm meadows on the hillside, Simier pressed upon Arundell the virtues of retirement. Really he could see no obstacle, he said; there was no cause in the world worthy of the pains Arundell had taken already. He had done enough; let those who care only for advancement, of their religion, their nation, or themselves, carry on henceforward--and may they eat each other up! Arundell could not deny that age was creeping upon him. The great hope of his career, the queen of Scots, was now past mourning for. Simier knew nothing of Arundell's private dealings, though he may have suspected somewhat; as a matter of fact, he could not have cared any less which side Arundell was on, but he knew enough of recent occurrences to say frankly that Arundell had outlived his usefulness to anyone and could not return in any hope of safety.

Arundell agreed. With his rational mind, he cared no longer for the ideologies of creed or nation. But this he was well aware was only part of it; beneath his logic, when he had exercised it to its fullest reach, he discovered a reservoir of plain feeling, an irrational feeling that, despite everything else, he ought to be doing his part. It was a very strong feeling, which recurred frequently, and would not be dispelled. But everything conspired to make him overrule it--his confusion about where his duty actually lay, what his part ought to be; the fact that he had no idea how next he should proceed in any case; the fact that, after all, he badly needed a rest of long duration. This was not the English countryside but it was countryside nonetheless.

Into that same countryside Arundell walked out the following morning. From the meadows, the river made a blue and silver quilt flung westward in long, narrow folds. Arundell, having made his decision, gave himself the chance to recede from it. Every consideration he brought before his consciousness conjured him to remain here at his ease. The zealots and the ambidexters might carry on very well without him. Only one thing weighed heavily in the other tray, that this next year would almost certainly be the climactic one, towards which all the foregoing years had pointed; in the spring the Armada would sail, and when it did, England would become Spanish virtually overnight or remain English for a very long time to come. The thought of British militiamen, carrying bare staves and half in undress, ranged across the Kentish farmlands before *los sacristanes* and the Black Riders of Germany in close order, brought pain to Arundell's heart. He could visualize the Spanish *tercios* formed in ranks in Fleet Street; he could see the officers of the Inquisition addressing trembling crowds near the burning heretics in Smithfield.

One more thought, however, made it all conclusive. His only means of doing his part had been helping Stafford in his intelligence, and Stafford had now gone over. Despite this elegant self-torture of deciding, in one sense his decision was made for him. The idea of duty remained with him, but he turned away from it and returned it to store.

When he had walked back to the house, Arundell told Simier that he would accept his hospitality for as long as he wished to have him. Only this did Arundell insist upon, that he must return once more to Paris and, as it were, resign from service, inform Mendoza and Stafford and the duke of Guise's agents that he would no longer be available. Simier inquired crossly what he thought he owed these people, who had used him so ungraciously

and would toss him away when his usefulness to them had ended. Arundell replied merely that he had engaged himself to act for them and must end his service properly. His friend wondered grimly how these gentlemen would greet him after four months' absence without leave.

A few days later then, as August neared its end, Arundell and Sharrock mounted their horses and rode out northward. They followed the river as far as Sully and crossed it there, then followed it on the other side to Orléans. Circumventing that city, they struck overland towards Paris, passing the night in Artenay. The next morning, near Etampes, they began encountering large concentrations of the king's troops in bivouac, but avoided running afoul of them. The next evening found them back in their beastly rooms in the Bonheur.



Charles Arundell stood grimly before the repugnant green door in la Monnaie. Stealth in coming to the English house would no longer be necessary. The door stood open in the heat, and through the relative darkness of the hall he could see Lilly hurrying out to answer his knock. Lilly's face betrayed a measure of surprise, but he ushered him in with a greeting and ran upstairs to announce him.

A moment later Stafford came bounding down the staircase, so quickly indeed that he cracked his head smartly on the crossbeam. He sat down upon the bottom stair, clutching his poor poll and moaning vicious epithets. Arundell pulled his hands away and looked at the blue egg growing before his eyes, and began laughing, praising Sir Edward's verbal ingenuity. The other, swearing still, began laughing too, despite himself, with tears in his eyes. He staggered to his feet.

Abruptly he let go his head and clutched Arundell to his breast. Charles squirmed weakly, but Stafford held on to him for several seconds, slapping him on the back. Then, just as abruptly, he pushed him away again, felt his forehead gingerly, and wiped his eyes with his shirt.

"Sir Ned, you funny old thing," Arundell said; "whence all this?"

Stafford sat down in a chair nearby and stared up at him. "You revolting person, I thought ye had been killed. Where ha' ye been hiding these four months or more, when I believed y'to be under the waters of river Seine?"

Arundell gazed at him in mild incredulity. "Do you not know why I went away, then?"

"Certain I do not. I thought ye were dead, assuredly. Scarce a week after I saw ye last, that awful man Sledd, with his boot-heel for an eyeball, came up grinning in my face before the church of St. Eustache. Not a word spoken, just this filthy heathen grin. Whatever was I to think, by olly Cock's bones, but that he had done ye t'death? My dear fellow, I ha' been praying for your black soul every service."

"Well, thanks. That's all to the good." Arundell was touched by this unaccustomed sentimentality, and he found that it made his task much more difficult. But it was as well to come roundly to it.

"Ned," he began, "I departed this town because of the notion I took of your good faith with me. You know you gave the Spaniard a true service in warning him of Drake."

Stafford's red face grew round and redder still. He stood up. Then he turned suddenly and marched up the staircase, Arundell following.

Stafford closed the door of his study and brusquely gestured towards a chair. Charles sat down silently, while Sir Edward paced back and forth across the room.

"I will tell you somewhat, Sir Charles Arundell, if y'will but listen a slender moment without jumping out o' my window to avoid me."

"Say away, Ned," Arundell answered. A painful depression was settling down upon him.

"I had only one thought in m'poor head when I said that thing about Cadiz," Stafford began, "and that was to deflect the Spaniard from the care of Lisbon. I had no dispatches, not a word come to me from the Secretary, nor nearly ever does; nor any way o' knowing the damned pirate would descend upon Cadiz. Only I heard rumors from Plymouth harbor that Drake was fitting out, that Drake was to sail, that Drake had sailed indeed, and that he meant surely to sail to Lisbon. Charles, y'know yourself 'twas at Lisbon the fleet was gathering, every noddie knew it."

Arundell nodded.

"Ah well, might not then that wily Spaniard hear the same as I heard, and warn them of Lisbon to be waiting for him? O'course he might! And I bent all my pains to take me in his trust, to tell him from my dispatches that it was certain to be Cadiz."

"But, Ned, he would have known within the month you played him falsely."

"So he would, so he would," Stafford exclaimed. "But too late then for Lisbon, what? My dear boy, Drake has returned from the Azores now. You write to any o' your favorers there to find out his seamen and they shall tell you the same thing I say to ye now. That damned Drake changed his mind at the last minute! He always does so. Great God, he threw his admiral in irons for insisting upon Lisbon as in his orders, and the man stands trial for defying him, even as we speak!"

Arundell was impressed by this, for it had the ring of truth to it. He said so.

"Well, right then, and look you now," Sir Edward continued; "what could be better? The intelligence came too tardy and Cadiz paid a merry price for it. What is more, the Spaniard finds me honest with him and will trust me like his mother. But then, just when we might o' had the use of him, you dance the coranto away down the street and I am left naked in his presence. He won't deal with anyone but with you, do you know? I sent Lilly to him and he thrust the fellow out o' doors. He sends to me once in a fortnight or a month and says me Where is Sir Charles? I would have Sir Charles! 'Sir Charles' my arse, y'black-hearted Spanish knight."

This brought Arundell almost to laughter, and he replied that at least he had got his knighthood for his merit, not merely to ornament his office. Stafford pretended to fumble excitedly for his rapier.

After some moments, Stafford spoke again.

"So where were ye, then?"

"I have been reposing in the country," Arundell answered, "where for the matter of that, Ned, I mean to return me. I'm done with this, I am."

"God damn me, you cannot! This is the time now, Charles. This is the year a mighty kingdom shall fall, the soothsayers spread it everywhere. The stars and planets are all in a conjunction, or what d'ye call it, and so is Don Spaniard's fleet. Y'cannot leave me now when I ha' the most need of ye. This is the very hour, man!"

"I can, Ned, I'm shut of it. I have found the place to spin out my last threads and play my lute till night comes on. Don't dissuade me, Ned."

"Oh, don't dissuade you. Do not break my heart, then. The Spaniard will not speak with anyone but yourself; you're his Third Party, his darling, you're the Intermediary. Just the winter and spring, that's all I am asking of ye. In nine months' time ye can go play your foul lute and be damned, for by then we'll have won or lost the whole table. Stick with us, man, for God's sake, just for the winter. After all this, don't give us up now."

Arundell was swayed powerfully by this rhapsody of supplication. Walsingham's travelers in the Portuguese ports, his merchants in the Spanish camps in Flanders, would learn far more about the fleet's preparations than he could from Mendoza, but he saw how valuable it would be to have someone in contact with the Spanish here, and how valuable it would be to have someone in the duke of Guise's confidence. For the matters in France, this exploding crisis between the king and the Holy League, might finally have more to do with England's survival than would how many ships left Lisbon port, and when.

His thoughts turned to the sunny hillsides of the Loire valley, to rising late to go riding after game in the forests of Gien. A vision of the blue river rose in his mind, and it occurred to him how he should like to see it in the autumn, when the leaves turned all along its banks.

Stafford was still talking; he explained that he understood how much Arundell must wish to rest, and swore that he deserved it, but came back again and again to that one more winter, one more winter and his job of work would have been finished. Arundell dragged himself out of his reverie and said at last, "One more winter, then."

He thought of how much he should have liked to see the leaves turning along the Loire, in the autumn.

The ambassador grabbed his hand and shook it. Nothing could express his gratitude, he said, for this service. He would not presume to speak of duty, but when it was over he should see that no one ever said that Arundell had failed in his. But his danger would be no less now than it had been. In the first place, the man with one eye had returned to the scene, whomever he now worked for. Stafford had never stumbled upon anything more about him, only that such a man had once been in service to one of Walsingham's cronies, and that he had lately been in Milan or Florence with the English there. In the second place, Morgan had been released at last and reigned still at the head of his faction, the more dangerous now that he could come and go as he pleased. According to Fitzherbert, the Welshman had been inquiring after Arundell many times throughout the summer. Gilbert Gifford, the dissolute priest, resided now in Paris and was making a spectacle of himself, living openly with his whore and speaking wildly of delicate matter wherever he came. Stafford had been warned by something Lilly had overheard that Gifford had been ordered by the English Council to spy upon Stafford himself.

The last bit of news was less disagreeable but in its way just as foreboding. William Allen had been elevated to cardinal, the first Englishman in forty years to have that honor. Arun-

dell thought the great man perfectly worthy of that office, but he recognized that it would not have been granted without the expectation that he would soon be cardinal of the Roman church in England. It was done to make the English Catholics the more eager to rise up when their liberators should come in the spring.

At last, Arundell departed and hurried back by boat across the river to his room in the Bonheur. Once there, he bid Sharrock go back to bed and sleep the clock round, for on the morrow he must return to Jean de Simier. The message was simply that Pyrrho and Sextus and Cicero and all must sit upon edge of chairs for nine months more, when he should infallibly appear for the summer revelries. Then they should hunt and fish, shoot, talk, and play at cards from dawn to twilight for the rest of the century, God willing, with no man to interrupt them. But for the present, duty called. (He could imagine what Simier's response to that would be.)

In the afternoon he went round to Mendoza's house. The ambassador greeted him warmly. He refrained from inquiring too closely into the reasons for Arundell's absence, only trusting that he felt refreshed. Having ascertained that Arundell meant to take up where he had left off, he thanked him for his good service in the unhappy matter of Cadiz and in bringing the two residents together, and proceeded to tick off a list of unimportant questions he would have Stafford answer if he could. None of them were urgent, but he should like Arundell to attend to them soon, for afterward he had another errand in which Charles might help him hugely.

Accordingly, the following day, Arundell brought the queries round to Stafford and waited while the Englishman devised answers to them. He returned to Mendoza with the replies and then set off on the errand, which as it turned out was to the duke of Guise.

The duke of Guise took some trouble to find. Arundell rode first to Châlons-sur-Marne, only to discover that the duke and his brothers had travelled on into the heart of Lorraine. Even as Arundell, the following morning, made his way towards Nancy and St. Nicholas du Port, he heard excited rumors everywhere that the duke and his army were proceeding southward, following the German Protestants in hot pursuit.

The estimates he heard were unreliable and varied widely, but as nearly as he could learn, the Baron von Dohna, hired by Queen Elizabeth and bound ultimately for a junction with Navarre, had led in some eight thousand of his own reiters, or heavy cavalry, as well as an equal number of landsknechts afoot. With these Germans came some eighteen thousand Protestant Swiss, commanded by the duke of Bouillon, and another six thousand Huguenots under the prince de Conti. They had struck northwestward into Lorraine, and the duke of Guise and his family had sprung to the defense of their home domains. For some reason, however, the Germans and Swiss had changed their minds, ignoring the tiny Guisard force, and were moving slowly southward towards the sources of the Loire.

Arundell overtook the duke near St. Dizier, where he found him in camp. Henri of Guise welcomed him and received the Spaniard's notices with gratitude. He seemed in a state of great excitement, and with his brother Mayenne he paced from one end of the camp to the other, constantly sending out new patrols and attending to the reports of the ones that returned. Mayneville was with him, and he sought Arundell out as soon as he heard of his arrival.

As they were crossing to Mayneville's tent, a squadron of horse came in bearing a few wounded and several prisoners, hands bound behind the high backs of their saddles.

Mayneville explained that the duke's men were fighting skirmishes all along the route, harassing the German force and taking prisoners where they could, but keeping well out of the way of a pitched field, since they were only four thousand strong. It had been expected that the invaders would strike hard into Lorraine, and no doubt, he said, that would have been as the king of France wished it. It was the common opinion that Henri III had desired to have the League forces annihilated at one blow, following which he would have come in himself, lamentably too late to save his "allies," and routed the invaders with the army of some forty thousand that he had gathered round Etampes and the Loire valley. Then, relieved of the constant pressure from the League and its Spanish friends, conceived a hero by his people for having driven out the foreign hosts, the king might easily have come to some arrangement with the Huguenots, the promise of a peaceful succession to Navarre, perhaps, in return for obedience during his lifetime. Thus would the realm have been betrayed to the Calvinist Bourbon--as if blood lineage were sufficient to inherit a kingdom, he said, while the house of Guise, defenders of the true faith, of the true line of Charlemagne, were more ancient a family and just as good in blood for the throne as any heretical Bourbon might claim to be. If not, for the matter of that, with a truer claim than the present king himself had! And in any case, Mayneville insisted, had not Navarre and his whole line been disinherited by the pope for their heresy and unholy intransigence?

But God had provided. The Germans and Swiss had swerved southwestward and left the Guisard army in possession of its own. The duke continued to follow them on their journey, taking prisoners when he could and sending them back to be paraded before the Parisians, while the preachers undertook to keep the citizens informed of how the family of Guise wagered everything to protect the city's safety, while their king cowered behind the Loire, doubtless plotting with Navarre.

Dohna appeared to be marching his mercenary troops to rendezvous with Navarre in the mountains to the south. The duke of Guise bid Arundell ride with his headquarters staff as he tagged along behind the Germans; he hoped any day to have an extraordinary message for Mendoza. For more than a week they kept a distant contact with the German force. There were frequent skirmishes among the outriding patrols, but never did Dohna consider Guise sufficiently a threat to meet him directly.

More weeks passed. The mercenary army seemed to move more and more slowly, and it left behind stragglers in greater numbers, sick men and deserters whom the duke's riders attached if they could get to them before the angry peasants did. Then, abruptly, instead of continuing southward into the uplands, where Navarre would be, Dohna and his various bands, less and less well organized, began swinging westward into the valley of the Loire, where the travelling was easier, the harvests more bountiful, and the villages closer together. Avoiding the fortified towns and castles, the ponderous animal lumbered westward, past Briare and Gien, Sully and Châteauneuf, plundering and burning and taking whatever was not buried underground or hidden in the treetops.

Then Guise's riders returned with the news that the German pickets had not moved on for a full day. Patrols were sent round to investigate, and they discovered that Dohna's host had struck up against advance elements of King Henri's army of the Loire. The king's commander, Epernon, was giving battle in isolated places and preventing the mercenaries from moving ahead towards Orléans.

The following day, in late October, they received the report of a fearful battle at Coutras. The king's southern army under the duke of Joyeuse had cornered Navarre at a little river crossing near Bordeaux; Navarre had outwitted the duke, however, and had very nearly exterminated his whole force. If he came northward at once, the king's army would be trapped on the Loire between the two Protestant multitudes.

That same afternoon, doubtless reacting to the same news, Dohna's host began moving northward towards the open ground near Chartres. It was evident that he meant to interpose himself between Henri III and his capital. Guise's men raced ahead of him, anxious to keep touch with the German force and guard the roads to Paris. Arundell just missed his chance to see the Loire in autumn, when the leaves turned all along its banks.

But everywhere the view was spoiled by the smoke of burning estates.

Near Montargis, Dohna's bands spread out among the villages to pass the night. Arundell watched as the dukes of Guise and Mayenne assembled their cavalry in the darkness and set out to make an assault. They had discovered that the Germans and Swiss, in negligence and weariness, had settled down in camps too distantly spread out to support one another. In a short while, from the nearest hamlet the sound of gunfire rang out sharply. When it was over, Arundell learned that Guise had entered the town without warning, the German pickets having been found asleep, and had captured Dohna's banners and headquarters staff. The baron himself had rallied his men and escaped more or less successfully. As it sounded to Arundell the little battle (the flying raid rather) had been fought virtually to a draw, with special honor for no one involved in it. Guise was inclined to see it differently. The banners and prisoners were to be conveyed immediately to Paris, as symbols to the citizenry of the glorious victory the League had won for them, while their king stood idly by. This was the occasion for which the duke had kept Arundell waiting. He put Charles at the head of the returning party, with a message to Mendoza, intent upon demonstrating to the Spanish king how great were the triumphs of Guise-Lorraine – how worthy were the members of that house to negotiate as equals with King Philip and the pope for the salvation of Catholic Christendom – how well spent would be any gold that might be sent them for the purpose of consolidating this great victory.

Arundell rode off gladly. While following the duke's military ventures, he had been held virtually a prisoner, for it had not occurred to the busy Guise that Arundell was not perfectly happy to remain at his beck, and he was not the martyr who would tell him he was not. Two months had been lost in this disagreeable and unsalutary camp life, and his only gain had been to keep the duke of Guise pleased with his service. If matters were as bad as the reports indicated they were, circumstances in France would soon be altered so radically that such things could make no difference now.

In Paris, when Guise's pronouncements had been transmitted to the crowds, there was widespread relief and thanksgiving. Arundell knew better, however, for he had seen enough to know that Dohna's losses near Montargis, by the most sanguine estimates, would have amounted to less than his daily sick call. Reports continued to arrive. Inexplicably, Navarre had disbanded his army after Coutras and was not riding northward as he should have been. Possibly this was no mistake; if Navarre and the king were to fight a great battle at the Loire, the only winner should be the house of Guise, the true enemies of the Huguenot cause, who would come all the more thoroughly thereafter to dominate the king.

In any case, Navarre did not appear, and the mercenary host was beginning to break up in earnest. Already the Swiss had marched away homeward under a guarantee of safe passage. In late November, Stafford learned from Secretary Villeroy at court that Dohna was being bought off as well; unpaid by the English queen, his army degenerating into a rabble all about him, the baron had struck a bargain with Henri III and was preparing to withdraw through Franche-Comté in as orderly fashion as he still could. Then, at Auneau, ten miles east of Chartres, Guise and Mayenne once again caught the Germans napping. The baron and a few friends escaped, but a large number of his troops were virtually massacred by the Leaguers. Thereupon the Germans applied to the king of France and gave him their complete surrender. Henri sent the demoralized landsknechts scurrying back into the German states, accompanied by Epemon and the royal army to protect them from the duke of Guise, who followed all the way, nipping at their heels.

Momentarily, at any rate, the Calvinist threat had passed. Stafford was constrained to report the failure of his queen's international adventure, for her troops of purchased German allies, those surviving, had all gone home. The duke of Guise was the hero of the day, and the streets of Paris displayed his portrait from nearly every window; from the pulpits were offered prayers of thanksgiving to the names of Guise and Jesus, and the citizens were unrestrainable in their joy.

Arundell stepped into the Normandie in the rue de la Huchette. He found a number of Frenchmen with whom he was acquainted, dining together in a corner in company with the priest Gilbert Gifford. He asked if he might join them, and the Parisians willingly made a place for him. Gifford stood abruptly.

"I will not dine with an English spy," he exclaimed, and abandoning his meal he stalked from the room.

The others looked at Arundell curiously.

XXI. "MY LUTE, BE STILL"

(1587)

"O cruel Time, which takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, and all we have,
And pays us but with age and dust;
Who, in the dark and silent grave
When we have wand'ered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days."

-- Sir Walter Raleigh

Gilbert Gifford's behavior was, by all accounts, erratic, by some accounts deranged. In his coarse and boisterous manner, he made a spectacle of himself, thus drawing unwelcome attention to the entire English community. He lived openly with his English whore, whom evidently he shared with a young man named Cotton, and his persistence in carrying on so obviously gave great scandal to the other priests in exile. His swaggering speeches were notorious among all the nationalities; he boasted drunkenly of the queen of England's confidence in him, he claimed friendship with the king of Spain; he knew Parma's secret plans, and Guise's, and Navarre's, and he had the secret ciphers of Bernardino de Mendoza. He sent a message to Stafford to tell him that his wife was known in the French court for a devout papist, and he informed Mendoza personally, and nearly everyone else in Paris by reiterated gossip, that Charles Arundell was an English spy.

Arundell himself, of course, was compromised. Mendoza did not believe the charge, he said, any more than he had on previous occasions, but he was forced to take it seriously. He was not in a position, in view of the delicate affairs he had in hand, to allow inquiry into his dealings with Stafford, and he cautioned that Gifford's foolishness must not bring his own business under scrutiny.

Yet no one made a move to shut the man up. Morgan and Paget seemed to have adopted him as one of their own and paraded him as the only survivor of the last heroic attempt to free the queen of Scots. The English priests were unwilling to protest in the absence of Allen and Parsons, who remained in Rome. But what most surprised Arundell was that so far Stafford had offered no attempt to have the man taken up in his queen's name. A week passed, and nothing at all was done.

One evening in early December 1587, or mid-month by the French calendar, Sharrock being absent for several days in Rheims, Arundell was dining alone in his rooms upon a stew, already cold, that Madame Lacour had brought up in her careless and tardy fashion. There came a knock at the door, and he found Stafford's knives-and-boots boy standing with a folded message. Sir Edward sent word that Thomas Fitzherbert had inquired urgently of Arundell's whereabouts, and that he had promised that Arundell would come to him that evening.

And so Arundell did, stepping over alone in the early darkness to his old chambers in the ruelle du Foi. There he found Fitzherbert awaiting him anxiously.

Even as Arundell was divesting himself of his cloaks, Tom Throgmorton hurried in and greeted them warmly. For over a year he had seen Arundell only very seldom, and there had been estrangement between them, but his manner seemed all fondness now. With no more delay, Throgmorton gave him his news.

His news was that Morgan and Paget, and indeed all of their companions, were bending themselves to bring Arundell into ruin. The method was unsettled, he said, but the determination was fixed. It was in consequence of an unfortunate occurrence. Someone on this side, amongst Morgan's intimates apparently, was in the bosom of Sir Francis Walsingham; a letter had turned up, written to this secret traitor (who is however unnamed in it), in which the writer clearly indicated on Mr. Secretary's authority certain facts about the present troubles. The facts were that the Spanish ambassador now holds Morgan and Paget in the greatest disdain and will not traffic with them in any matter, and that this is known by Stafford's report. And furthermore, that Stafford had had this knowledge, together with several of Paget's secret papers, directly from Arundell.

"They hold that intelligence," Throgmorton said, "as a certain proof that you are a spy of Mr. Ambassador's here. And they mean, indeed, to revenge the same upon your body."

Arundell sat glumly through the hearing of the news, and said nothing, and then closed his eyes.

Fitzherbert tossed it aside. "Belike it is some mad dreamer, making stir among us by pretense of Mr. Secretary's confidence."

Throgmorton shook his head tiredly.

"I fear me not. This writer writes at the command of Mr. Secretary, and the letter's residue confirms the same with other matter. Only it is not knowable to whom the thing was sent, but that he is in Mr. Secretary's own employment."

"Who was the writer of this unhappy letter?" Arundell asked.

Throgmorton paused. He coughed and seemed downcast.

"This will bring no more joy and delectation to your hearts than it did to mine." He looked at both of them for a moment. "'Twas our great friend Mr. Berden, signed by him, in the Secretary's name, and all in his own hand, I can warrant it."

Arundell was dumbfounded. He recollected the occasion when Nicholas Berden had so friendly arranged to receive him into England, and the thought brought a chill over him. It had taken a little time, but he had come to affect the man greatly.

"I will ask no questions of mine own," Throgmorton said, "for I never wish to learn a hard thing of you nor Paget nor Morgan nor Stafford nor old Cloots the devil's squire. I am neither judge nor jury over any man, for as our Lord saith, we must all one day be judged ourselves. Only this is to say, which is that they hate you like a toad. They will have your heart for this, and you must look roundly to it. I would have no man taken unawares."

Fitzherbert seemed no more inclined to be censorious. Whether because he disbelieved the tale of intercepted letters or because the truth of it made no matter to him, he omitted even to mention the allegation and only expressed his fears for Arundell's safety. If it were not sufficient that there were these days in Paris a new generation of young firebrands, more violent and even more excitable than the veteran refugees had been, it was true also that even the old-timers, those who remained, had become far more desperate, more impetuous and vehement, than they had ever been before. In such a climate, almost any wicked deed might be done. In such a time, almost any man might undertake almost any action, however ill-considered, however unjust, rather than permit a defector to impede the coming Armada. Fitzherbert feared that the mere rumor of such a thing as this, with the faintest

color of proof, might propel some crazy servingman or ex-soldier or failed student out into the night, in search of Arundell, poniard in hand.

Arundell sat upon a powderkeg, and sparks flew everywhere about him. Thanking his friends for their warning, he returned to the Bonheur in a brown study. The task in which he was engaged, by promising Stafford another winter's work, receded from the picture. He must first weather this storm before giving any thought to resuming his labors of intelligence. He would be altogether useless to Sir Edward if dead.

In '85 he had survived the imputation of treachery by adroit preparation in advance, by ensuring that he had the duke of Guise to corroborate him. The evidence on this occasion -- which was genuine -- did not admit of the same escape. He understood that he must go at last upon the offensive. He must take up the active part, devise some cunning stratagem for carrying the battle to Morgan's tents. Wiliness was not a quality he wished to attribute to himself, but he must be wily now.

There was only the smallest tithe of fear in this. Indeed, he discovered only now, when this grim threat had arisen, that something seemed to have altered in him. The anxiety that had been tightening in him gradually, relentlessly, for more than a few years past, seemed miraculously to have been absent during his summer's holiday, but it ought now to have returned; yet it had not. His old sense of humor, puckish and perhaps a little puerile, had never been restored to him, it was true. Perhaps age and loss had transfigured that entirely. But in the place of a natural fear he felt only a sober knowledge that the danger was acute and he must act. He felt no grim determination to survive at any cost. Only the last reduction, the rather somber conviction that the circumstances called for his best. That he had a job to do.

And as a matter of fact, although not much disposed to make merry jests about it, and wry puns, he did find a comical craziness in the business. He risked his all in order that Stafford might send Walsingham the best information, and Walsingham looked well in the way to undoing him for his pains. Why the Secretary should through vile Berden have informed Morgan's unnamed friend -- or if the truth were known, most likely Morgan himself, or Paget -- that Arundell worked against them, was something doubtless God knew, but probably no mortal mind, even Walsingham's, was capable of unravelling it. Had this been played upon a stage in Italy, he thought ruefully, he himself would have worn the mask of Harlequin.

"Oh Berden!" he groaned. He had come to affect the man.

He sat alone in his chambers, gazing out of the single window into the darkness, turning the question over; his answer came to him. The unarmored point was Gilbert Gifford. The man was known to everyone as a braggart, a liar, and prominent among his ravings had been the claim that Arundell was a spy. Despite his shocking behavior, Morgan and Paget had friended the man openly and kept him always in their company. If Arundell were to direct his attack against that man, Morgan's allegations would appear to be merely a contrived attempt to discredit the accuser by calling the kettle black.

The surest way would be to bring Gifford up to the authorities, for if the man's troubles were to come before a public forum, there would be less chance of his wriggling away and far less opportunity for his friends to set after Arundell in secret violence. There would not then be the slightest hope of avoiding a thorough investigation of any harm he came to. The

one point about Gifford that would most certainly evoke official process was the fact that he, a priest, kept chambers with a quean.

Arundell sat long into the evening revolving the problem in his mind, trying out in fancy all of the elements of his plan that might conceivably go awry, casting everywhere for some better alternative. In the end he found none, nor could he imagine any hindrance to it. He would delate poor Gifford to the authorities and have him taken up; the allegations of the man's friends would seem but vain expostulations, and the public airing of the controversy would make Arundell virtually immune from private violence.

Then, when Morgan's and Paget's guns had been properly spiked, their case against him razed to the ground and its fields, as it were, sowed with salt, then Arundell would carry on with his work. In the spring, the Armada would sail, Parma's troops would try to make their landing, and with God's help, possibly with Arundell's help as well, England would prevail. Thereafter, in the summer, he would be lying at ease on Simier's estate, nevermore to meddle in these matters of politics and creeds and heroic strivings after glory.

He could almost see the blue Loire, sunlight glinting upon its little waves.

Arundell turned to his bed at a late hour, nervous about the morrow's task but confident of success. For some while he lay awake, trying to deflect his mind from rehearsal of the same considerations he had already run through systematically. Some small thought that he could not grasp, something about Stafford, taunted him. He almost caught it -- Stafford's face; some cold thought -- and it slipped away.

Gradually, he began thankfully to feel his long legs becoming numb, and his mind fogging over in deeper and longer spells of nonsense, and eventually he drifted into sleep.

He crouched fully armored in a muddy ditch in a row of anxious soldiers. The sun's first rays broke above a long, flat plain, across which there sat low upon the horizon a squat mound of earth surmounted by gleams of light, the sunlight glancing off metal surfaces. He rose with the others and began lumbering across the field in a broken line. As they gained a third of the open distance, a volley of musketry burst out from the earthworks, followed by another, followed by a ragged patter of fire like rain on a roof. The scone was swallowed up in slowly rising plumes of smoke, touched by the white dawn. The men about him began falling away, dead or wounded in a hail of shot; many of them he seemed to recognize, friends of long acquaintance splashing down in the mud and groaning up their lacerated spirits. His armor weighed heavily upon him, and as he tired his loping gait degenerated into an awkward, clownish shuffle.

Then he saw that he was almost alone, the greater part of his company lying strewn like discarded clothing over the ground he had traversed. Above the earthwork's rim he could discern the forms of busy musketeers, stepping up, aiming, firing, hastening away to reload, their places filled at once. Above them rose a flagstaff, from which hung their standard, but it was a windless morning and the bit of rag hung straight down, its emblem undecipherable. He was standing alone, all of his companions fallen, but the fire from the scone kept up in the same intensity as before. He gazed back across the field at the lifeless or crippled forms of all his friends, and then faced stupidly about. A shower of musket balls tore through him and flung him arching into the air, tumbling into soft, black mud.

Arundell awoke in a moist chill. The room remained dark and silent. He rose with his blanket wrapped about him and went to the window. Nowhere in the east was there any

sign of dawn. He lay down again, trembling in the cold, thinking about Berden, wrapping his cover tightly about him to await the new day, a long time coming.

In the morning (Friday, the 18th of December by French time), Arundell descended into the street and found breakfast in a nearby inn. There he waited, ill at ease, until the hour had advanced a bit further. Then he saddled his horse and made his way round to the Bishop's Palace. In the secretary's office he explained his errand, protesting that his conscience required his appearance. With the official's direction he wrote out and swore to an affidavit accusing the priest Gifford of flagrant immorality within the jurisdiction of the cathedral. The particulars of Gifford's identity, dwelling place, and crimes, all of them quite true, he indited with care, and the secretary, more than a little troubled at the accusation, thanked him heartily for having come forward like an honest citizen.

When the secretary had hurried away with his papers, Arundell returned to the street and wandered idly about the cold city for an hour or two. Then he rode over into Gifford's neighborhood near the colleges to take up a post in a tavern opposite the priest's door. Before long, a party of guardsmen came clattering up the street. They entered the house and in a few minutes returned bearing Gifford, his English whore, and a terrified young man, all in nightdress. Gifford was lecturing them vehemently, flinging his arms about and whirling from one to another, about some of the fine points of their duty. Arundell thought of Ambidexter, turning with the wind.

In the late afternoon, he travelled across the Seine and turned in the direction of the Louvre. He left his horse in a narrow alley and entered a disused house, the rear door of which let him out into the courtyard behind Sir Edward Stafford's stables. The ambassador, hearing his knock, opened the door of his back stairs, and together they ascended silently to the study.

"What ho, Sir Carlo," Stafford said, with the slightest hint of impatience, as if he had been engaged in other business but was reluctant to say so; "what brings you out today?"

"Eversions of kingdoms and portents in the sky."

"Portents again! The sign of the *ipsissima verba* in conjunction with the *habemus papum*, occluded by the *malum in se*; I ha' seen that myself. Which kingdoms are overturned?"

"The kingdom of Reason and the duchy of Good Faith. The factions are at open jars, and the crown is melted down for cannon shot."

"I think y'say truer than you mean. I have seen your howling mobs in their celebrations now, and I daily expect a popular election for a new king here. Your friend of Guise I think we shall see entering the town in a beaming cloud, transported like the darling of the seraphim."

"He is the very hero of the hour."

"Of the hour!" cried Sir Edward. "I shall wonder much if this new Christmas, with their extravagant celebrations, do not bring some greater changes than we may jest of. What is it that brings ye to me?"

Arundell's smile faded as he began to explain.

"Your esteemed and worthy superior, Mr. Secretary, writing with his left hand like Mucius Scaevola, hath informed our montrous runagates here that you had Paget's packet at my

hands. It is told me, therefore, that I shall be rewarded for it amply. I had rather, Ned, that you had named me Master Ignoto in your report to him."

Stafford's face had grown pinched with a kind of furious annoyance, and he swore ferociously.

"It does not sound to me as a thing t'make light of, in any way. I wrote your name to show the man that you are a true man, as I have ever writ him you are. Damn the faithless devil to ever burning fires for sending it back to me this way! Damn him!"

Arundell shrugged to show that the damage had been done and could not now be undone.

"I will tell you again, y'take the thing too childishly. They'll hack off your chaps with a two-handed sword." Stafford rose and began pacing the chamber. "With this in their hands, man, the traitors will haul you to the nuncio before the pope can sneeze and say grace. We must give it all up and get ye away."

Arundell frowned slightly and gestured in deprecation.

"I have done already somewhat in my defense."

"And what may that be, pray?"

"Well, you know, Ned, that this man Gifford is their great companion, and says everywhere just that which they would say of me to the nuncio. Gifford keeps a quean, which is clean contrary to the canon for an ordained man to do. Therefore, to prevent them in their tale of me, I have had their fool taken up by the church for his whoremongering, to the end that hereafter their allegations of me will seem to be but vain imaginings to mitigate somewhat their companion's punishment."

Stafford stood with eyes and mouth agape.

"Y'did what, Charles?"

"I say I had Gifford taken up by the officers for keeping his quean, and clapt up in the Bishop's Prison for the same."

Sir Edward collapsed into a chair and dropped his head into his hands.

"Why, Sir Nedly, what can be the matter wi' that?"

Stafford made no reply. Arundell grew more and more uncomfortable, until his friend looked up sadly and said, "Well, my old companion, I pay the price for too little honesty with'ee. Believe me, I would have told you before this, but for that I know the great love ye bore to the queen of Scots."

He paused and glanced away. Arundell waited, dread settling down upon his heart.

"You see, me boy, this Gifford is possessed of certain papers which tell mortally upon the honor of our queen's government."

"Papers?"

"Aye, I know not what they are, but they cast a harsh light on the doings in the queen of Scots's matter. The man had commands in writing to do somewhat in entrapping the good lady, something o' the sort, and a' has kept 'em. He told me o' them straightaway when he arrived here out of England, near a good part of a year ago now, and said that if ever harm

should befall him here, our queen should long have cause to be sorry for it, and told me that much that I must believe him."

The haunting afterthought returned to Arundell's memory, the question he had suppressed why Stafford had not stifled the man already. He groaned aloud, cursing himself for not having guessed the truth.

"How many papers?"

"That I canna say, but not many, I do not think, only what is sufficient to bring scandal irreparable to her majesty's name and opprobrium on all of us. He had them always hidden, but so as to be easily produced in the event of evil coming to him, and for that cause I have had to bear with him in all his moonstruck ravings. Well, God, there is no help for it. I will do what I can, and can do no more than that."

"No, Ned. I have done this harm, and I will undo it. You shall have your papers by this hour tomorrow, or I shall die in the attempt." So saying, he rose and donned his cloak.

"Tarry, Charles, ye cannot meddle in this now. 'Double the charge will rive the cannon.' 'Tis my fault entire. There is nothing no man can do at this time, and you of all men will hazard your life to be seen in it. Leave off, now, and let me take the business up with Vileroy."

"Never say it. If they can be got, I will get them. I cannot let myself do you this harm. There is still honor among some of us, I think."

Stafford made as if to protest again, but Arundell was already halfway down the staircase. There was nothing for him to do but call after him, "God be with ye, Charles." He felt almost sick with dread, and went upstairs to lie down.

The night was already coming on, and in the freezing twilight the townsmen were hurrying homeward. Arundell rode part of the way back to the left bank and stopped for supper in an ordinary. Painstakingly, he tried turning over in his mind the courses of action open to him, but he knew too little to plan for any contingencies. As usual. He determined merely to plunge on hunting for the papers, proceeding in order from the most to the least likely places they might be.

The thought never occurred to him now whether he might be better off out of it altogether. For once in his life he was of a unified mind, determined to do what could be done.

When the light was entirely gone, he remounted and rode into the university district. Even in the Place Maubert, the principal gathering place of the students and clerks, there were few people to be seen, so dark and cold had it grown. He came up upon Gifford's street, but on second thought rode past it and entered the next one. Leaving his horse in front of a house about as far in as Gifford's was, he passed through a narrow alley, scarcely wider than his shoulders, and came out into a tiny court behind. It was closed in by stone walls some six feet high, and he could find no stair.

Careful to be silent, he stepped back amid a spread of garbage and paused for a moment to be sure he could pick out the top of the wall. Then he dashed a few steps towards it and leapt up, pushing up with his hands atop it and throwing his hips onto the dirt above. His scabbard scraped roughly against the stones.

From the few lights flickering in the row of buildings facing him, Arundell was able to count in to Gifford's house. The windows he picked out as Gifford's were dark. Stealthily, he walked through the high grass to what he supposed to be the rear door into the main hall. Again he had a second thought, and turned aside.

Close in by the wall, beneath the eaves, the darkness was inhibiting. He groped his way inch by inch, both hands held before him, as he moved towards the adjoining house. Coming to a door, he tried it, found it unbarred, and edged through it into a crowded scullery shed. The shed was attached by a plaster and lathing wall to the kitchens, through which a half-sized crawlway afforded access, and Arundell, discovering this with his fingers, ducked low and stepped through. The last embers of the cooking fire left a residue of red glow in the room. Through it, he found the hall, and crept carefully up the narrow staircase. The house was silent but for the regular creaking of its timbers which camouflaged the sounds of Arundell's weight upon the boards.

In the top of the house, he hoisted himself into the eaves and inspected the roof with his fingertips. It was composed half of board lathing and half of bound thatch, and there was a large expanse of thatch covering the area near the adjacent building. Nimble he slit the cords with his belt-knife and parted the plaited bundles, then, by carefully crowding them to the sides, forced an opening along the top of the eaves, through which he eased himself out into the night sky.

He found himself, as he had meant to, sitting next to the third story of Gifford's house. At this height, there was a frigid wind from the north that had been unnoticeable from the ground. The occupants of the house through which he had crept remained quiet; the sighing breeze absorbed any sounds that might have been rising from the nearby streets. He seemed to be alone in a special world, a cold and dark one but, as it seemed, a safe and silent one, a peaceful one. He stared for a moment into the black yards beneath him, thoughtfully. Then he crouched forward and stepped onto the external beams of the adjoining house. Grasping the oblique timbers imbedded in the wall, he made his way deliberately along the outside of the building until he came to the windows he sought.

The shutters stood flung open against the wall. The windows themselves were not of glass but of a greased paper or thin skin; Arundell drew out his dagger and quietly cut one of them out all round the frame. Then he clambered inside and felt his way to the center of the room, where he collided softly with a table. He found a tallow candle and tinderbox, and soon had a wavering flame to see by.

The room had belonged to Gifford after all; on the bed and floor and in the cabinets lay a quantity of clothing he recognized as stuff he had seen the man wearing, thrown carelessly amongst a mass of gowns and feminine underthings and much soiled cooking ware. Moving rapidly, Arundell sifted through the clothing and made a cursory search within, behind, and beneath the furniture. He explored the cupboards and the mattresses, the brickwork of hearth and chimney, and the books stacked along the wall. Every place he himself had ever thought to employ for secreting his valuables he ran his fingers and his candle over, and he felt deftly along every foot of plasterwork for signs of recent patching. There was nothing. He returned to a chair in the center of the room to think it over.

In the entire flat, which consisted only of one large chamber and a sleeping alcove, he had seen everything, and had turned up no personal papers of any kind. He was no longer an amateur at searches of this kind. There was nothing left behind, not even the casual, often

worthless material that every man surrounds himself with. The guardsmen must have possessed themselves of all of Gifford's papers and brought them all off to let their superiors distinguish grain from chaff. Gifford's body, of course, was being kept by the ecclesiastical authorities, but his papers would have been brought first to the secular arm. In all likelihood, they would have been brought to Villeroy.

Murmured voices came from the hall. Soft footsteps approached, and Arundell blew out his candle. He need not have bothered, for the door opened and a large man stood in the passage with a candle of his own, the glow of which fell full upon Arundell at the table. The intruder stared for an instant and then, calling out in a low voice, ran towards him, followed by two others tumbling into the chamber at his heels.

Arundell swept out his rapier and made a hasty pass at the candle, which was flung sideways and extinguished as it flew towards the wall. In the dancing gleam of another light held by the third man, the first one, his dagger in hand, circled round and looked for an opening. Arundell held his rapier at an easy guard, backing slowly and keeping at bay the two advancing on him, while the third man raised his candle aloft to let them see their quarry.

Suddenly, Arundell darted a step to the left, which brought both of his attackers leaping in that direction. He bolted abruptly back to the right past their flank and feinted towards the third man, who dashed away his taper bounding backward. Darkness poured through the room again. Arundell knelt and found the stool he had picked out, and he flung it hard against the far wall. As both of his assailants followed the sound, he stepped to the paler rectangle of the window and scrambled outside. All three of them shouted and ran after him. He tried to hurry along the ledge the way he'd come, but could only creep foot by foot, knowing they would overtake him in an instant. One of the attackers leaned out, virtually alongside him, and swung a dagger at his outstretched arm; the dagger missed him, but the man's wrist knocked loose his grasp and he lost his balance. He teetered almost in mid-air for a long fraction of a second, and then, with a short cry, fell away into empty space.

He plummeted into something harsh and sharp, but yielding, a pile of sticks for kindling perhaps. He had the sensation of being poked vigorously all over, and in the impact he wrenched his back violently as his torso fell a foot or two farther than his legs. Still, after several seconds recovering from the panic he'd felt in free space, he tumbled over twice, fetched up on solid ground, and found that he could rise and walk with no more hurt than a lancinating pain just above his buttocks.

From within the ancient house resounded the thundering descent of his attackers through its passages. At other windows, tiny lights were springing up, and here and there an inquisitive face emerged in silhouette. Arundell set off across the yard. He limped clumsily to compensate for his twisted back, but he made the wall, eased himself tenderly over the edge of it, and dropped into the paved court below. He could hear his pursuers run out of Gifford's house and apply themselves to deducing noisily in which direction he must have fled. The trash strewn about the court made silence difficult, but he picked his way gingerly through it until he found the alley, through which he could risk a better pace. His horse was where he had left it in the street.

He fled the neighborhood at a brisk canter, keeping an eye open for his three assailants. The question who they were was the obvious one, but he could not answer it. Two had been vaguely familiar, small, lithe forms that seemed to come to him out of the past, but in the

darkness he had not recognized them, and he hoped they would say as much of him. They might have been any of a few thousand men, of some ten or twelve nations; presumably they had come, as he had come, to search the chamber on command, and would return to report that they had been anticipated. Someone else, it seemed, knew of the papers and was engaged as he was in trying to find them out.

Arundell continued westward across St. Jacques towards the farther city wall. He slowed his pace once he'd come well away from the university district. The rhythmical clatter of his horse's hooves echoed blankly from the housefronts, for there was no one about in the frigid streets, and the air was crisply still.

In his rooms he stopped to restore himself with some cheese and bread. He longed to stretch out on his bed to rest his back, but he put the thought aside and confined himself to bathing some of the lacerations he'd got in the fall. None of them seemed serious; but for some parings from the skin of his arms and legs, his only worrisome hurt was a deep cut over his right eye, which bled a fair trickle down the side of his face. At length he left off that and began preparing to go out again. He took the trouble of removing his purse from its hiding place and providing himself with an ample sum of gold.

The moonless night was advancing. From the Petit Pont, as he crossed over, the black sweeping river was invisible below him. As he paused to peer upstream, he could just perceive the vertical bulk of Notre Dame rising blacker against the black sky, its spire and square towers indistinguishable from this distance. Below the Pont au Change over the northern stream of the Seine, one could just hear the rush and sweep of the wheels of the Millers' Bridge some way off.

At the Grand Châtelet, Arundell turned eastward along the rue de la Vannerie into the Place de Grève. There was a tavern in a small street off the square that would be open even on such an empty night, but he could not recall precisely where it was. In a few moments a pair of workmen rounded the corner and hurried with uneven steps to a small door a short distance along. Arundell left his horse and followed them.

The common room was relatively still. Here and there were knots of workmen and servingmen conversing quietly over their wine or sitting silently alone, members of a race dispossessed. Arundell saw a few faces he recognized of men with whom he had had business in the past, and he considered for a moment before walking over to one of them. He sat down near the man and began speaking to him quickly in a low voice, and after a time the fellow began nodding and looking round the room. Then the man rose and moved in succession to several other benches, making brief inquiries among several other parties, and when he returned he brought three other men with him. They were as rough and as surly as he was, and two of them were, like him, very large, the third one rather of Arundell's leaner build but somewhat shorter.

The conversation continued for a brief time, and finally all of the men were nodding assent to Arundell's proposition. He produced a purse and distributed gold among them, and then all five of them departed together. One of the men, who had been unarmed, borrowed a thin saber from the landlord, who was his late wife's brother.

In the street Arundell untied his horse and led it behind him as they walked rapidly westward, along the rue de la Cotellerie and past the bridges. The hour had progressed to nearly midnight, or perhaps already past it. A thin derma of ice was forming over the small puddles by the roadside, and a few snowflakes drifted slowly to the stones. They passed no one

as they strode down the center of the black street. In the rue de la Serpente they halted and went into an inn to warm themselves over hot wine, and then, within a quarter of an hour, they resumed their progress. A final stage of their journey brought them into the broad place before the Louvre, bordering upon the river towers at the bottom of the square.

From the lights in the fortress it appeared that the court was in residence. Arundell and his men walked on riverwards, approaching the buildings opposite the front gates of the Louvre. Across the square, a surprising number of Swiss guardsmen could be seen huddled about fires and pacing somnolently back and forth before the gate towers of the palace. The unusual strength of the guard was explicable only by the king's fear of his own Parisians in their Guisard ecstasy.

Nearer at hand on their left as they passed southward rose a huge block of a building with tiny black windows dotted across its long façade. There were no guardsmen stationed before its three large doors, but they would be on duty behind each of them. When Arundell and his men had progressed past the hôtel and along a row of smaller houses, he left his companions and conducted his horse into an alley that issued into a large yard behind, where he tied it up and left it.

Strolling as if idly, they retraced their steps and approached the southernmost door in the long hôtel, as Arundell and one of the cutters rehearsed their plan once more. Across the wide place, the palace guardsmen seemed not to have noticed them. At the door they stood back against the wall of the building, as if conversing or nodding drunkenly, while one of the larger men stepped up and pounded on the planks. The door swung slightly open and a guardsman peeked out. Arundell's man began jabbering unintelligibly some drivel about desperately needing help and thrust his way into the building, pushing the soldier before him, who protested and tried in vain to calm the intruder. Then two more of his companions stepped in behind, and Arundell could hear them pleading in drunken excitement for assistance and understanding. The guardsman's voice, and then another one joining in, continued trying to pacify the men and entreating them to leave. Suddenly, there came sounds of scuffling and running feet, and both soldiers began calling out commands to halt. The noise receded, and Arundell and the other cutter slipped into the building also.

The guard chamber was empty; the noise of the chase reached them down a dimly lit corridor running off to the left. Arundell led his companion up the wooden steps and away towards the right. Against the nearer side of the building they made a turning towards the rear, where they found a dark, narrow staircase that served the officials when they wished to avoid the crowds of suitors who thronged the central double-stairs in the public part of the hall. On the next floor up, they came into a narrow corridor that ran the enormous length of the hôtel, illuminated only by four or five large cressets. They slipped out of the staircase and ran lightly down the hall. They could still hear faintly the commotion being raised below. Suddenly, a door closed near at hand, and they crouched in the shadow of a table set against the wall. Not six feet further on, another door opened and a tall gentleman wearing a legal gown stepped out and hurried away. When he had got some distance ahead, Arundell and his man rounded the table and crept on, hugging the wall on their right. In a few seconds, the gentleman had reached the double-stairs and descended from view.

About a third of the way along the corridor, Arundell stopped before a large portrait on the wall. In the faint, flickering light, he could not perceive it clearly, but saw enough to recognize it. He opened the door next to it and the two of them slipped in.

The writing desks of Villeroy's legal clerks loomed heavily in the darkness all about the chambers. Leaving the cutter by the door, Arundell negotiated his way among the furnitures and entered the smaller room within. Here he found a lamp and struck a light in it. From somewhere far off came a noise of drunken singing; otherwise the building lay eerily silent. Along the rear wall of the Secretary's chamber, beneath the narrow windows, the boxes were piled that contained his official papers. The sight of that great mass of material brought a cold desperation to Arundell's heart, for searching through it all seemed the labor of a long season. He turned first to those papers still shuffled up on the surface of a desk or bookcase.

He brought his lamp to Villeroy's big table and held it over some of the sheets scattered across it. A number of yellow linen bags were stacked near the center, with others strewn about nearby. He set the light down and untied the ribbons of one of the bags. The papers within seemed all to do with fiscal matters of the royal household. The next set was devoted to the riders of the frontier post, and the third contained matter unintelligible to him.

He started through the bags in the stack. In the second one he tried, he found a bundle of sheets, untidily shuffled together, about two inches thick, and the top piece was a letter endorsed on the verso, "from Aldred, Lyons, 3 March 1586" (which would have meant 1587). Arundell's heart leapt in his throat. He sat in Villeroy's chair and peered carefully at a few more. He found Gifford's name prominently displayed upon all of them.

Hastily he shuffled the papers back into the bag and drew its ribbons tight. He checked the next few bags and found matter unrelated, and then shoved his prize down within his doublet. At that instant, he heard a low whistle from the other room; he blew out the lamp and ran out to join his man by the door. From the corridor came the jingling noise of guardsmen in full accoutrement trotting up the staircase. Arundell drew his rapier and his companion reached behind him for a long dagger in his belt, and then they threw open the door and stepped out. The jangling came still louder from the double-staircase. They turned and dashed away in the other direction. A cry rang out behind them. Arundell's companion reached up to the cresset hung from a bracket on the wall and tipped the pan; the oil poured out and splashed burning across the floor, throwing up a bright, crazy glare. Arundell glanced back and saw through the flare and flames that the two soldiers stood with pistols raised. The cry came again. Arundell began dodging about as he ran, but there was scarcely any room for it.

Two deafening roars exploded through the corridor, almost as one. His companion fell forward and stumbled a few steps on his knees, catching himself with both hands. Arundell paused to jerk the man upright by his arm. They made the narrow staircase in a matter of another second. As they plunged into it, he looked back and saw the guardsmen tearing off their tunics to smother the burning oil before it brought the entire structure into conflagration.

They hurried down the steps and out into the ground floor hallway. Far off at the other end, a troop of guardsmen came running towards them, calling for them to halt. They tumbled round the corner to the short stairs leading outward. Five soldiers stood round Arundell's cutters by the door, seeming half to have them in custody and half to be treating them as drunken revellers to be humored and sent home. The guardsmen turned in surprise at Arundell's precipitate arrival upon them; two stood already with rapiers drawn, and now the others grabbed for theirs. Instantly the three conspirators shook off their feigned intoxi-

cation and threw themselves into their captors. As some grappled with their prisoners, two of the guardsmen advanced to meet Arundell and the injured cutter, who leant upon Arundell, unable to defend himself. Trying to steady the man with his left arm, he stepped to the head of the stairs and crossed blades with the guardsmen below. One of the other soldiers by the door cried out as a cutter's dagger pierced his arm. Then one of the companions gave out a shriek and fell back against the stone with a rapier's point imbedded in his chest. He muttered "*mon dieu*" over and over and slid slowly down the wall, his brother-in-law's saber still held weakly aloft.

The guardsmen duelling with Arundell fought professionally and calmly, and without the advantage of the stairs he should never have kept them off. The scuffling continued, and then one of the cutters was flung into the backs of Arundell's assailants. He released his man and leapt down the steps, scoring an ugly hit in the breast of one of the soldiers before they recovered. At the same instant, the troop came round the corner from the corridor. Two of them raised their pistols and fired, and one of the guardsmen grappling below grasped at his forearm and spun away. The wounded cutter whom Arundell had left standing on the stairs was hit full between the shoulderblades virtually at point blank. Silently he pitched forward and sailed gracefully down the steps into the tangle of men below.

Arundell reached the door and pulled it open, then grabbed one of his companions and threw him out into the street. He bolted through himself and heard the third surviving man following on his heels. They raced towards the river as fast as they could run.

Already the guardsmen had picked their way through the carnage at the door and were tumbling out into the square. Arundell saw flashes lighting up the air before he heard the pistol shots, followed by the sounds of the soldiers chasing after them, with a few more shots. Across the place, some of the Swiss ran out of the lighted gateway of the Louvre and stood peering into the darkness.

Near the river tower, Arundell's men sprinted in among the sheds clustered beneath the walls, tripping and falling upon wagon tongues and casks, springing up and running on doggedly around the eastern face of the tower, where the river walls of the palace ended. Emerging upon the flat plain on the other side, they dashed off in the direction of the blackly flowing stream. The shouting continued from behind.

They reached the bank at a place where a low stone wall served as a kind of pier, just upstream from the palace wharf. Finding a punt, they dropped into it and cut the painters, allowing it to swing slowly away into the current. Black forms could be seen advancing upon them. The oars had been shut up somewhere for the night, so paddling furiously with their hands they had mainly to be content with drifting down into the center of the river. A few more shots rang out from the bank, but though one ball threw up a splash a few meters from them they took no hurt. They heard nothing after that; the darkness on the cold river had saved them.

Half an hour passed as the boat floated downstream through the freezing wind. The three men huddled in the bottom, shivering violently with their faces pressed against the rough wooden floor. Finally, they felt the punt spinning slowly in an arc, and looked up to discover themselves swinging about in an eddy near the farther bank, in a place where the great river swerved sharply about to the north. They began paddling with their hands again and brought the punt up under a high bank. Then, scrambling up through the dead underbrush and frozen mud, they reached the trees above.

There they paused to take stock of themselves. They had not travelled as far down the stream as they would have guessed; the laborers recognized the place as near a little hill some five or six miles from the city. Soon it was decided that they should part company, for the men wished to travel into the nearby country for a time, rather than return to the city. Arundell drew out his purse and gave them nearly the whole contents to share between them. Accepting it gratefully, the two men wandered dazedly away to the south.

Arundell would have wished to rest a while where he was. His strained back was paining him awfully, and the laceration above his eye had reopened. But the cold prevented any idleness. He started off towards Paris, angling over the hard meadow away from the Seine in hopes of stumbling upon a high road. And so he did, in time, and thereafter the walking was easier, though the frozen ruts still tormented his ankles. After more than an hour he began to fear frostbite in his fingers and toes and in his face. His wind was very short, and he felt his age telling upon him. But he kept up a vigorous pace in desperation.

He reached the Porte de Buci just as the eastern sky began glowing with a thin light. So far he had met no one on the road, but once within the walls he began to see early risers hurrying by in every direction. Soon afterward he found his way through the maze of narrow streets in a crowded quarter and emerged into the head of the passage du Bonheur. Within moments, he had a stack of wood kindled in his own hearth.

Before doing anything else, as his room slowly warmed, he ate up a half loaf of bread and a large chunk of cheese, washing them down with heated wine, and then lay down fully dressed upon his bed. His mind felt numbed, yet he was not sleepy. He tried to relax his tormented back and found pleasure in the way the muscles slowly loosened their taut grip across his lower spine.

At length, however, his curiosity overcame him. Removing his doublet, he drew out the Secretary's yellow bag of documents. Pouring out some more wine, he moved his table closer to the fire and spread the papers before him. The morning came on bright outside; through the window he could hear the working people getting down to business.

He began sifting through the sheets and reading them over in order. The first few contained only meaningless jottings and random notes in Gifford's childish scrawl. Then there were a few letters from Dr. William Gifford and one of Gilbert's replies to him.

Next he found a copy of a recent report in Gifford's hand addressed to Thomas Phelippes, Walsingham's man. It described some financial trouble into which Ambassador Stafford had fallen, having appropriated to pay his gambling debts some 16,000 crowns of the queen's money intended to be delivered to the count of Soissons, the Huguenot commander. It went on to assert that, with Mr. Charles Arundell as intermediary, Sir Edward had shown his dispatches to Mendoza the Spaniard in return for pecuniary relief. From the promise of more news and the language employed throughout, it was evident that the report had been made on assignment. Gilbert Gifford was then, himself, after all, an English spy.

What turned up next froze Arundell to his chair. He reread them several times in disbelief -- he had three letters of instructions, all addressed to Gifford and signed by Mr. Phelippes, dating from May and June of 1586, which gave precise directions for the entrapment of Babington, Ballard, and Savage, and required further information about all the other men Gifford had managed to bring into "the wicked artifice." Stafford's guess had been correct. Without question, the reference was to the hare-brained scheme to murder the English queen and rescue the queen of Scots. All of the messages spoke explicitly on Mr. Secretary's

behalf. Another letter, a brief note really, was dated February 1586, and, likewise penned by Phelippes, it concerned Gifford's part in the reopening of Queen Mary's correspondence.

In a flash, the entire sordid business became clear. Never in his worst dreams had Arundell imagined how thoroughly Babington's mortal folly had been engineered by Walsingham himself. It had been easy enough to suspect that some craven informer had betrayed the plotters and given the Secretary all he needed to take them up; here was proof, however, that the government had planned the entire venture and had maneuvered the foolish gentlemen like pawns in a bloodstained game of chess. Tears began sliding down Arundell's face. He thought of the poor desperate queen in captivity, so anxious after twenty years to regain her freedom that she should be taken in like a child to approve an assassination invented in Walsingham's own brain. He grew into a rage and sobbed for a time in frustration. They had as good as murdered her. They had taken away all of his hopes but one, the queen of Scots, then had cruelly shorn him of that one as well. This was what the Secretary's gospel purity prompted him to: the murder of innocents. So far from recovering these proofs for discretion's sake, he felt angrily impelled to publish them before the world.

The idea, as soon as it had come to him, consumed him. For fifteen years, since the death of his powerful friend the duke of Norfolk, Arundell had been in varying degrees at the mercy of Leicester and Walsingham. Always he had known of their cruelty, their lack of scruple, and the danger they presented to the quietness of old England, but scarcely anyone had believed him. Gradually they had worn him down, wrenched away his friends, dug the ground deeper and deeper out from under him, and finally they had deprived him of everything he loved, casting him into dateless exile in a foreign and unfamiliar land. Now he had them on the hip. Here in just these papers lay the proof that he had always been right, that Walsingham and Leicester were capable of any wickedness in pursuit of their ambitions.

The possibility that, however deceitfully, they might merely have been carrying out their own view of what was necessary for England's welfare -- this did not occur to him. He saw only that it lay finally, providentially, in his own power to expose them before the world, to bring them into the same ruin they had brought to him and his companions. He had only to publish these documents and all Europe would be shaken with a righteous indignation against Leicester and his bible-bearing famulus. The queen of England would have no choice but to toss them to the baying hounds.

When he had tumbled about for a while amid these wrathful thoughts, he began to grow calmer, and with the passing of the first access of his grief and rage came new considerations. It was not possible that these actions should be brought home to Walsingham alone, nor even to Walsingham with the earl of Leicester at his side, as surely he had been. Even in impartial eyes -- and there were no impartial eyes -- the true villain would appear to be the queen herself, and sacrificing the Puritans would not exculpate her. As Stafford had predicted, the knowledge of these documents would bring irredeemable dishonor to the queen and odium to the entire nation. Gifford had known his business; he had provided himself with an insurance policy in good earnest, however little it had availed him in the end.

It was not just a question of the queen's good name. With the knowledge that the queen of Scots's execution had been contrived upon this pretext, the duke of Guise and the League preachers would hold every trump. The king of France would be helpless, in such a climate of popular fury as the League would cultivate, to remain neutral in the conflict expected in

the spring. Simply to retain his own throne, even in name only, Henri would be driven to throw his forces in with the other Catholics bent upon the reduction of England, compelled to aid in the revenge of Mary's martyrdom and the extirpation of the heretical government from that island. When the Spanish fleet arrived at last, with its barges full of Spanish, Italian, German, and Savoyard soldiery, the entire strength of Catholic France would have to be there with them. The same was true of young James of Scotland; popular pressure would be terrific upon him to cooperate in a landing on his shores. These few sheets of paper could very well change the face of Europe. They could bring into England a government of Inquisitors.

Arundell sat gloomily by the fire. His spirits were depressed, yet he felt a curious excitement at the same time. He held at last the power he had never had to fight his enemies with. After fifteen years of toiling almost ceaselessly, as it seemed now, with no real hope of success, vindication lay within his grasp.

He remembered a time, many long years before, when he had been resting at a house in Cornwall -- it had been Tregian's house; the occasion, he now recalled, had been the taking of poor Mayne the martyred priest -- and as they had sat upon the lawn, a group of children had been playing at Castle-Come-Down near the house. The other boys had arranged themselves, and then the smallest chappie, a thin fellow younger than the others, had set out to ascend to the top. Several times he had almost fallen, and the climb had almost been more than his little strength was equal to, but after a valiant struggle, with perseverance, he had made it to the highest level. There he had knelt, broadly grinning his victory to all of Cornwall, before the structure of boys had crumbled away beneath him and he had tumbled into writhing limbs below.

Arundell felt very much like that boy. Long he had persevered and struggled despite himself, and now he had reached the summit. This was the source of his odd exhilaration. He held in his own hands the means either to destroy his powerful enemies or to permit them to continue. He grinned broadly, just as the little boy had. For the moment at least, he was on top.

He savored the sensation. In a strange and twisted way, this bizarre circumstance, his sitting in this squalid room holding such evidence in his hands, seemed almost to make his whole career worth while, all of the anxieties, losses, humiliations, all of the vain hopes and broken daydreams. It brought his life to a sort of culmination, a satisfactory one. It seemed to make sense, so to speak, of the years of suffering and loss. He gazed into the flames and felt an unaccustomed peace creeping over his soul, a certain tranquility, as if in simply knowing that he could prove Leicester's and Walsingham's perfidy, he no longer cared whether he did so. It was no longer necessary. It made no difference to him anymore. His battle with those men and their favorers seemed almost to have defined his life, and he had now in a manner transcended it.

He leant forward and tossed the letters into the flames. Then he rose and scooped the rest of Gifford's papers from the table, without having read them, and threw the entire collection into the hearth. Finally the yellow bag as well he delivered to that bright oblivion. A great, crazy smile illuminated his face. It occurred to him that the Magnificent Earl of Leicester, Lion of the Court, creator and smasher of men's destinies, was as much as he was merely a plaything of the circumstances. Like him, a victim of the Irony. Almost whimsically, he had just saved the man's career.

As he basked in the warmth of this new mood, this unfamiliar self-satisfaction, Arundell rummaged up a steel glass and attended to the laceration above his eye. It had ceased bleeding a long while earlier, but stood still open and might in time become dangerous.

The image of Leicester came before him once again. "There is nothing so glorious upon the earth but it shall pass away." His lordship, who had always seemed to him to be sitting on his horse atop a high ridge, sunlight gleaming brilliantly upon his trappings, staring out over the heads of merely ordinary men, perhaps observing them, perhaps not -- his lordship was no more above the common struggle than was he himself or any of the men the earl had beaten down. So far from standing calmly above them all, as it were upon a high hill, he'd been driven by fear and distrust to employ such foul men as Gifford to perform such tricks as this, this mean, dishonorable entanglement of the queen of Scots. He and Walsingham, Arundell saw clearly now almost for the first time, were driven by the same desperate, petty apprehensions that moved other men.

A certain quiet sadness had replaced his earlier exhilaration. That was inevitable, he thought. He felt as if he had stepped outside of all of the struggles and anxieties of the time, and from without they seemed nothing more than tragic games: games because played by rules the players themselves never fully understood, and because ultimately they all tended nowhere, accomplished nothing; tragic because men wasted their best years and sometimes their whole lives in learning that truth. It was like watching the feverish busyness of bees about the hive, and wondering how the pretty fellows conceived their own importance. He wished foolishly that he might sit down quietly with Leicester and Mendoza and the duke of Guise and all of them, and explain to them that everything was all right, not to worry, not to fear anymore and merely to remain calm, accept what could not be altered. On all accounts, not to strive so mightily only to do one another harm.

An enormous fatigue crept slowly over him. He had not slept in twenty-four hours; for that matter, he'd not slept well in twenty-four years. The time had come to take a sleep he had well earned.

He stretched his long frame out upon the bed. The lines of Virgil's shepherd drifted before him:

"The twilight deepens. You have done well. Home then; home."

His back began almost to glow, in a manner, as the muscles loosened in recline. Within moments he was sleeping peacefully.

Some time later, Arundell was awakened by a rapping at the door. Gradually he shook himself out of slumber. The knock came again. He called out an inquiry but could not distinguish the reply.

The knock came again.

Sleepily, he rolled from his bed and drew his rapier out of the hangers thrown across the cabinet. The knock came again. With the blade held ready in his right hand, he drew the bolt with his left and cracked open the door. Madame Lacour stood on the stairs, staring up at him with the accustomed boredom painted across her thick features. She asked whether the gentlemen wished to have their dinner. Abruptly Arundell realized that he was voraciously hungry; he told her that he did wish dinner, but that he was alone. The woman nodded dully and waddled away.

The fire in the hearth had burned down, but the room held a pleasant warmth from the morning's blaze. The carter who dwelt below was accustomed to superheating his own rooms in terror of the ague, and this very often was sufficient to warm Charles without the expense of a fire of his own. Even the water retained a little warmth from his labors at washing his wounds earlier in the day, and he employed it to have a thorough washover now. After a time the woman returned with a covered iron pan containing his dinner. After unbolting his door and admitting her, he thanked her as she set it loudly upon the table, staring at him with a kind of insolent disinterest as he found a coin in his belt to bestow upon her. She took it without comment and stared at him for a moment more. Then she shrugged and shuffled out of the room.

Arundell rose and relocked the door before tucking into his meal. As he ate, he spread out a half sheet of paper and began considering the wording of his note to Stafford. He had promised the ambassador confidently that he should recover the documents, but had hardly felt at that time half the confidence he'd displayed; accordingly, it gave him a fine pleasure to be able to report his success. Several men had paid for it with their lives, and he himself had nearly ended catastrophically, but he had accomplished his mission. How fortunate that the papers had been there, unhidden, in the second place he had thought to look. One almost suspected that providence had directed him. He had half expected to have eventually to spend the rest of his life chasing down all of the people who would have given almost anything, if they had known about the papers, to have them in their hands; and for all that he could guess, they may all have known about them. Certainly someone else had been searching for them, for he'd run into that trio of bumbler in Gifford's chambers.

As he pushed his empty pan away from him, he considered who it might have been that had sent those three to Gifford's. Two of them had seemed familiar to him, but, in the darkness, only vaguely. Unless his memory served him better, there was no way to tell who they might have been. More than likely they came either from Morgan's friends or from the English government, but even that much was not certain. Gifford was the sort of man who, sitting upon such a bundle, could scarcely have kept himself from telling it in most of the places that he came. Probably all of his drinking companions had heard about it many times. Whether to compromise the English government or to save it, or to sell the papers to the best bidder, a large number of men would have given much to have them. It was a wonder that Gifford was still alive.

He took up the paper and ink and wrote out a salutation to Sir Edward.

A sharp pain twisted through Arundell's abdomen, and when it ceased he sat stunned for several seconds, and then it returned, doubling him over at the table. His chest became constricted and he could breathe only by the greatest effort. Then after about four seconds the pain lessened. In no more interval than that, it came again; he fell from the chair to one knee and grasped the table to hold himself upright. Slowly he began to realize the danger he was in.

When the next attack passed, he stepped to the hearth and used his dagger to shave tallow from the candle into the washwater, with hacking blows. His hands would not obey him. The candle slipped away and splashed into the basin. He tried to lift the basin but his shoulders were growing numb and incapable of effort. He threw his face down and began gulping the warm, dirty water, swallowing it convulsively with bits of tallow and a film of grease across it. For a few seconds he had to pause as another spasm gripped him, and

then he tried to drink some more. Still he did not retch. One of his knees buckled, but he caught himself, then found that he was away from the basin, weaving near the middle of the room. The room swam before his eyes, the walls and furniture grew bigger and smaller and longer and rounder than they should have been. It seemed to be growing darker. He found himself lying on his back on the floor with his head propped up at a sharp angle by something behind it.

The incursions of sharp pain now seemed mercifully less intense than they had been. His brain was fogging over, and his limbs had become powerless; he was trying to lift an arm and roll over but the effort ended only in a grotesque twitch. Now slowly, now rapidly, the room seemed to rotate about him; the walls seemed to rush towards him, then to rush away.

He heard an enormous roar. Across the chamber, as it seemed some twenty or thirty meters away, the door had been splintered into pieces and the frame of it thrown back. One man and then another crept slowly into the room, both crouching and padding in a horrible parody of stealth. In their hands they carried pistols that seemed as long as a man's arm. Then they were gone. He saw a meadow sloping downward, with something at the bottom of it. It was a blue river at the bottom of the meadow. He jerked up violently. It was Walklate's face, my Lord Paget's servant. The man held Arundell up by his shirt, staring closely at him. With absurd slowness Walklate began to smile in a kind of elongated rictus. Then he let Arundell drop back to the floor.

Charles was talking animatedly with Tom Paget, Walklate standing just behind his master. They were jesting; it was very funny; my Lord Paget was laughing merrily. Behind Lord Thomas rose the great topless bulk of St. Paul's Cathedral. They were standing near the bookstalls in the churchyard, his back towards Fleet Street and Westminster, and he leaned a little forward to see Walklate more clearly. He was an ugly man with features made for sneering. Paget had disappeared. Arundell looked for him again and became aware of him standing behind his servant, engaged in something with his hands. Then the fellow turned; Arundell blinked his eyes and looked again. It was not Lord Paget there, it was the man with the milk-white eye. Sledd, the nemesis, the man with the nacreous orb. Arundell was shaking his head and sobbing. Walklate lifted the table aloft and smashed it on the floor. It was night-time, and the black Thames swept by under the bridge. Lord Harry was saying that he wished to be put ashore, for he preferred to walk round the end of the bridge; he had, he said, a horrible terror of shooting the bridge at night. Sledd was crouching in the hearth. He had thrown the irons out onto the floor and he was kneeling in the ashes digging at the bricks with his dagger. There was another crash from the other side. It sounded like musketry; he could see the parapet of Newhaven, Le Havre, and from it a body of horsemen riding beneath the walls waving their lances. In the compound, the plague-stricken soldiers were dying in rows laid out upon the ground. Leicester's brother, the earl of Warwick, was standing near him observing the riders below, a deep sorrow in his eyes. But that was many years gone now. Twenty-four, twenty-five years ago. Someone overturned the bed and his head banged on the floor. Clothing was being thrown about the room. Night was coming on. Now it was dawn again. Sledd was still there; he had torn off the sides of the cabinet and was scrutinizing the inside of its frame. Walklate loomed above on his left and upset the wash basin, and the tepid water splashed across his legs. He felt the cool waters of the Loire rising above his knees. Sweat glistened on his white chest as he waded deeper into

the stream, and then the water became warm and the air cold, and to prevent the chill he ducked beneath the surface.

When he reopened his eyes, the room was dark. A pale light came from the rectangle of the window, but it was not enough to illuminate anything in the room. He couldn't move. At first, as he strained his ears to listen, he could hear nothing at all, but then he became aware of a sweet boy's voice singing afar off, across a vast distance of time, the same words over and over. As a child he had known them, and had sung them. Then he could recognize the choirboy's words. He was singing "*Et ecce, nunc in pulvere dormio*" in a plaintive chant. *Et ecce, nunc in pulvere dormio*. And behold, now I sleep in the dust. He found that humorous. Then he ceased giggling, because he could see a rebel's ancient head impaled upon a pike on the top of the bridge. He began sobbing weakly. At last, he closed his eyes and went back to sleep.



Jamie Sharrock arrived in the passage du Bonheur at about noon on Sunday, the 20th of December. The streets were filled with churchgoers returning to their homes. In the stables he found only one of his master's horses, but hoped nevertheless that he would find Sir Charles at home.

As he mounted the stairs he was surprised to find the door of their chamber open. He jogged up and looked in. The room had been torn apart; its contents lay in disarray from wall to window. As he ran in, he noticed the frame of the door hanging from its hinges. The cabinets and table had been smashed, and a good deal of the plasterwork had been dug out of the walls.

He called out for his master. No answer came back to him. Then he saw him on the floor near the alcove. The mattress, sliced into ribbons across the top and with the straw hanging out in handfuls, lay across Arundell's legs; near his mouth, on the floorboards, lay a little pool of thin vomit mixed with blood. Clutched in Arundell's hand was a half sheet of paper, upon which was written "Blithe Sir Ned."

His master was still breathing, almost imperceptibly. Sharrock tried to rouse him, without success; the man lay, in every respect but his shallow respiration, like a corpse. Jamie could think of nothing he should do next. His only clear thought was that his master deserved better than to lie in a mess of straw and vomit. He turned and ran down to the floor below and set up a banging on the chamber door. In a few seconds the carter thrust his head out, and Sharrock dragged the man back upstairs. Together they hoisted Arundell up and carried him down to the carter's bedroom, the man's wife and tribe of children staring on agape.

At once, the carter's wife began bathing the stricken man's head with damp cloths, as Sharrock pulled off his boots and fidgeted about the room. The carter had run off to summon the physician. There was no change in Arundell's condition; he lay still, as if in training for the grave, breathing evenly but very faintly.

Within half an hour the physician arrived. He stared and poked and palpated the patient for some little while, and then declared that it was a case either of a virulent poison or of some unknown plague. At the mention of that latter word, the carter and his wife bade Sharrock use their chambers for as long as necessary, the longer the better, and packed off with their children to their kinsmen's house in the country.

The physician prepared a concoction of some sort and tried with Sharrock's help to pour it between Arundell's lips. They got very little of it in, but somehow aroused the patient, for without awakening Arundell shrieked and twisted over on the bed, as if his guts were being gnawed by eagles. After a few moments of that, however, he fell back and lay still again.

Throughout the day, the physician periodically applied his potions with no effect. He was a very old man and seemed very much perplexed, and Sharrock began to feel that a better doctor must be found at once. Still there had been no change in Arundell's condition; except for several more attacks of an evidently terrible pain, he lay perfectly inert. Late in the evening, roundabout midnight, Jamie could stand no more of it. Awakening the physician to take over his vigil, he ran down and saddled his horse and clattered out through the freezing air for the other side of the river.

At Sir Edward Stafford's house, he leapt from his horse and beat upon the front doors until one of the boys came down to let him in. A few moments later, Stafford and Lady Douglass hurried down in nightdress to hear his news. The ambassador swore violently at the mischance. Pacing hard upon the floor, while Lady Stafford merely wrung her hands, Sir Edward complained that he could not go himself, for it would compromise him if he were even to be seen in that quarter of the city. But he bustled on his clothing and came out to bring Sharrock down the street to his own physician, a young Englishman who had spent some years studying to good effect in Germany. As the doctor prepared his horse, Sir Edward pressed a purse into Jamie's hand and promised to have a whole squadron of physicians ready by the morning's light.

And so he did. By late the following afternoon, some four or five physicians had come round to consult about the case; all of them but Stafford's man had then departed, having delivered the opinion that the patient was completely without remedy. Arundell's condition had not altered, except in two ways. His breathing had weakened further, and he had several times risen to a sort of distracted consciousness. At those times he was mainly delirious, but once or twice he seemed to lay in a wan awareness of what was going on about him. Though he made no sound or sign of recognition, his eyes, for those brief intervals, were capable of following the faces that pressed close above him.

Stafford's doctor knew of no means to bring him out of his present torpor, but he insisted that they must preserve enough strength in him to keep him alive until he should come out of it on his own hook. Accordingly, upon the hour, they raised his head and forced between his lips a warm meat broth, which usually he kept down. The attacks of sharp pain continued to occur at irregular intervals, but otherwise Arundell did not seem to be in any obvious discomfort.

On Wednesday Arundell still hung on. Stafford gave up his diplomatic scruples and appeared at about noon, with the Lady Douglass rushing in before him. That woman, famed in several nations for her hard imperiousness, revealed a vein of tenderness that none but her husbands had had the pleasure of seeing before, and for the time she remained, she took over the task of feeding him the broth.

Late in the afternoon, Stafford was sitting by the bedhead lost in some reverie, when all at once Arundell opened his eyes. They observed at once that he was awake and seemingly lucid. When he noticed Stafford, he smiled weakly and whispered, "Blithe Sir Ned." Herr Oberholtzer was in the room at the time, and he returned to Mendoza with the news that the stricken man was improving. Mayneville was there as well, but he just frowned.

On Thursday Arundell began to sing. Only Sharrock and the old physician were in the room. His eyes remained closed, but evidently he was thinking clearly wherever his mind was, for the words came out, almost inaudibly, yet perfectly distinctly. In unmelodious whispers, with long pauses after each line, he was singing a verse from one of Thomas Wyatt's lyrics. Wyatt had always been his favorite poet.

"Now cease, my lute. This is the last," he sang. "Labor that thou and I shall waste."

"And ended is that which we begun." His breathing made no sound, but he wore a faint smile.

"Now is this song both sung and past," he murmured.

Arundell lay peacefully for a long moment.

"My lute, be still, for I have done."

On Friday morning, Christmas day, the bells of the city kept up a continuous ringing. The citizens ran up and down the streets in every quarter of the city, singing hymns to both of their saviors, the victorious duke of Guise and the newborn Christ child, who by his birth had brought hope and joy into the world. Pavior danced with barmaid, carter danced with merchant. The Swiss guards at the palaces looked on with wide smiles. From their harried lives, the burghers and the laborers and the soldiers gave themselves up to happiness and danced with their beaming children in the broad avenues.

In the sun-drenched valley of the Loire, under a light patina of new snow, lay the black ruin of Simier's house where the baron von Dohna had left it in his march down-country. No one was about but some villagers in celebration over the next hill.

In a borrowed bedroom in the passage du Bonheur, Sir Charles Arundell passed away, his features set in some repose.

"Then shall my enemies sink with shame, and
I depart out of the field with honor; and
whatsoever either malice hath unjustly built,
or a fool devised upon a false ground, must
play Castle-Come-Down, and
dissolve to nothing."

EPILOGUE

It would be as well to tie up some of the larger threads left dangling. The Armada set its sails, as expected, in the summer of 1588, but it was dispersed with terrible losses by adverse winds and the brilliant seamanship of Drake and Admiral Howard of Effingham. Several times more King Philip tried mounting new invasions, but with even less success. In September 1588 the earl of Leicester, who had returned from the Netherlands to help direct the land defenses, set out for a rest in the country, and died of an illness at a house of his in Cornbury. Sir Francis Walsingham died in 1590; Lord Treasurer Burghley lived on until 1598, in which year also died King Philip II of Spain. Queen Elizabeth died peacefully in the spring of 1603 and was succeeded in her crown by James of Scotland, who in the following year concluded peace with Spain.

In France, King Henri III continued to fall under the power of the Holy League. Driven finally to desperation, in December 1588 he lured the duke of Guise to negotiations at his palace at Blois and had him assassinated by members of the royal bodyguard. The cities of the League revolted openly and the king allied himself at last with the Huguenot Henri of Navarre. The prince of Parma invaded France on the League side. Then in the summer of 1589, the king himself was stabbed to death by a fanatical priest. Nominally at least, Navarre inherited the throne, which after a period of civil war and his own conversion to Catholicism he came finally to enjoy, as Henri IV, in 1594. He too was assassinated, in 1610. Don Bernardino de Mendoza, in depleted health and almost totally blind, left Paris and returned to Spain in 1591, where he devoted himself to literary pursuits until his quiet death in Madrid in August 1604.

Sir Edward Stafford retired from his diplomatic career in 1590 and lived quietly in the country with his wife Lady Douglass until his death in 1605, predeceasing her by three years. Thomas Fitzherbert seems for a time to have taken up Arundell's role as intermediary between Stafford and Mendoza; in 1596 he became English Secretary to the king of Spain; in 1602 he was ordained as a priest, in 1613 he became a Jesuit, and he served as rector of the English college in Rome until his death in 1640. Thomas Lord Paget died of unknown causes in the first half of 1590, and Thomas Throgmorton died in 1595. Gilbert Gifford died, still immured in the Bishop's Prison, in 1590. Thomas Morgan was imprisoned by the prince of Parma in Flanders from 1590 to 1592, and soon thereafter was exiled from those territories; in 1595 he was deported from Spain; in 1604 he was imprisoned once again in the Bastille for his involvement in an intrigue against Henri IV, and nothing is known of him thereafter. Charles Paget seems to have been allowed to return to England after Queen Elizabeth's death, to live out his years peacefully in the country until he died in 1612.

Of the gentlemen in England, the earl of Oxford continued to live well on the queen's largesse until his death in 1604. William Shelley was condemned for high treason in 1586 for his part in Throgmorton's business, but was still a prisoner in the Tower when last heard of in July 1588. Philip Howard, the earl of Arundel, still in the Tower, was tried belatedly and convicted of treason in 1589; he died in his cell in 1595. Lord Harry Howard lived in eclipse throughout the reign, but was readmitted to the court in 1600. His intrigues in aid of the peaceful succession of King James brought him into long-awaited favor upon the queen's death; he was admitted to the Privy Council and in 1604 he was created earl of Northampton, and became Lord Privy Seal in 1608; he remained unobtrusively a Catholic until his death in 1614, but had become capable of impressing all observers time and again with his evident lack of principle.

Lord Paget's sister, Lady Anne Lee, was buried in December 1590. Roman Catholics were granted political rights in England in 1829.

