The Gunpowder Plot
THE
GUNPOWDER
PLOT

by
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To
my brothers
REGINALD POLE
and
ALLESBROOK
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These four cartoons are reproduced from Carleton's *A Thankfull Remembrance of God's Mercie*, published in 1625, which gives a popular propaganda account of events. By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Hindlip Hall from the South East

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From Nash's *Worcestershire*. By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

St. Winifred's Well in the Eighteenth Century

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Lord Monteagle

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This Van Somers portrait of Lord Monteagle was exhibited at South Kensington in 1866 and was numbered 431 in the Catalogue. It was sold in 1869 and has not been traced since. According to the Catalogue, he is wearing a rich brown dress, ornamented with gold and silver. By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum.
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THE PROPAGANDA IN A PICTURE  facing page 156
The frontispiece of Carleton’s Thankfull Remembrance, showing Queen Elizabeth and King James, holding banners depicting the Spanish Armada and the Gunpowder Plot, behind a symbolic figure of the Church of England, crowned with Canterbury Cathedral, and trampling on the Pope, a Cardinal and the Devil. By courtesy of the British Museum.

CARTOON OF THE DELIVERY OF THE LETTER TO CECIL  facing page 157
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By courtesy of the Most Hon. the Marquess of Salisbury, K.G., and the Public Record Office.
Introduction

On 5th November 1605, when Guy Fawkes was arrested in the proximity of barrels of gunpowder under the House of Lords, undoubtedly a plot was brought to light. But it is still not certain what kind of a plot it was—whether it was a conspiracy of Catholics against the Government or of the Government against the Catholics. The popular verdict, endorsed and repeated by generations of history books, is that it was what it seemed to be and that, by a series of events little short of miraculous, a desperate band of Roman Catholic gentlemen had, at the eleventh hour, been prevented from blowing up King, Lords and Commons assembled for the opening of Parliament. The opposite view is thus dismissed in the epitome in the Encyclopedia Britannica: "The allegation that the whole affair was an agent-provocateur's plot for which Salisbury was responsible is now generally regarded as baseless."

Yet no historian versed in the period who has studied the matter is likely to concur in so easy a generalization. He may be unwilling to commit himself to any positive judgment, for he knows too well the equivocal atmosphere which surrounds the whole affair, but it is unlikely that he will dissent, in the main, from the verdict that 'the evidence available to us appears to establish principally two points—that the true history of the Gunpowder Plot is now known to no man and that the history commonly received is certainly untrue. It is impossible to believe that the proceedings of the conspirators were actually such as they are related to have been. It is unquestionable that the Government consistently falsified the story and the evidence presented to the world.'

Further than this the careful historian would hardly commit himself. Too much vital evidence is lacking. Gun-
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powder, for example, was at the time a government monopoly and the first question to arise in the inquirer’s mind is how the conspirators procured such a great quantity without some kind of connivance—but in the Ordnance accounts of the stores in the Tower, those concerned with the years in question are missing. John Whynniard, Keeper of the Wardrobe, who leased the famous cellar to the conspirators, was a material witness of the first importance. He died suddenly on the morning of November 5th before he could give any evidence, and the cause of his death is unknown.

Concerned with the conspiracy from the beginning were four men, Robert Catesby and his cousin and inseparable friend, Thomas Winter; Thomas Percy and his brother-in-law, John Wright. Of these only Thomas Winter was taken alive, though all could have been, since, as they had no firearms, they were practically defenceless. The man who killed Percy and Catesby was given a government pension of two shillings a day (equal to at least a pound of our present money) for life and as Dr. Goodman, at the time of the trial of the conspirators a vicar in Essex and later Bishop of Gloucester, recorded: ‘Some will not stick to report that the great statesman (Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury) sending to apprehend these traitors gave special charge and direction for Percy and Catesby, “Let me never see them alive”, who it may be would have revealed some evil counsel given.’

It is thus not altogether surprising that there have not been lacking from that day to this those who have endorsed the opinion of a contemporary who, writing on 10th December 1605, informed a correspondent abroad: ‘Those that have practical experience of the way in which things are done hold it as certain that there has been foul play and that some of the Council secretly spun a web to entangle these poor gentlemen.’

In 1857 the Protestant lawyer, David Jardine, published A Narrative of the Gunpowder Plot which was an enlargement and revision of the account he had written twenty-one years earlier as an introduction to his edition of the trial of the conspirators. This, though later research has shown some of its details to be incorrect, remained the basis of later works. Jardine accepted the theory of a Catholic plot—as indeed did his contemporary, the Catholic historian, John
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Lingard—but he was under no illusions as to the attitude of the Government. 'The object of the government was to turn the transaction to the best political account and nothing could be further from their intention than to publish truth merely for the information of the people.' Of the official account, the 'King's Book'* which was printed immediately after the trials and was 'not only dispersed profusely in England but was sent . . . to the ambassadors at foreign courts, translated into several languages and circulated with the utmost diligence in every part of Europe,' Jardine writes that 'there is no doubt that it is a narrative of no historical authority; it is merely the Court version of the transaction, given to the world for the express purpose of leading the public mind in a particular direction. Of several hundreds of examinations which were taken, two only were published in this narrative, namely a Declaration of Guy Fawkes and a Confession of Thomas Winter. That both of these were carefully settled and prepared for the purpose of publication is not only highly probable from a comparison of them with the other statements of the same individuals, which are still extant, but is demonstrated as a fact by the interlineations and alterations observable on the originals.'

Jardine did not take the further step, which was later to become the focal point of the controversy, of suggesting that these two accounts, on which the Government case and the traditional story rest, are worthless as evidence for the simple reason that Fawkes was tortured into signing a version which the Government had prepared and that Thomas Winter's 'Confession' was a Government forgery.

In 1863, Samuel Rawson Gardiner published the first instalment of his monumental History of England from 1603 to 1656 at which he was to labour till his death in 1902. His

* This official account, His Majesties Speech in this last Session of Parliament . . . together with a discourse of the manner of the discovery of this late intended treason, 1605, together with A true and perfect relation of the proceedings against the late most barbarous traytors. . . . Imprinted at London by Robert Burke, Printer to the King's most Excellent Majestie, 1606, form the basis of later controversial pamphlets in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was, substantially, reprinted in 1850 by W. J. Adams, incorporating the preface by Thomas Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, an anti-Catholic propagandist, written in 1679, entitled The Gunpowder Treason. It is also the basis of 'popular' and school histories to-day.
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first volume contained his story of the Gunpowder Plot which, in essentials, is based on the Government version. In 1871, Father John Morris, S.J., edited and published *A Narrative of the Gunpowder Plot* which had been written in 1606 by Father John Gerard, S.J., one of the Jesuit priests actually implicated in the Plot. Gerard had written this after his escape from England—'I myself, when I came from England to Rome, was ordered to put in writing an account of the whole affair, and did so as well as I could.'

With Gardiner, on the one hand, with his extreme Protestant and even Puritan bias, reinforcing the traditional version of the Plot and with the contemporary Catholic view, on the other, now generally accessible, it was inevitable that the debate should be carried further. In 1897 another Father John Gerard, S.J., published *What was the Gunpowder Plot?* which challenged the entire Government story, and drew from Gardiner in the same year a reply, *What the Gunpowder Plot was*, in which he defended the accepted version and concluded that 'the attempt to make Salisbury the originator of the Plot for his own purposes breaks down entirely'. Gardiner was now at the height of his fame—in Gerard's words 'beyond question a veteran and the foremost representative of the new Oxford school'—and so great was his reputation as the indisputable authority on the period that *What the Gunpowder Plot was* was—and, indeed, generally speaking, is—taken as the final word on the matter, closing the debate.

None but scholars are aware that Gerard returned to the attack and in *The Gunpowder Plot and the Gunpowder Plotters* (1897) and *Thomas Winter's Confession and the Gunpowder Plot* (1898)—neither of which is listed in Godfrey Davies's *Bibliography of British History, Stuart Period*—made a crushing reply to Gardiner. Nor can anyone who, refusing to be dazzled by his reputation, has carefully examined Gardiner's controversial method fail to realize how unsatisfactory is *What the Gunpowder Plot was*. The prestige still popularly attached to it might be adduced as an illustration of the cynical *mot*: 'History never repeats itself, but historians always repeat each other.'

One thing, however, as Gerard immediately realized, Gardiner had done. He had clarified the issue. He had, by implication at least, admitted that the case for the traditional
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story rested on the authenticity of Thomas Winter’s ‘Confession’. If this could be shown to be a Government forgery, the case fell to the ground. And in the two little works mentioned—the second of which contains a facsimile of the ‘Confession’ in its entirety—Gerard addressed himself to this task with a conspicuous degree of success.

The reasons for supposing it a forgery will be dealt with later in the book, but it may be mentioned here that less than a fortnight earlier Winter had been wounded in the shoulder and found great difficulty in writing at all, that his genuine signature taken on the same day as the ‘Confession’ differs from the writing of the document (which resembles his hand before he was wounded), that in the ‘Confession’ he spells his name as ‘Winter’—a form he never used, preferring ‘Wintour’* which was the correct family spelling, whereas ‘Winter’ was a form which the Government always used in speaking of him, that the original was never allowed out of the hands of Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, who had a copy made ‘from the original’ and put the copy only—which differs in several respects from the original—into the Government collection of papers. The original ‘Confession’ remains to-day among the MSS. at Hatfield House relating to 1605, which were not calendared till 1938, so that, until Gerard’s facsimile, very few people indeed were acquainted with it, though Gardiner had printed it (with several errors, which are now noted in the Calendar) in What the Gunpowder Plot was.

In this century what work has been done on the Plot has been directed mainly to elucidating specific points, such as the identity of the writer of the anonymous letter to Montague warning him to absent himself from the opening of Parliament—the famous letter which, according to the Government story, first revealed to them the existence of the conspiracy. But, in general, Jardine’s warning has been taken to heart: ‘If the truth is ever discovered, it will not be by State papers or recorded examinations and confessions. When such expert artists as Bacon and Cecil framed and propagated a State fiction in order to cover a State intrigue,

* The original name of the family was the Welsh Gwyn-Tour (White Tower), and the crest, a falcon mounted on a white tower, perpetuated the meaning.
they took care to cut off or divert the channels of history so effectually as to make it hopeless at the distance of three centuries to trace the truth by means of documents which have ever been in their control. If the mystery should hereafter be unravelled, it will be probably by the discovery of some letters or papers of a domestic nature, which either slumber in private repositories or remain unnoticed in public collections.7

Such new evidence might, of course, at any moment come to light, but, even without it, there is a justification for retelling the story. For something has taken place which neither Jardine nor Gardiner nor Gerard could have foreseen. Events have made it possible for us, in the second half of the twentieth century, to understand, and therefore to assess, the ‘climate’ of the Gunpowder Plot, as those in the second half of the nineteenth could not. The use of torture to extort signatures to convenient statements; the forgery of documents; the unscrupulous employment of propaganda; the services of the agent-provocateur; the sudden deaths of vital witnesses; the art of the ‘double-cross’ (which was known at the time of the Plot as ‘practising’) and, more importantly, the ‘double double-cross’; the ruthlessness of the struggle between a national, secular State and a universal Church claiming unlimited spiritual authority and supranational jurisdiction—all these concomitants of a revolutionary period are part of our day-to-day European experience. We may regard them with horror, but hardly with incredulity, and the present makes possible a better understanding of the past. We may have no new documents but we can read the old ones with new eyes.

Side by side with this positive gain, there is also a negative advantage. We are no longer troubled by the bitterness of theological controversy. From the beginning the Gunpowder Plot has been bedevilled by ecclesiastical propaganda. Its original effect (whatever its cause or purpose) was the virtual extinction of Roman Catholicism in England. The first republication of the story of the Plot in 1679 was a deliberate attempt to add fuel to the flames of popular anti-Catholicism in the year of terror following Titus Oates’s ‘discovery’ of a ‘Popish Plot’. The second popular republication in 1850—the reprinting of the 1679 material—coincided, hardly acci-
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dentally, with the 'No Popery' outbreak, associated with Lord John Russell and his government, following on the reorganization of Roman Catholicism in England. On the Catholic side, treatment of the Plot was directed towards exonerating from complicity the body of Catholic laity and exculpating the Jesuits. Now at last we are free of unfortunate fanaticisms and can view the Plot objectively, without any desire to prove a case but caring only to arrive at the probable truth.

Finally no excuse should be necessary for trying to retell a story which is one of the most famous and most fascinating in the annals of England.

My particular thanks are due to the Most Hon. The Marquess of Salisbury, K.G., K.C.V.O. for giving me access to the manuscripts at Hatfield and allowing me to photograph and reproduce relevant portions of two of them; to the Jesuits of Farm Street, London, for permitting me to use their transcript of Greenway's Narrative, a copy of the Stonyhurst MS. (this, a key document of the Plot, has been neither translated nor published); to the Editor of The Month for the loan of the blocks illustrating the Winter confession; to the Rector of Hawarden for having the photograph made of his copy of St. Winifred's Well; to Miss Jean Rowntree, both for lending me her copy of the 'King's Book' and for suggesting that I should write this book; and to Miss Joy Saint for invaluable help in research and for reading the proofs and making the index.

Hugh Ross Williamson

London, 1948-50
BOOK ONE

THE BACKGROUND
One of the most difficult feats of historical imagination is to see an event in its proper perspective and the indispensable basis of any attempt to do so is some knowledge of the conditions and background against which the actors in it grew up.

A man born in the year that Elizabeth came to the throne would have been forty-six at the time of the Gunpowder Plot. If a Catholic, he could not have escaped the practical results of Elizabeth's ecclesiastical policy. If a Protestant, he would have accepted without question the Government's version of that mortal duel. And as an Englishman, whether Catholic or Protestant, he would have been affected by the international struggle with Spain which, though inevitably coloured by the religious issue, was in essence a matter of secular power-politics.

To understand the 'Papists' Conspiracy'—as the Gunpowder Plot was long referred to in the English Calendar—it is thus necessary to know, at least in outline, something of Elizabeth's attempt to suppress Catholicism; of the Government's technique in 'discovering plots'; of the main lines of international diplomacy; and, as in a sense a climax where the threads are drawn together, of the rebellion of Essex at the turn of the century in which the main actors in the Gunpowder Plot—the four cousins, Catesby, Tresham, Winter and Monteagle—were all involved.
The Suppression of Catholicism

(i) The Early Years

In 1559, within three months of Elizabeth's accession, the first Acts to be put on the Statute Book were those of Supremacy and Uniformity which were intended to extirpate the Catholic Faith in England. Supreme spiritual authority was vested in the Crown (a provision which made it impossible for a Catholic to take the Oath of Supremacy) and the only services allowed were those of the Prayer Book (which meant the end of the Mass—the service of Holy Communion in the form in which it had been invariably performed everywhere in Christendom since the year 600).

Some Catholics conformed openly, remaining faithful at heart—a proceeding rendered in these early days more possible because a great proportion of the priests, even if they practised the Anglican rites, were unquestionably validly ordained and their 'intention', whatever the formula, could not be doubted. But many younger Catholics saw the legislation, especially as it affected the universities, as a choice between apostasy and exile and embraced the latter. Within a year, over a hundred Oxford and Cambridge men had left for Louvain (where two houses were named 'Oxford' and 'Cambridge'); others went to universities of Paris, Padua and Salamanca; and from Louvain for the next sixteen years, came the stream of learned polemics against the new Anglican Establishment which the English Government made every effort to suppress.

In 1561, the Regent of the Netherlands wrote to her brother, Philip II of Spain, drawing his attention to the presence of so many English Catholic exiles in her territory and asking his help in providing pensions for them. The
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same year, William Allen, a fellow of Oriel and principal of St. Mary’s Hall, decided, at the age of twenty-nine, that he could no longer remain at Oxford and crossed to Louvain. Though he came back to England in disguise for three years (during which he strenuously opposed the practice of occasional conformity), it was to the Low Countries he eventually returned to found, in 1568, a Catholic seminary for Englishmen at Douay. In that same year, Robert Persons, who was twenty-four, became a fellow of Balliol and Edmund Campion, who was twenty-eight, junior proctor—two men whose names were later to be linked with Allen’s in the Catholic counter-attack. Campion was to become the Jesuit protomartyr of England: Persons, till his death in 1610, was to be the directing energy and brain behind the Jesuit missionary efforts.

Though the first-fruits of Douay were still in the future, other events in the next two years led to a hardening of the situation. In 1569 took place the last great English rising in arms for the Catholic Faith, the Rebellion in the North. It was suppressed and the Catholic peers, Norfolk and Northumberland, executed. In 1570 the Pope, who up to this point had not abandoned hope of the return of England to the Faith, formally excommunicated Elizabeth. Henceforth, for Catholics not only abroad but at home, the rightful ruler of England was technically Mary, Queen of Scots, whom Elizabeth kept prisoner for the next seventeen years, at the end of which she executed her.

The Papal Bull, Regnans in Excelsis, naturally provoked an immediate reply from the English Government. It was made high treason to introduce Bulls from Rome (Felton, who had affixed a copy of it to the gates of the Bishop of London’s palace, was executed), to question Elizabeth’s title, to attempt to liberate Mary Queen of Scots, and at the same time a determined inquisition was instituted among the clergy to eliminate secret Catholics, or any with Catholic sympathies.

(ii) THE JESUIT COUNTER-ATTACK

The second great and well-defined phase of the struggle begins in 1579. The quiet but continuous pressure of the anti-Catholic legislation, the cutting-off of England from the

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The Jesuit Counter-Attack

Continent, the rise and consolidation of the power of the Protestant gentry, who alone could become magistrates or Members of Parliament, dons or clergymen, the circulation of exclusively Protestant literature and the growing prestige of Elizabeth had had its twenty years' effect. If, as was probably the case, the majority of the population was still Catholic at heart and, as was certainly the case, had inherited Catholic teaching and traditions; if there were still great areas, especially in the north and west, where Catholicism was still practised in no more than quasi-secrecy, England, with the passage of time and the working of inertia, was slowly but steadily becoming as Protestant as the official world of Court, Government, Church, Law and University. It seemed only a matter of years before the Faith died out.

What saved it was the foundation of Douay, the mission of the seminary priests and the fidelity of the English seculars, and, finally, the Jesuits—the men who, in a continuous stream, unflinchingly trod 'the via dolorosa from Douay to Tyburn'.

To appreciate the part played at this juncture by the Jesuits who were to loom so large in the story of the Gunpowder Plot, it is important to remember that they were a new and contemporary Order. In 1530—only four years before Elizabeth's birth—Ignatius Loyola, their founder, had visited London during a long vacation at the University of Paris. As late as 1555—four years before her accession—he had written to Cardinal Pole, then in England, of 'the ardent desire which the divine and supreme Charity had imparted to him of saving the souls in that realm'. The fear which the English Government had of and the propaganda with which they vilified the Jesuits therefore was a 'modern' attack on something novel, not (as such attacks would be to-day) a traditional appeal to long-standing prejudice. The pattern of it has persisted and a twentieth-century reader could hardly feel the astonished surprise which must have affected Persons, when he wrote from the England of 1581: 'There is tremendous talk here of Jesuits and more fables perhaps are told about them than were told of old about monsters. For as to the origin of these men, their way of life, their institute, their morals and teaching, their plans and actions, stories of all sorts are spread abroad, not only in private conversations,
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but also in public sermons and printed books, and these contradict one another and have a striking resemblance to dreams."

The legend finally was to obscure the truth, but "it is a significant fact, explain it as we may, that in the latter half of the sixteenth century, the "call of God" for young Englishmen of culture and birth who were Catholics, meant almost invariably a call to enter the Society of Jesus: so completely had the new Order attracted to itself all the choice and lofty spirits among the Catholics, and so wonderfully had the Fathers of the Society impressed the minds of men with a belief in their sanctity, self-abnegation, and the sincerity of their devotion to a great cause."

Persons had become a member of the Society in 1575, Campion two years earlier. In 1578, Allen, to escape Calvinist persecution, moved his college to Rheims, where it was given hospitality in the house of the Jesuits; in 1579 he was concerned with the foundation of an English Jesuit college in Rome; and in 1580 he proposed to the General of the Jesuits, that the Society should undertake a mission to England to strengthen and organize the faithful and to reconvert the lapsed. So it was that in 1580 the English Mission set out, led by Persons and including Campion.

They were not, of course, the first seminary priests to enter the country—many missionaries, English Catholics trained abroad, had returned, risking and giving their lives in the seventies—but this was the first organized and directed assault, made by a Society which had been founded by a soldier and which was planned on the lines of military discipline and mobility, and, though the Jesuits in the forty years of their existence had already defended the Faith in Poland and in Germany, in Ireland and in the Indies, 'here in England they played a special part because here in England the conditions were those of active and continual battle, for which the special character and ideal of strict co-ordination under absolute obedience and the clarity of the object before them and their annealing discipline, peculiarly fitted them'.

Their battle was concerned only with salvation of souls. They were forbidden to take any part in politics and so that no Catholic should feel that there was any incompatibility
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between temporal loyalty to Elizabeth and the claims of the Faith, the missionaries obtained from the Pope a declaration that as things stood the Bull of Excommunication did not bind Catholics.9

From one of Persons’s letters, written in 1580, may be seen the nature of the work and the temper in which it was done: ‘After Mass has been said and sermons preached—I am compelled sometimes to preach twice on the same day—I struggle with almost unending business. This consists mainly in solving cases of conscience which occur, in directing other priests to suitable places and occupations, in reconciling schismatics to the Church, in writing letters to those who are tempted at times in the course of this persecution, in trying to arrange temporal aid for the support of those who are in prison and in want; for every day they send to me, laying bare their needs. In short the burdens of this kind are so many that, unless I perceived clearly that the honour of God required what we are doing, and that very badly, I should not hesitate to say that I am weary. But weariness must never be acknowledged in these affairs. For I am firmly convinced that, unless my sins prevent it, God will always be with us as he has been up to now in our efforts; and no weariness of body or mind is of any account in comparison with the consolation we receive from the joy, which is almost unbelievable, of the people at our coming.’10

They were guarded, as well as possible, by the Catholic ‘underground’, but only one of them—Persons—escaped the Government’s vigilance. The rest were taken, tried and either executed as traitors or left to languish in imprisonment. What they had accomplished in the seventeen months between their landing and Campion’s martyrdom on 1st December 1581 cannot well be estimated statistically. It is said that they made four thousand converts,11 besides the new hope and strength they brought to the faithful, the organization they planned for those who were to follow and the force of the example of their lives and deaths. But the most obvious tribute to their success was the violence of the Government’s counter-attack.

In 1581 it was made high treason to endeavour to convert anyone to the Faith; to be present at Mass meant a year’s imprisonment as well as a fine; and every person above six-
teen was fined £20 a month for non-attendance at Anglican services (a penalty later adjusted to the confiscation by the Crown of two-thirds of their property). To facilitate the effective working of the new Act, informers were rewarded.

Despite these new measures, which made every priest guilty of high treason on no other grounds than his priesthood, the stream from the Continent never ceased. Persons himself, who was not allowed to return to what would have been certain death, used his knowledge and energy and powers of organization to direct affairs from the Continental base. We have a picture of him in another of his letters, written in the autumn of 1584: 'There has been a most violent and searching persecution and the English ports have been guarded so carefully that there is no way open either to enter or to leave the country. . . . Some new way must be found. . . . To do this and a number of other things required for the equipment of this spiritual war, I am obliged to maintain a modest establishment at Rouen, which is a most convenient city on account of its nearness to the sea, so that from there some can make trips to the coast to arrange for boats to convey people across (for they cannot use either the public boats or the ordinary ports that are well known) whilst others take charge of the preparation and introduction into the country of books, written in English, both on spiritual and devotional subjects, and on matters of controversy and in answer to the calumnies with which the heretics assail us. . . . Then, too, there are the holy oils, chalices, vestments and Bibles to be sent over.'

The Government now saw quite clearly that if Catholicism were to be effectively eradicated from England, she must be shut off completely from the Continent. So long as Catholic youths were educated abroad and ardent missionaries could enter to neutralize effects of persecution and taxation on the Catholics at home, the factor of time was not on the Government side. In 1585 new measures were passed. All Jesuit and seminary priests were banished from the country on pain of death; the maintenance of them was made a felony; any person who did not inform against them within twelve days incurred a fine and imprisonment 'at the Queen's pleasure'; any English subject being educated abroad was to return within six months and take the oath of supremacy or incur
The Jesuit Counter-Attack

the penalties of high treason; no children were to be sent 'beyond the sea' without special licence from the Government. The strict watch at all ports was maintained—the more effectively since spies abroad regularly supplied the Government with descriptions of Catholics* who were likely to attempt to enter the country.

This new legislation affected, among hundreds of others, John Gerard who, twenty years later, was to be one of the Jesuits accused by the Government in the Gunpowder Plot. The son of a Lancashire knight who was being continually fined and imprisoned for his Catholicism, he had, after a year or two at Oxford, gone to the Continent where he had approached Persons and told him of his desire to become a Jesuit. Persons advised him, before taking the final step, to return to England to put his affairs and property in order. Gerard did so, but on trying to leave the country was arrested and imprisoned. As he put it in his autobiography: "Being committed to the Marshalsea prison, I found there numbers of Catholics and some priests, awaiting judgment of death with the greatest joy. In this school of Christ I was detained from the beginning of one Lent to the end of the following."13

Gerard has left us a first-hand account of what the Government legislation meant in practice to the ordinary Catholic gentleman.14 Though it is too long to reproduce here, it is worth quoting a Protestant historian's epitome of this and other evidence.

'The truth is, a detestable system had now begun to spring up under which no one with any conscience or religious scruples could hold himself safe for an hour. An army of spies and common informers were prowling about the length and breadth of the land, living by their wits, and feeding partly upon the terrors of others and partly upon the letter of the law as laid down by the recent Acts—wretches who had everything to gain by straining the penalties to the utmost, for they claimed their share of the spoil. Armed with warrants from weak magistrates, who were themselves afraid of suspicion, or, failing these, armed with an order from the Privy

* To take one example, in one of the Yelverton MSS. (vol. xxxiiii) is an account of 295 Englishmen, with descriptions, written by a spy who had been given the hospitality of the English College in Rome.
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Council, which was only too easily to be obtained, they sallied forth on their mission of treachery. They were nothing better than bandits protected by the law, let loose upon that portion of the community which might be harried and robbed with impunity. In some cases the pursuivants, after arresting their victims and appropriating their money, were content to let them alone, and save themselves further trouble; in others they kept them till a ransom might come from friends; in any case there was always the fun of half-scuttling a big house and living at free quarters during the search, and the chance of securing a handsome bribe in consideration of being left unmolested for the future.'

(iii) AFTER THE ARMADA

The execution of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587 made a radical change in the situation. With the end of the hope that Elizabeth would be peacefully succeeded by a Catholic sovereign who was the indisputable heir, the succession question began to divide Catholics. It had its repercussions both at home and abroad and in 1588 the coming of the Great Armada of the Philip II (who had once been King-Consort of England and who was 'the most powerful and, in that sense, the most formidable' of the pretenders to the Crown) further heightened the patriotic tensions. During the nineties, controversy ran high as to the best method of re-establishing the Catholic Faith in England—by an invasion of Catholic powers, aided by the insurrection in the country and the placing of a Catholic sovereign, such as Philip II's daughter, the Infanta Isabella, on the throne, or by enduring persecution with as much patience as possible in the hope that the next sovereign—either Arabella Stewart or James of Scotland—would mitigate it.

It was not until 1597, when the English sack of Cadiz and the failure of the Third Armada, showed beyond contradiction the weakness of Spain, that 'the Papacy definitely and finally renounced all hopes of seeing the ancient religion restored in England by means of Spanish intervention or that of any other foreign power. A return to former religious conditions, or at least to liberty of conscience, could at the utmost be looked for by the Holy See from the accession to
After the Armada

the throne of some prince who was not hostile to the Catho-
licals; in the meantime it limited itself henceforward to an
attempt to save and maintain by the peaceful means of
preaching and instruction what still remained to be saved and
preserved. 17

These peaceful means—the ‘spiritual warfare’—had, of
course never ceased. The Acts of 1585 had been answered
by a new Jesuit Mission of 1586, led by Father Henry
Garnet, who, twenty years later, was to die for his alleged
implication in the Gunpowder Plot.

Garnet, a Derbyshire man, was born in 1554, was edu-
cated at Winchester and, for two years before going abroad
and joining the Society of Jesus, was a corrector of the press
to Tottel, the celebrated law printer. In this capacity he first
met Popham, who, as Lord Chief Justice, was to sit in judg-
ment of him, and Coke who, as Attorney General, was to
prosecute him in 1606. Coke, indeed, at the trial referred to
him as ‘by birth a gentleman, by education a scholar . . .’
and mentioned his ‘many gifts and endowments of nature,
by art learned, a good linguist, and by profession a Jesuit’. 18

Of Garnet’s ability there was no doubt. Abroad, he
studied under Bellarmine; at the English College at Rome,
he was not only Professor of Hebrew but deputized for two
years for the famous mathematician, Clavius. Everyone bore
witness to the charm of his character and the depth of his
devotion. The only doubt was of the strength of his person-
ality and, at first, the General of the Jesuits hesitated to en-
trust him with the mission on the grounds that it was ‘expos-
ing the meekest lamb to the cruellest butchery’. 19

‘The cruellest butchery’ was to come at last, but before it,
Garnet was to rule the English province for nineteen years
and to leave behind him a good organization and forty
Jesuits where he found, on his coming, only three, William
Weston, Thomas Metham and Thomas Pound. He was
ordered to obey Weston as his Superior, should circum-
stances permit it, but Weston’s imprisonment, first in the
Clink, then in Wisbech Castle, meant that Garnet had almost
immediately to assume the office.

Wisbech Castle becomes, in a sense, the focal point in the
story of Catholicism between the years 1587 and 1597.
Since 1579 a certain number of Catholics, whom the Govern-
The Suppression of Catholicism

ment wished neither to execute nor to set at liberty, had been imprisoned there. In the critical years 1587 and 1588, prisoners from the London gaols were, largely for political reasons connected with the possible invasion, transferred there. *

Though at first confinement was strict, the appointment of a new director in 1593 led to a relaxation of the rules and the prisoners enjoyed a certain degree of liberty within the confines of the settlement. They had their own library. They could be visited by friends. Indeed some Catholics made long journeys to Wisbech to be able to breathe once more a purely Catholic atmosphere and, after one such visit, Garnet wrote that he had not enjoyed such consolation for seven years.  

The Government’s clemency, however, was not altogether disinterested. By the middle nineties, in spite of preparations in Spain for a new Armada, there was no real danger of invasion, and the new patriotism, combined with the inexorable economic pressure of the recusancy laws, was having its effect. The wealthier Catholics were steadily being made poorer; the number of schismatic Catholics (that is to say, those who heard Mass privately when they could, but publicly attended their parish church and so escaped the fines) was increasing. What is more, the new penal legislation enacted in 1593 had further checked Catholicism by forbidding Catholics to travel more than five miles from their homes and by banishing from the realm all Catholics too poor to pay the fines. By the same Act, anyone suspected of being a seminary priest or a Jesuit and refusing to answer the charge could be imprisoned till he would submit to examination.

Thus, as regards the Catholics at Wisbech, where seminary priests, secular priests and laymen were held, year after year, without hope of release, the Government judged it politic to proceed on the assumption that, as Professor Pollard has put it, ‘if the Roman Catholics were given enough rope, they would hang themselves. This calculation was to some extent justified.’ Of the events which culminated in the ‘Wisbech stirs’ of 1597 and the ‘Archpriest con-

* The best analogy, rough and anachronistic though it is, is probably the concentration camp in the Isle of Man for those detained without trial as ‘political prisoners’ under Regulation 18B during the last war.
After the Armada

troversy' of 1598 to 1602, only the merest outline is possible here.

In 1594, Allen died. It was an ominous death, for, if any man could be called irreplaceable, it was he. In 1587, he had been made a Cardinal and to him, had the Spanish Armada been successful, would have been entrusted the task of reconciling England to the Faith. He was, as the Pope said of him, 'the man who had kept the English Catholics united'. Catholics at home, exiles abroad, students at Rome or Douay or Paris could equally look to him as their head—an achievement of personality rather than of office. 'The secular priests took their instructions from the Jesuit Persons and the Jesuits from Allen.'

After the defeat of the Armada, Allen had retired quietly to Rome and Persons had gone to Spain, where he spent the next eight or nine years founding English colleges there, composing polemics, drawing up plans and keeping in touch with Philip II about a new 'enterprise of England'. The adherence of Persons in particular and the Jesuits in general to the pro-Spanish policy made it impossible for Persons to succeed Allen as the unchallenged head of the English Catholics, since it would have completely alienated the 'patriotic' party, which favoured the succession claims of the Stuarts (Arabella or James) and would have resisted any attempt to subjugate England by force. As the Jesuits and those who agreed with their reading of the situation would equally have repudiated a nominee of the 'patriotic' party, an impasse was reached and no successor to Allen was appointed.

Persons realized, however, that, if Catholicism were to survive in England there must be some acknowledged head and his perception was reinforced by events at Wisbech, where the laxity of some of the secular priests and laymen contrasting with the strictness of the missionary priests and Jesuits was leading to quarrels, divisions and treacheries which added the last straw to the burden and tensions of unending imprisonment. Eventually in 1598 the Pope appointed as Archpriest with authority in England, George Blackwell, a secular who, however, was sympathetic to the Jesuits; but when Blackwell endeavoured to enforce order and discipline, he was met with such opposition that some of
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the compromising seculars actually entered into communication with the Anglican authorities and obtained permission from the Government for their representatives (accompanied by a Dr. Cecil who had acted as spy for his influential namesake) to go to Rome to appeal against the Archpriest and his policy.

Having thus allowed the Catholics to weaken themselves by internal dissensions, the Government struck. By the last religious edict of Elizabeth—in 1602—the edifice of anti-Catholic legislation was completed. A distinction was made between the Jesuits and the secular priests. The former were, without exception, declared guilty of high treason; the latter were given time to submit and were assured of lenient treatment if they did so.

During the whole of this period, when the emphasis appears to be on politics, strife and weakness, the 'spiritual warfare' was, of course, proceeding. The Jesuits might be calumniated by the party of the compromising seculars;* Wisbech might be rent by 'stirs'; the English College at Rome might repeat the pattern of controversy; the exiles in Flanders might be divided bitterly into rival factions, but the essential work was not interrupted. As in the seventies and the eighties, so after the Armada, missionaries came and worked and died for the Faith, unaffected by tactical considerations as to how the Faith might best be safeguarded. Robert Southwell, the poet, who was martyred in 1595 was among them, as were the four Jesuits, who with Garnet, were to become involved in the Gunpowder Plot.

John Gerard returned to England in the October of 1588, landing on the Norfolk coast in company with Edward Oldcorne, a Yorkshireman, who was to become known as 'the Apostle of Worcestershire'. In 1597 there landed Oswald Tesmond, also a Yorkshireman, who had been at school with Oldcorne and who was to be better known under one of his *alias*, Greenway. And among the lay-brothers of the Society was Nicholas Owen, usually known as 'Little John', 'by which name', wrote Gerard, 'he was so famous and so much esteemed by all Catholics, especially those of the

* It is important to draw a distinction, especially in these years, between the secular party in general and the anti-Jesuit 'appellant party', a minority which arrogated to itself the title of 'secular'.
After the Armada

better sort, that few in England, either priests or others, were of more credit.  

Gerard’s description of ‘Little John’ and his work may stand as a convenient epitome of the state of Catholics in England in the years immediately preceding the Gunpowder Plot.

“This man did for seventeen or eighteen years continually attend upon Father Garnet and assist him in many occasions. But his chief employment was in making of secret places to hide priests and church stuff in from the fury of the searches; in which kind he was so skilful . . . that I verily think no man can be said to have done more good of all those that laboured in the English vineyard. For, first, he was the immediate occasion of saving the lives of many hundreds of persons, both ecclesiastical and secular, and of the estates also of these seculars, which had been lost and forfeited many times over if the priests had been taken in their houses; of which some have escaped not once but many times. . . . Then for spiritual good, it is to be noted he was partner with them all in the gain of souls wherein he did preserve them; and to which end he intended directly all his works, labouring in that painful and dangerous business to keep them in safety for the saving of souls, which it appeared well he respected more than his own body, for he was not ignorant that his office was much subject to the danger of spies, and that when he should happen to be taken he was sure to be extremely handled to wrest out of him the secrets of other men’s houses. . . . But above all, that which did most commend him both in the sight of God and man, was his innocent life and earnest practice of solid virtues. For the first it was such that I think no man can say that in all that seventeen or eighteen years they heard him swear by any oath or ever saw him out of charity.’

When the Government eventually caught him, they saw to it that he was indeed ‘extremely handled’. They tortured him to death.  

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The Technique of Plots

(i) THE TIMING OF THE PLOTS

Even the bare outline of anti-Catholic legislation suggests something of the oppressive atmosphere of ruthless malignity which, as soon as the researcher penetrates the surface, is exhaled from the Elizabethan past. One is aware of the underlying element which ‘the mass of our official historians ignore’ and which has been well defined: ‘There has been opposed to the Catholic Church from its foundation a spirit quite different from mere reaction against what is strong or organized. It is a special personal hatred of the Faith. This mood invariably emerges in every moment of schism or even of criticism. The moment (and wherever) the Church is fighting, that malign spirit appears. It had appeared on Calvary; it appears throughout the succeeding centuries; it appeared at once after the beginning of the revolt in the early sixteenth century.’ But once it has been recognized and the necessary allowance made, it is important to give due weight to more mundane and matter-of-fact considerations. Pre- eminent and obvious among them is the acquisitive instinct—the greed of the nouveaux riches to retain and increase what had been plundered. From the meanest pursuivant to Burghley himself (whose title indicated a despoiled nunnery and who at his death possessed over 300 estates), the stability of the new ruling class was bound up with the suppression of Catholicism. There is no need, at this time of day, to enlarge on this admitted historical commonplace.

There was, too, hardening many hearts—the hearts of simple people who had gained nothing and had nothing to gain—the memory of the fires of Smithfield and the persecu-
The Timing of the Plots

tions of the previous reign when Mary Tudor set herself to burn out "No Popery" and managed to burn it in. The concentration of her fanaticism into cruelty, especially its concentration in particular places and in a short time, did remain like something red-hot in the public memory."

Other factors were certain admitted corruptions in the Church and, in places, a genuine and even fanatical belief in the new doctrines of Calvinism. In reality, however, these are but secondary—secondary because the Catholic Church itself had by that time been reformed and the corruptions, such as they were, condemned by the Council of Trent; and because the genuine Calvinists, the Puritans, came in time to be persecuted by the Erastian State-Church hardly less than the Catholics. Finally there was, growing stronger with the years as Elizabeth’s prestige increased and as the peril of foreign invasion appeared, the patriotism which, as we have seen, divided the Catholics themselves and which gradually made ordinary men and women honestly, if mistakenly, equate Catholicism with disloyalty.

Yet, when all these considerations are given their due weight, something is still lacking. The picture is psychologically false. It is not congruous with human nature that hatred should so unwearingly persist and that laws of increasing severity should be so simply acceptable and accepted. For Catholics were not a strange race apart; they were neighbours, friends, relatives. Even if they did not constitute the actual majority of the English people (reliable statistics in this matter are almost impossible to arrive at), there can have been few families of which some member was not an adherent, secret or open, of the Faith.

The missing factor which explains the strange temper of the nation is the continual discovery of ‘plots’ to assassinate Elizabeth—whose life was the thread on which the new State and Church depended.

The Ridolfi plot of 1571 facilitated the penal laws of that and the following year; Parry’s plot of 1585 those of that year; the Babington plot of 1586 was used as an excuse for the execution of Mary Queen of Scots (for which purpose it was, indeed, ‘framed’) and the legislation of 1587; in the nineties, there were Polwhele’s plot and Collen’s plot and Squire’s plot, to say nothing of the more important plots of
The Technique of Plots

Lopez and of Yorke and Williams, 'Public indignation and hatred were in this way constantly kept at fever-heat against a party which was represented as constantly plotting against the life of the Queen, though one loose hint of a spy or an impatient word from a distracted prisoner was evidently a sufficient foundation for the manufacture of a succession of such plots.'

Widely differing in details, these plots have one constant feature. They were all known to, nursed by, and, at the right moment, 'discovered' by the Government who used in the elucidation (if not in the construction) of them its spies, forgers and torturers. One or two of them may have had a foundation in fact, in that some wild spirit among the exiles in Flanders could always be found to advocate the assassination of Elizabeth, the 'Grand Turk of the West' and, as long as Mary Queen of Scots was alive, some partisan would try to right her wrongs; but, the more that is known about them, the more suspect their authenticity becomes. As Martin Hume wrote as long ago as 1901: 'The accusations that have been repeated by nearly every English historian from Elizabeth's time to our own, of widespread and numerous plots to assassinate the Queen at this period, are to a large extent unsupported by serious evidence. . . . Pamphlets and broadsides, professing to give the whole story of the various murder plots, were numerous, and have formed the basis of our historical relations for three centuries; but they were written in nearly every instance with political or party object, and, from the nature of the case, were necessarily based upon an imperfect or partial statement of the facts. . . . Even the English refugees on the Continent must nearly all of them have been against the commission of such a crime, or the Queen would never have died a natural death. . . . The fact remains that, notwithstanding all the loose talk of the swashbucklers, no serious attempt was ever really made to commit the murder.'

To narrate the story of all the plots would require another book, but two may be briefly mentioned. The Babington conspiracy of 1586, which resulted in the execution of Mary Queen of Scots is a key plot in that, as the facts are not in dispute, it lays bare the Government technique. Squire's plot of 1597 was still fresh in the public memory at the time
The Babington Conspiracy

of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 and was specifically mentioned in Coke's speech at Garnet's trial as implicating the Jesuits.

(ii) THE BABINGTON CONSPIRACY

The Government's object in the Babington Conspiracy was to involve Mary Queen of Scots in an attempt by her partisans to take Elizabeth's life. If she could be proved privy to such an attempt, her own life would be forfeit under the new Act of 1585 which decreed that 'if anything shall be compassed or imagined tending to the hurt of Her Majesty's royal person by any person or with the privy of any person that may pretend title to the Crown of this realm... her Highness's subjects may lawfully... by all possible and forcible means pursue to death every such wicked person by whom or by whose means assent or privy... any such wicked act (shall be) attempted, or any other thing compassed or imagined.' The passing of this Act was, as everybody including Mary herself realized, the death-warrant of the Queen of Scots. All that remained to be done was to secure proof not necessarily of her assent to but merely of her knowledge of a mortal conspiracy.

On Christmas Eve, 1585, Mary was taken to a new place of imprisonment, Chartley, under the care of a new gaoler, Paulet, who was bitterly hostile to Catholicism and to her. 'Here the trap was set; a very ingenious trap.'

Among those in the Government spy service at this time were Gilbert Gifford, Thomas Phelipps and Robert Poley, all posing as Catholics. Gifford had the confidence of Thomas Morgan, who had once been Mary's secretary and was now in Paris working for her release. Phelipps was an expert decipherer and forger;* Poley was trusted both by the Catholic exiles and by the Catholic gentry. He became the special friend of Antony Babington, a wealthy, idealistic and somewhat unstable young man of twenty-four who had been page to Mary's earlier gaoler and who, seeing her often, had become devoted to her.

Gifford, trusted by Morgan and by Mary, acted as deliverer of letters, arranging that they should go in and out of Chartley by the hands of the brewer who supplied the

* See p. 97.
beer from Burton. Having established this 'secret post', Gifford then showed all the letters to the Government, to be copied by Phelippes, who could also forge any interpolation which was considered necessary.

As nothing incriminating appeared in this correspondence, Gifford then went to the Continent to get into touch with the wilder spirits who favoured Elizabeth's assassination. Eventually, by some of these, aided later by Poley, Babington was persuaded to become the 'leader' of a murder-plot and, when he wished to withdraw from it, was skilfully kept involved. Gifford induced Babington to write of his plans to Mary, and, once this letter was safely delivered, the work was, in reality, done. The Queen of Scots had been made privy to a murder plot. To make assurance doubly sure, the Government when they had Mary's reply to Babington in their hands, decided to forge a postscript which should explicitly implicate Mary. Babington had written: 'For the dispatch of the usurper, from the obedience of whom we are by the excommunication of her 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.' The famous 'forged postscript' added to Mary's letter by Phelippes on the Government's instructions ran: 'I would be glad to know the names and qualities of the six gentlemen which are to accomplish the designment, for it may be I shall be able, upon knowledge of the parties, to give you some further advice necessary to be followed therein, as also from time to time particularly how you proceed, and as soon as you may (for the same purpose) who be already, and how far, everyone is privy hereunto.'

A few days later, the Government 'discovered' the plot, arrested Babington and his associates and brought them to trial. 'The conspiracy proved to be so harmless—never at any time more than the silly talk of boys—that it was only by the wilful distortion and suppression of evidence that it was possible to make any case in court.'

They were, of course, tortured, condemned and executed, as the prelude to the killing of Mary Queen of Scots five months later.

The Babington formula, simple and effective, could be varied to suit the circumstances. It might even be considered
Squire’s Plot

a conventional device of statesmanship in an unstable or revolutionary situation, and though it neither originated in nor ended with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England, the climate then was propitious for its use. To stir up popular indignation against a party obnoxious to the Government by the unmasking of an ‘enterprise’ undertaken by a few fanatics, unsuspectingly goaded on by Government spies (who suggested the matter in the first place) was a certain way to gain approbation for measures which would otherwise have been unpopular. And where, as with the execution of Mary in 1587 and the extreme measures for the extermination of Catholicism in 1606, there were diplomatic repercussions abroad to be considered, an elaborate plot—in the first the Babington, in the second the Gunpowder—complete with confessions, documentary evidence and a public trial, was essential. Squire’s plot of 1597, however, was on a smaller scale and with a more limited objective and, because of certain inherent improbabilities, it lacks something of the brilliance of the larger achievements.

(iii) Squire’s Plot

Edward Squire was a jack-of-all-trades who lived by his wits. Originally an unsuccessful accountant, he decided to seek his fortune by joining Drake’s expedition to the West Indies in 1595, but the ship in which he was serving was captured by the Spaniards and he was taken prisoner to Seville, where he was liberated on parole. Here he went about challenging Spaniards to debate the relative claims of the Anglican and the Catholic Churches and, not unnaturally, drew upon himself the attentions of the Holy Office, by which he was sentenced to two years’ imprisonment in a Carmelite monastery. Once in the monastery, he soon professed himself converted to Catholicism and asked if he could consult the English Jesuit, Father Richard Walpole, Rector of the English College in Seville.

Walpole was immediately suspicious, since the gambit of Englishmen becoming reconciled to the Church and returning to Cecil with the information they had thus managed to acquire was, by now, an old one; and his suspicions were increased when Squire asked him for introductions to the
The Technique of Plots

Jesuits and seminary priests in England. He naturally refused to give any such introductions and shortly afterwards Squire managed to escape and return to England. Here he was given a post in the Royal stables and it was not long before he joined Essex's expedition—the Islands Voyage—which was as unsuccessful in the way of profit or plunder as Drake's had been. He returned, at the end of 1597, with no visible means of subsistence. In the spring of 1598 we know, from a letter of Chamberlain to Carleton, that 'Here be certain apprehended for a conspiracy against the Queen's person and my Lord of Essex... much buzzing hath been about it, but either the matter is not ripe or there is something else in it, for it is kept very secret.' This is usually considered (though certain proof is lacking) as being the first indication of Squire's 'plot' which did not ripen till the autumn. When Squire was eventually arrested in the October of 1598, he confessed, after five hours on the rack, that Father Walpole had employed him to poison Elizabeth and Essex.

'Being demanded what directions he had from Walpole concerning (Squire) saith that he had certain directions from Walpole in his own handwriting, which as he saith he threw into the water the same day he came from Seville.... And saith that certain poisonous drugs whereof opium was one were to be compounded and beaten together and steeped in white mercury water and put in an earthen pot and set it a month in the sun, by Walpole's said directions.

'This examinant demanded of Walpole how he should apply the poison and he said it should be put in a double bladder, and the bladders to be pricked full of holes in the upper part and carried in the palm of his hand upon a thick glove for safeguard of his hand; and then to turn the holes downwards and press it hard upon the pommel of her Highness's saddle; and said that it would lie and tarry long there, and that it would not be checked by air....

'He confesseth that at the persuasion of Walpole, the Jesuit, he undertook to poison the Earl of Essex, when he should be with him at sea, to the end to defeat the voyage, and that he carried the confection of the poison with him to sea in the Earl's ship... and did apply it to the pommel of the Earl's chair, where he did use to sit and lay his hand
Squire’s Plot

... and saith that the confection was so clammy as it would stick to the pommel of the chair and that he rubbed it on with parchment. And soon after the Earl sat in the chair all supper-time.

‘And now at last confesseth that the Monday seven-night, after his coming home from Spain and had obtained leave to go with the Earl to sea, understanding that Her Majesty’s horses were in preparing for Her Majesty to ride abroad, as her horse stood ready saddled in the stable-yard, this examinant came to the horse, and in the hearing of divers thereabout said “God save the Queen” and therewith laid his hand upon the pommel of the saddle, and out of a bladder which he had made full of holes with a big pin, he poisoned the pommel of the saddle, being covered with velvet, by brushing the poison on it through the holes of the bladder with his hand, and soon after Her Majesty rode abroad that afternoon.10

Later he entirely recanted, saying that he had confessed anything he thought would satisfy the Commissioners and relieve him from torture; and at the gallows itself—knowing that such a course would ensure a vile and lingering death—he protested that this statement under torture was a lie. The story indeed is so preposterous that one cannot but agree with Lingard’s judgment that ‘if Titus Oates had never existed, the history of this ridiculous plot would suffice to show how easily the most absurd fictions obtain credit when the public mind is under the influence of religious prejudice’.11 And, should Lingard, as a Catholic, be deemed to be prejudiced, there is the Protestant Jessop who, after a careful examination of the evidence, asserts: ‘To me it seems only a monstrous fiction, which the more closely it is looked into the more entirely incredible does it appear.’12 To-day, there is no historian who would take it seriously; but the importance of it is that, at the time, the Government worked it up to a point where public feeling was at fever-heat. Bacon prepared the Government pamphlet on it; Coke prosecuted the prisoner and, on this occasion, had recourse to the forensic trick of allowing his emotion to overcome him in the middle of the speech and having to pause for loyal tears;* and special

* The following year, Shakespeare wrote *Julius Caesar* in which Antony does the same in the Forum Speech.

45
prayers were appointed to be used officially in all Anglican churches, one of which ended with a reference to the Jesuits as ‘the hellish Chaplains of Antichrist’ and exhorted the Almighty to ‘let our gracious Queen still reign and rule in despite of Rome and Rheims and Spain and Hell’,14 and another began: ‘Almighty and Everlasting God Creator and Governor of all the world, by whom Kings do rule and under whose providence they are wonderfully and mightily oftentimes protected from many fearful dangers by which the malice of Satan and his wicked imps do seek to entrap them: We give unto thy heavenly Majesty most humble and hearty thanks for that it hath pleased thee of thine infinite mercy and goodness in Christ Jesu so wonderfully to uphold, deliver and preserve thine handmaid, our most dread and Sovereign Queen Elizabeth so many and sundry times from the cruel and bloody treacheries of desperate men who address themselves to all wickedness; and at this time especially, wherein her innocent life was not only attempted but, had it not been thy merciful power to prevent it, much endangered by wretched traitors appointed to that purpose, who had performed, as much as in them lay, their wicked designments of impoisoning her sacred Majesty.’14

And that there might be no doubt in the minds of the worshippers as to who Satan’s wicked imps were and who had attempted the poisoning, the authorities prefaced the Prayers with an ‘Admonition to the Reader’ in which it was stated: ‘That which passeth the rest and may be an effectual motive to work in all Christian hearts a sounder devotion of thankfulness to our God and a greater detestation of that blood-sucking Romish Antichrist with his whole swarm of shavelings, was that dreadful attempt of Squire . . . which we, her subjects, do tremble at to remember, utterly to quench the light of Israel and by poison to make away our Sovereign Prince . . . to which horrible practice the said Squire in his voluntary confession, without any torture at all, professed that he was first incited and afterward at several times persuaded, and, appearing somewhat backward, at last encouraged by one Walpole, a cursed Jebusite (Jesuite, I should say).’15

With such popularizing of the plot in the one place which everyone had by law to attend, the parish church, it is not
Squire’s Plot

surprising that eight years later, Coke, in his indictment of Garnet for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot, could be sure of making his point when, at the end of a list of plots, he said: ‘Anno ’97 came Squire from Spain to poison Her Majesty, incited, directed and warranted by Walpole, a Jesuit, then residing there; at whose hands, likewise, after absolution he received the sacrament, as well to put the practice in execution as to keep it secret.’

Apart from this explicit reference, Squire’s plot is bound to the Gunpowder Plot in other ways. They are separated in time by eight years only; the earlier plot shows in action the Government triumvirate—Robert Cecil, William Waad and Edward Coke—which was to manage the later; and the point of Squire’s plot was to implicate the Jesuits and Spain* which was also the Government’s main concern in the Gunpowder Plot. The propaganda value of this move was obvious, in that the first would further widen the cleavage between the Jesuits and the seculars and the second would rally the patriots of whatever religious allegiance.

Taking the Babington and the Squire conspiracies together, we find already present almost every feature of the Gunpowder Plot. The general framework was that of the former, some details that of the latter. In place of Babington and his friends, taking the suggestions of Gifford, whom they trusted but who was in the Government pay, and stiffened by fanatics among the exiles, we have Catesby and his friends, in close contact with Monteagle who, from circumstantial evidence, seems to have played a similar part to Gifford and who was indubitably instrumental in ‘discovering’ the plot, and employing the fanatic, Guy Fawkes, one of the exiles abroad. Thomas Philipes who, beyond question, was employed on the forgeries in the Babington case, was at the Government’s disposal, protesting his desire to

* In the confessions of Stanley, which led to the arrest of Squire (a circumstance which I have omitted in my very condensed epitome of the plot), Philip II himself was implicated in the murder attempt, in ‘an utterly ridiculous story, which bears indications of its falsity on every line of it’. The judgment is Martin Hume’s (Treason and Plot, p. 319) and he has no difficulty in sustaining it. For one thing, Philip was at the time on his death-bed.

In the Gunpowder Plot, as we shall see, the English Government made strenuous efforts to involve Hugh Owen, an exile in Spanish pay, as the Spanish liaison.
The Technique of Plots

serve them, during the Gunpowder Plot. Waad, who had been one of the trusted Government officials in the Babington trap and who was one of the three who extorted Squire's confession under torture, was, as Governor of the Tower, responsible for the torture and confession of Fawkes. The tying-in of the Gunpowder Plot with the Jesuits is, as we have seen, an obvious parallel with the Squire plot.

But though we know the Babington and the Squire conspiracies to have been what would now be called 'frame-ups' and can recognize the pattern of them, as well as the people in them, repeated in the Gunpowder Plot, we are not, of course, thereby entitled to assert that the latter was a 'frame-up' also. It is, however, necessary to think of the Gunpowder Plot not as an isolated event at the beginning of a new reign and a new dynasty, but as the last example of a twenty-year-long series. And it is hardly too much to say that any reader who cares to study in detail all the plots (rather than being content with this necessarily short abstract of two of them) will approach the Gunpowder Plot requiring above all proof not of the conspirators' guilt but of the Government's innocence.
Spain and the English Succession

(i) The International Situation

The dominant factor in foreign affairs during Elizabeth’s reign is now so obviously seen as the rivalry of England and Spain that it is difficult, at this distance, to realize that then it was a new phenomenon. In the July of 1558 Philip of Spain began his fifth regnal year as King-Consort of England; in the July of 1588, the Great Armada was in the English Channel. During the thirty years between, Philip had been pushed slowly but inevitably and much against his will into war. ‘The almost simultaneous accession to power of Elizabeth of England, Philip of Spain and Catherine de Medici, Queen Mother of France, radically changed the problems of European politics’ and, if the very complicated outcome may be conveniently summarized as a triangular struggle for power between the three, it is the duel between Elizabeth and Philip which occupies the centre of the stage.

That religion was one of the elements in it is not to be denied, but it played a far less important part than both parties, for propaganda purposes, pretended. Philip, for example, was angry with the Pope for excommunicating Elizabeth, but he may later have availed himself of that excommunication. Also, he genuinely wanted peace with England even more than Elizabeth wanted peace with Spain. Both needed time to consolidate their power. What made war inevitable were Elizabeth’s attempts to add to hers at the expense of his. And here the religious divisions formed convenient excuses for political intervention. Elizabeth could support Philip’s rebellious subjects in the Netherlands on the ground that they were Protestants; Philip could foster
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the Irish rebelling against Elizabeth on the ground that they were Catholics. But, as Sir John Claughton has rightly pointed out, it is quite incorrect 'to represent the war as religious; to describe it as a species of crusade instigated by the Pope, in order to bring heretical England once more into the fold of the true Church. In reality nothing can be more inaccurate. It is, indeed, quite certain that religious bitterness was imported into the quarrel; but the war had its origin in two perfectly clear and wholly mundane causes.'

These causes were the raids made by English seamen, especially Drake, on the Spanish-American trade and Elizabeth's refusal to make restitution for or to disavow their acts and 'the countenance and assistance which had been given by the English to the king's rebellious subjects in the Netherlands.'

During the late sixties, not only had there been persistent raids on the 'Spanish main' but Elizabeth had actually impounded money sent to pay Spanish troops in the Netherlands, with the result that the Governor there had to impose a tax on the Dutch which rekindled the rebellion. During the seventies, Drake brought home fortunes plundered from Spain. In 1585, Philip took the first step to bring matters to a head by placing an embargo on all English ships in Spanish ports. Elizabeth's reply was to authorize an attack on Spain in the West Indies, in which Drake and Frobisher 'capturing, plundering and destroying as they went...sacked and burnt Santiago and Porto Praya in the Cape Verde Islands, gutted San Domingo, plundered Cartagena on the Spanish main and held it to ransom, burning all the ships and galleys which they could not take away; cruised for a month off Cape St. Antonio, threatened Havana, the defences of which, however, were judged too strong; and, passing up the coast of Florida, took, plundered and burnt St. Augustine, a town of about two hundred and fifty houses, not one of which was left standing. They then relieved and took away from Wokokan the colonists who had been sent out the year before by Sir Walter Ralegh, and finally returned to Portsmouth at the end of July 1586. The booty brought home was valued at from sixty to sixty-five thousand pounds—small in comparison with what Drake had won with much smaller means.'
The Jesuit Mission

The Babington Conspiracy
Squire's Plot

The Gunpowder Plot
The International Situation

This raid is important because it was the direct occasion of Philip's decision to send an Armada against England. There had been rumours of such an expedition ever since Elizabeth had taken the Netherlands money in 1569 but 'it does not appear that Philip himself definitely entertained the project till driven to it by Drake's savage raid through the West Indies';* and when at last he agreed to the course which many of his advisers had for years urged on him, it was because he recognized at last that he could never effectively put his European dominions in order until he had checked the English attacks on his colonies abroad. That the Armada was delayed until after the execution of Mary Queen of Scots (that is, till after the spring of 1587)* was a matter of policy as well as of religion. Though it is true that, with Mary's death, the hope of a Catholic sovereign peacefully succeeding to the English throne was extinguished, the politically relevant consideration was that Philip had no desire to see in England a ruler who would strengthen the power of France, as Mary, with her intimate French connections (she was the daughter-in-law of Catherine de Medici) would have done. To have deposed Elizabeth in favour of the Queen of Scots would have been to substitute one anti-Spanish menace for another. But once Mary was dead Philip (whom Mary had named her heir), could, if he conquered England, appoint his own Spanish nominee to the throne, and thus restore the Anglo-Spanish alliance of thirty years earlier.

Philip II lived for ten years after the defeat of the Great Armada and inevitably the war continued; but it was not until the end of 1592 that the Spanish navy again constituted an effective fleet. This, however, was never intended for a direct attack on England, as the English Government was quite well aware. But, for reasons of internal policy, the fear of it was carefully fostered, 'so far as the Cecils were concerned at least the scare in the English Parliament and public was deliberately exaggerated' and the Queen's Speech to the Parliament of 1593 (which passed the bitterest of the anti-Catholic legislation) was a rousing appeal for defence against imminent invasion.

* Its further postponement till 1588 was due to Drake's crippling raid on Cadiz and his cruise off the Portuguese coast and to the Azores.
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For the next four years the Spanish plans were for an indirect blow at England from Scotland or from Ireland. In Scotland many Catholics were prepared to throw over King James and accept a Spanish nominee, while James himself, either as a diplomatic or as a protective measure, gave evidence that he was considering conversion to Catholicism. In Ireland, the aftermath of the Desmond rising of 1583 and the attempts at colonization by the English had produced a state of hatred, misery and despair, which found its outlet in the rising of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone in 1594.

Philip eventually decided to send help to the Irish and the new fleet—the Second Armada—was prepared. The English tactics remained the same. Like Drake in 1587, Essex in 1596 led the English fleet in a sloop on Cadiz, in which Spain lost seventy ships and incalculable treasure, and Cadiz itself suffered sixteen days' systematic plunder, rape and destruction. Nevertheless, in the October of the same year, the Second Armada set out for Ireland* only to be scattered by storm in the Bay of Biscay.

Philip, though now mortally ill, remained indomitable. A third Armada was prepared for the following year, 1597. The pattern once more repeated itself, with one difference. This time the English fleet under Essex did no damage to the Spaniards but was itself put out of action by a storm in the Channel. The result was that England was indeed in a panic when the Third Armada sighted the Lizard on its way to Falmouth, where a landing was intended. But, once more, the wind blew. According to an eye-witness, 'the Armada began to part company and to scatter, each one thinking of his own safety; the sea unshipping their rudders, breaking their yards, carrying away their masts, and most gave themselves up for lost. For two days they knocked about without being able to make any harbour.' Eventually it returned to Spain, having never seen an enemy or fired a shot, and with this humiliating failure England was safe from fear of invasion.

Philip II was succeeded by his son, Philip III, a weak,

* There was no intention, any more than in 1593, of a landing in England though, as Hume points out, 'English historians have nearly always assumed that this fleet was intended for the invasion of the Isle of Wight.' (Hume: Treason and Plot, p. 226 n.)
idle youth under the dominance of a favourite, who, though he wished to continue the war and ordered preparations on a spectacular scale, 'had neither the ships nor the money nor the grim determination which were needed. The English held command of the sea, not indeed with theoretical completeness, but with practical sufficiency. No Spanish fleets even attempted to contest it. It is true that in 1601 a force of three thousand men was landed in Kinsale; but the ships which brought them withdrew panic-struck and left them in a state of isolation.'

This aid to Ireland, which three years earlier might have been effective, was too little and too late. In 1598 Tyrone had defeated the English in battle and Essex, who had been sent out in 1599 to oppose him, had returned to England in despair. But Mountjoy, who succeeded Essex, achieved a slow but systematic subjugation with starvation as his principal weapon* and, by 1601 when the Spaniards landed in Kinsale, he was in a position to defeat the Irish army which tried to join them and to force their withdrawal. With this failure, all hope of Ireland as a base for a foreign attack on England was at an end, and in 1603 Tyrone submitted.

Yet though, after 1598—seven years before the Gunpowder Plot—there was no danger from Spain, it was the English Government's continuing policy to pretend to the people that there was. It was also the continuing hope of the militant Catholic exiles abroad that there would be. And both these states of mind must be allowed for in assessing the Plot. The ordinary English citizen was living in a state of recurrent tensions, fostered by the Government, which was careful to suggest, by its discovery of 'plots' and by its penal legislation, the intimate connection between Catholicism at home and invasion from abroad. At the same time, a small but fanatical band of Catholic exiles did, in fact, see a military attempt by Spain as the only sure way of helping their co-religionists at home, and though they were, of course, powerless to influence Spanish policy, they were importunate in persuasion.

* Mountjoy's English secretary noted: 'No spectacle was more frequent in the ditches of the towns, and especially in wasted countries, than to see multitudes of these poor people dead, with their mouths all coloured green by eating nettles, docks and all things they could rend up above ground.'
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(ii) THOMAS WINTER IN SPAIN

It is against this background that the journey of Thomas Winter to Spain in the December of 1601 must be set. What was alleged against Winter at his trial in 1606 was that at the instigation of certain English Catholics, including his cousin and inseparable friend, Catesby, he had been sent to Spain 'as for the general good of the Romish Catholic cause' to 'make a proposition and request to the King of Spain, in the behalf and names of the English Catholics, that the King would send an army hither into England, and that the forces of the Catholics in England should be prepared to join with him and do him service... and, because that, in all attempts upon England, the greatest difficulty was ever found to be the transportation of horses, the Catholics in England would assure the King of Spain to have always in readiness for his use and service 1,500 or 2,000 horses, against any occasion or enterprise. Concerning the place for landing of the King of Spain's army, which from the English Romish Catholics he desired might be sent to invade the land, it were resolved that, if the army were great, then Essex and Kent were judged fittest. If the army were small, and trusted upon succour in England, then Milford Haven was thought more convenient... The King of Spain willingly embraced the motion, saying that he took the message from the Catholics very kindly and that in all things he would respect them with as great care as his proper Castilians. But for his further answer and full dispatch, Thomas Winter was appointed to attend the progress. In the end whereof, being in summer time, Count Miranda gave him this answer in behalf of his master, that the king would bestow a hundred thousand crowns to that use, half to be paid that year, and the rest the next spring following, and withal required that we should be as good as our promise; for the next spring he meant to be with us and set foot in England. And lastly he desired on the king's behalf of Winter that he might have certain advertisement and intelligence if so it should in the meantime happen that the queen did die. Thomas Winter, laden with these hopes, returns into England about a month before Christmas... But soon after set that glorious light, her majesty died.'
Thomas Winter in Spain

Though it is impossible to disentangle truth from falsehood in this account which is based on his confession, it is obvious that it did represent what the English public would instantly believe and what a small section of militant and fanatical Catholics might wish to believe. Equally certainly, it gives a totally false picture of the real situation as both the Spanish Government and the English (through its spies) knew it to be.

The pivot on which events turned during these first years of the seventeenth century was the inevitable death of Queen Elizabeth. In the nature of things, this event could not be long delayed and all politics, at home and abroad, were concentrated on who was to succeed her and what steps were to be taken when the moment should come. The effective candidates were reduced to three—James of Scotland (for whom Cecil was secretly working), Arabella Stuart (who was favoured by the English Catholics) and the Infanta Isabella, Philip II’s daughter who was now Regent of the Netherlands (the Spanish candidate, supported by the pro-Spanish Jesuits). Each, broadly speaking, represented a different religious policy—James, with Cecil’s aid, the continuation of Anglicanism and the penal laws against the Catholics;* Arabella Stuart, toleration after the pattern of Henri IV in France; the Infanta, the re-establishment of Catholicism.

It was thus of extreme importance to English Catholics to know exactly where Spain stood in the matter and what, at the critical moment, she proposed to do. Though the Spanish aid to Ireland had proved abortive, Tyrone was still fighting and it was not certainly known by the English Catholics whether more aid was to be sent and, in the event of Elizabeth’s death, a Catholic successor to be supported by military aid from abroad and a rising of Catholic gentry at home.

It was information on this question which presumably Winter was sent to give and receive—to tell the strength of the Catholics in England and to ask the measure of support to be expected from Spain. It is probable that he was in some way associated with the mission of Thomas James, a London

* This, of course, must not be confused with James’s protestations while he was trying to secure the succession, when he promised anything to anybody who would support him, from conversion to Catholicism to extreme Puritanism,
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merchant settled in Spain, who, through his brother Francis, a merchant in Bread Street, London, was the usual means of communication between the English Catholics and Father Persons in Madrid. Thomas James arrived at the Spanish court in the early spring of 1602 and like Winter, remained there for some months. Whether Winter was officially in James’s company or not, he must have known him and, as he was with the Spanish court for practically the whole of the year 1602, he must at least have been involved in some measure in the interminable discussions proceeding on the burning topic, though there is no means of determining how much he knew. The Spanish promise of money and an invasion of England may have been what he was told by the Spaniards; it may have been what he told his fellow-Catholics in England; or it may have been what the English Government, once he was in their power, put into his mouth.* That problem, because insoluble, is irrelevant. What is to the point is that it bears no relation to the facts of the situation. During 1602, in spite of all petitions and persuasions from the English Catholics in Spain, Father Persons and others, it became clear that Spain neither could nor should do anything. Infanta Isabella had no desire for the English throne and her nephew, the King of Spain, had neither money nor resources to support her claim to it if she had. Nor was it politically wise to try to force a Spanish claimant on the English throne by force of arms, even supposing the arms were available. The wisest course was to support diplomatically an English Catholic claimant and thus, at least, keep out James of Scotland. When, in the November of 1602—that is to say, about the time Winter was preparing to return to England—a memorandum of the English point of view was sent to Philip in which ‘all the old counsels of activity and expenditure were repeated’, the Council of State made this report on it: ‘It is difficult to know what to say about

* Waad, writing to Cecil on 26th November 1605, says: “Thomas Winter hath set down in writing of his own hand, as he was directed, the whole course of his employment into Spain, which I send to you hereinclosed” (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 511) and there exists (ibid., pp. 512, 513) an account which may be the enclosure. It is on this account that Coke’s indictment is based, but, whatever truth there may be in it, there can be no doubt, from internal evidence, that it was dictated by Government ‘suggestion’, if not actually torture.
Thomas Percy in Scotland

them, as they recommend the taking up of the English enterprise; and things are here in such a condition as to make this impossible. This is hardly a hundred thousand crowns and a landing in Kent, Essex or Milford Haven.

(iii) Thomas Percy in Scotland

While Thomas Winter was trying to discover the probable Spanish reactions to Elizabeth’s death, Thomas Percy, who was to become the ‘organizer’ of the Gunpowder Plot, was on a mission to the Scottish Court, attempting to find out the attitude of King James to Catholics should he succeed to the English throne. Thomas Percy was second cousin to Henry Percy, ninth earl of Northumberland (known as ‘the Wizard Earl’ on account of his scientific experiments) and as Constable of Alnwick Castle acted as agent for his northern estates. Northumberland, whose uncle had been executed for his part in the Northern Rising of 1569 and whose father, imprisoned in the Tower, had been found shot through the heart (the Government pronounced it suicide), was, though he himself conformed to Anglicanism, naturally allied to the Catholics. As head of the great hereditary Border house, he was contemptuous of the ‘new men’ and was reported to have said that if Percy blood and Cecil blood were poured into the same bowl, the former would refuse to mix with the latter. But he and Cecil worked to a certain extent together for the bringing-in of James, and James, though he was aware that the real power lay with Cecil, was equally (and rightly) desirous of Northumberland’s backing.

Thomas Percy, whom Northumberland trusted implicitly, and who had recently returned to the Catholic faith, was the obvious choice to carry a letter to James and to give and receive whatever verbal messages it might be impolitic to commit to paper. In his letter Northumberland went only as far as to suggest: ‘For the papists, it is true their faction is strong, their increase is daily and their diffidence in your Majesty is not desperate. Some of the purer sort of them, who have swallowed the doctrine of putting down princes for religion, may perhaps be hotter than there were reason, wishing the Infanta a better share in the kingdom than your-
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self. But since your Majesty understandeth better how to lead this cause than I can give instruction, I will dare to say no more but it were a pity to lose so good a kingdom for the not tolerating a Mass in a corner (if upon that it resteth) so long as they shall not be too busy disturbers of the government of the state, nor seek to make us contributors to a Peter priest. And James, in a written reply, committed himself no further than: ‘As for the Catholics, I will neither persecute any that will be quiet and give but an outward obedience to the law; neither will I spare to advance any of them that will by good service worthily deserve it.’

It seems probable, however, that this was to be understood as a promise of toleration. Thomas Percy certainly so understood it; and Northumberland confidentially informed the French Ambassador that James would tolerate Catholics. James’s denial of having written such a letter or made such a promise, as well as his refusal to implement it, is, of course, as typical of the King as his famous remark when he was safely in possession of England: ‘Na, na, we’ll no’ need the Papists noo,’ and provides evidence for nothing except his own character.

(iv) The Essex Rebellion

While foreign policy in Spain and Scotland in 1602 had occupied the activities of Winter and Percy, three of Winter’s cousins, Robert Catesby, Francis Tresham and William Parker, Lord Montague had incurred the suspicion and watchfulness of the Government for their part in the Essex rebellion of 1601. The story of the last attempt of Elizabeth’s last favourite to regain her favour and of his death on the scaffold has been told too often, from our first child’s history-book to Lytton Strachey’s Elizabeth and Essex, for there to be need, even if there were occasion, for a retelling here. Its present relevance is in its politics. Essex represented the extreme Protestant party and an anti-Cecil movement. After his failure in Ireland and his subsequent conduct, he had lost his influence with Elizabeth and his rebellion was an attempt to regain control, oust Cecil and ensure the succession of James of Scotland. He represented that Cecil was in favour of the Infanta, though it can hardly be supposed that he
The Essex Rebellion

believed this impossibility, and thus won to his side a body of patriotic Catholics who trusted Essex’s assurance that James would introduce toleration and who shared with Essex (though for different reasons) his opposition both to Cecil and to the Infanta’s succession.

An outstanding representative of the English Catholic gentry was Sir Thomas Tresham. He and his brother-in-law, Sir William Catesby (who had died in 1598), were typical of those who held steadily to the two apparently incompatible loyalties of religion and Queen. They suffered continual fines and imprisonment for the one without abating their duty and affection for the other. But their sons were less patient and when Essex, at the beginning of 1601, tried to raise the capital against the Queen, Sir Thomas Tresham found to his dismay that his son, Francis, his son-in-law, Montague, and his nephew, Robert Catesby, had played dangerous parts in it. Francis Tresham, indeed, nearly paid with his life. When the Lord Keeper and the Lord Chief Justice came from the Queen to Essex House to reason with Essex, they were locked in a room and their return to the Queen prevented while Essex went out to try to raise the City, and one of their guards was Francis Tresham, against whom they later laid ‘vehement information’, demanding that he should be brought to trial with Essex. Catesby, with his commanding presence and brilliant swordsmanship, had ridden with Essex into the City and had been wounded in a skirmish. Montague, a close friend of Essex’s who had been with him on the Irish campaign, had been one of those who, just before the attempted coup, had arranged with Lord Chamberlain’s players at the Globe to revive William Shakespeare’s Richard II so they might hearten themselves by witnessing the successful mimic depositing of a king.

After the ignominious failure of the rebellion, the three were naturally among those arrested and held for trial. They were saved only by the efforts of friends and relations at Court and the payment of crippling fines—Montague, £8,000; Catesby, 4,000 marks; and Tresham 3,000 marks (£2,000). To pay this, Catesby had to sell his estate at Chastleton, which he had recently inherited from his grandmother, and make his home with his mother at Ashby St. Legers. But his reputation for leadership had increased—
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'when Mr. Catesby was cured of his hurts and had paid his ransom and procured his liberty, he was so much esteemed and respected in all companies of such as are counted there swordsmen or men of action, that few were in the opinions of most men preferred before him and he increased much his acquaintance and friends'\textsuperscript{18}—and, at the beginning of the new reign, he was obviously a man whom the Government would find it prudent to watch.

Yet when Elizabeth at last died and James of Scotland succeeded her, there was a momentary cessation of all strife. The new King was Cecil's nominee and was assured of that indispensable support. Sir Thomas Tresham proclaimed James with enthusiasm in the Midlands—'Let us pray to God to prosper him.' Monteagle helped to secure the Tower of London for James and when it was announced on Tower Hill, just before midday on 24th March 1603 that 'the high and mighty Prince, James the Sixth, King of Scotland, is now become our only lawful, lineal and rightful liege Lord, James the First, King of England',\textsuperscript{19} there were no dissentient voices. A diarist noted that there was 'no tumult, no contradiction, no disorder in the City; every man went about his own business as readily, as peaceably, as securely as though there had been no change, nor any news ever heard of competitors,' so that 'the people, both in cities and counties, finding the just fear of forty years for want of a known successor dissolved in a minute, do so rejoice as few wished the gracious Queen alive again'.\textsuperscript{20} And, four months later, about the time of James's coronation, Father Persons wrote from Rome to Father Garnet that 'such applause was here generally at this new King's entrance as if he had been the greatest Catholic in the world. . . . His Holiness here is so far embarked to try what may be done by fair means with him as, until the contrary do appear by manifest proofs and that it be confirmed also by sufficient time, he will hearken to nothing against him.'\textsuperscript{21}

The hopes, however, were not to be realized. As soon as Parliament met, James ratified an act to ensure that all legislation 'made in the late Queen's time against any manner of recusants, shall be put in due and exact execution'.\textsuperscript{22}

62
BOOK TWO

THE PEOPLE
1

Among the Conspirators

(i) LORD MONTEAGLE

William Parker, fourth Baron Monteagle, experienced a change in fortune such as is vouchsafed to few. At the end of 1601, having paid his fine for his part in the Essex affair and been released from strict custody, he was under house arrest at Bethnal Green, with liberty to walk two or three miles, ‘but so as in no wise to repair unto London’.¹ Four years later he found himself hailed as a national hero, publicized in pamphlets, apostrophized by Ben Jonson:

My country's parents I have many known,
But savor of my country, thee alone,

and rewarded by a grateful Government with a pension of £500 a year for life and £200 in perpetuity in fee-farm rents.*

The reason for this change was that he had been—so the Government said—the only means by which the Gunpowder Plot was discovered. On Saturday, 26th October 1605, ten days before the intended meeting of Parliament, he had suddenly ordered supper to be prepared at his house in Hoxton. (This mansion, which he had not visited for more than a year, was part of the Tresham property which he had acquired on his marriage with Sir Thomas Tresham’s daughter, Elizabeth.) Then, according to the official account in A Discourse of the late intended Treason, ‘being in his own lodging ready to go to supper at seven of the clock at night, one of his footmen whom he had sent of an errand over the street was met by an unknown man of a reasonable tall personage who delivered him a letter, charging him to put it in my

* In the currency of the time
Among the Conspirators

Lord his master’s hands, which my Lord no sooner received but that having broken it up and perceiving the same to be of an unknown and somewhat unlegible hand, and without either date or subscription, did call one of his men unto him for helping him to read it. But no sooner did he conceive the strange contents thereof, although he was somewhat perplexed what construction to make of it... yet did he as a most dutiful and loyal subject conclude not to conceal it, whatever might come of it. Whereupon notwithstanding the lateness and darkness of the night in that season of the year, he presently repaired to His Majesty’s palace at Whitehall and there delivered the same to the Earl of Salisbury, His Majesty’s principal Secretary.2

This famous anonymous letter ran:

‘My lord out of the loue i beare to some of youere frends i haue a caer of youer preseruacion therfor i would aduyse yowe as yowe tender youer lyf to deuys some excuse to shift of youer attendance at this parleament for god and man hath concurred to punishe the wickednes of this tyme and thinke not slightelye of this aduertisment but retyere youre self into youre contri wheare yowe maye expect the event in safti for thowghe theare be no apparence of anni stir yet i saye they shall receyue a terrible blowe this parleament and yet they shall not sei who hurts them this counsel is not to be con-
temned because it maye do yowe good and can do yowe no harme for the dangere is passed as soon as yowe have burnt the letter and i hope god will give yowe the grace to mak good use of it to whose holy proteccion i comend yowe.’

And the ‘servant’ who read it was Thomas Ward who, there is some reason to suppose, had been in the Government’s spy service.*

It may be taken for granted that ‘anybody gifted with ordinary common sense can see that this scene must have been all planned beforehand’ and Monteagle has never been altogether free from suspicion. Bruce, writing in 1840, found it difficult to escape ‘the conclusion that Lord Mont-
eagle had a guilty knowledge of the plot and earned his

Lord Monteagle

reward by betraying his companions'. Jardine, countering the argument that his reward was somewhat disproportionate to his performance—£700 a year for delivering an anonymous letter which he did not understand—yet admits: 'There was a great deal more to be rewarded in Monteagle’s conduct than the mere delivery of the anonymous letter to the Council. . . . He became party to a state intrigue in which the King himself was a main performer and respecting which it was of essential importance that Monteagle should be bound to inviolable secrecy.' What, however, seems to emerge from the part played by Monteagle is not that he was a conspirator turned informer but the secret Government agent by whom the Plot was nursed.

Monteagle was born in 1575, the son of Edward, tenth Baron Morley, and Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of William Stanley, third Baron Monteagle. He married before he was eighteen Elizabeth Tresham, daughter of Sir Thomas, and his eldest sister Mary married Thomas Abington of Hindlip, at whose house Father Garnet spent much time and was finally captured. Monteagle, whose title was held by courtesy in the right of his mother, was thus related by blood and by marriage to many of the great Catholic families. By birth and by wealth he held a special position among them, so that it is not surprising to find Thomas Winter (who was also related to him) taking service in his household.

Until the death of Elizabeth, Monteagle was at one with his co-religionists and his part in the Essex rebellion and in the sending of Winter to Spain in 1602 has already been noticed. But, on James’s accession—he was twenty-eight at the time—he seems to have decided in favour of conformity. He wrote to the King announcing his change of religion. He admitted he 'was bred up in the Romish religion and walked in that because I knew no better' but had now 'by long, careful and diligent reading and conference with learned men on both sides and impartial examination of their proofs and arguments, come to discern the ignorance I was formerly wrapped in'. 'And in all this, Sir,' he concluded in a characteristic passage, 'I protest to your Majesty before Almighty God, I have simply and only propounded to myself the true service of God and salvation of my own soul; not gain, not honour, no, not that which I do most highly value, your
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Majesty's favour or better opinion of me. Neither on the one side am I afraid of those censures of men whether of the party I have abandoned, or of others which I shall incur by this alteration, holding it contentment enough to myself that God hath in mercy enlightened my mind to see His sacred truth, with desire to serve....

What Monteagle desired to serve must remain a secret, for the letter is here mutilated, but at least by the March of 1604 he had managed to procure his pre-eminence and dignity and been summoned to the House of Lords as Lord Monteagle; and he had enough experience of the ways of Court to be able to assure an applicant for a post there 'that he should satisfy Cranborne (Cecil) that he is free from dependence on any man that might keep him from being wholly Cranborne's'. By the end of 1604, he had secured the re-grant of certain lands in Essex and throughout that year and during the early months of 1605 Cecil was interesting himself in Monteagle's lawsuit against the Earl of Hertford. Perhaps the most spectacular evidence of his favour at Court, however, was given in the September of 1605—several weeks before the delivery of the anonymous letter—when James personally asked as a favour from the King of France the release of Monteagle's brother who was imprisoned at Calais for a violent outrage he had committed there, a request which the French King granted only with extreme reluctance.

In the light of his favour with the King and intimacy with Cecil, Monteagle's other known activities during the same period are of considerable interest. During 1605, he was in the innermost councils of the conspirators. Thomas Winter was his private secretary, accompanying him on his visits to Bath, Lancashire and the country houses of the Catholic gentry. With Tresham and Catesby, he visited Father Garnet, whom he asked to procure for him a Colonelship in Flanders 'but would not have it known yet till his visit was ended in Michaelmas Term'. At the Jesuit house at Fremland, in Essex, in the July of 1605, Garnet asked Catesby, Tresham and Monteagle whether they thought the Catholics 'were able to make their part good by arms against the King' and Monteagle replied: 'If ever they were, they are able now. The King is so odious to all sorts.' When Garnet
assured them that they would get no help from abroad, Monteagle burst out: ‘What! will not the Spaniard help us? It is a shame!’

In the September of 1605, Monteagle provided Sir Edmund Baynham with introductions to Catholics in Flanders and Rome and, about the same time, wrote to Catesby a curious and allusive letter, which has generally been taken to imply his knowledge of the Plot:

‘If all creatures born under the moon’s sphere cannot endure without the elements of air and fire, in what languishment have we led our life since we departed from the dear Robin whose conversation gave us such warmth as we needed no other heat to maintain our healths? Since, therefore, it is proper to all to desire a remedy for their disease, I do by these bind thee, by the laws of charity, to make thy present appearance here at Bath; and let no watery nymphs divert you, who can better live with the air and better forbear the fire of your spirit and vigour than we, who account thy person the only sun that must ripen our harvest. And thus I rest

‘Ever fast tied to your friendship

‘W. MONTEAGLE.’

At the end of October, Monteagle went to Richmond to see the Prince of Wales ostensibly to discover in conversation whether he intended to be present at the opening of Parliament on November 5th. He then told Winter that ‘the Prince thought not to be there’—a piece of information which caused Catesby to change his plans. That was on Friday. On Saturday, Monteagle received the anonymous letter which he did not understand and so dutifully took to Cecil.

Once the Plot was thus ‘discovered’, the Government rewarded Monteagle with silence as well as with money. His name was safeguarded. Where it appeared in examinations of prisoners, it was pasted over or erased even when it referred to events in which Monteagle had indubitably taken part, such as the sending of Winter to Spain in 1602. From the document which referred to Monteagle’s visit to the Prince of Wales an official copy was made which omitted that parti-
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cular episode. The document which narrated the conversation at Fremland was suppressed altogether. Before the trial of the conspirators, Cecil wrote in his own hand a private letter to Coke in which he insisted: 'You must not omit, you must deliver, in commendation of my Lord Monteagle, words to show how sincerely he dealt and how fortunately it proved that he was the instrument of so great a blessing as this was. To be short, sir, you can remember how well the King in his Book did censure† his Lordship's part in it, from which sense you are not to vary, but obiter (as you know best how) to give some good echo of that particular action in that day of public trial of these men; because it is so lewdly given out that he was once of this plot of powder, and afterwards betrayed it all to me.'

Of Monteagle's character and interests little is known. He seems to have held some ceremonial office at Court in the household of the Queen; he took his part in masque and tournament, dancing and running at tilt, but 'as far as we can judge from the scanty notices of him in the correspondence of the time, he was not remarkable for intelligence or personal influence of any kind'.

(ii) ROBERT CATESBY

Robert Catesby, the 'arch-conspirator', was a born leader of men. With a face striking in its beauty, with singular charm of manner, over six feet in height, slender and elegant, a brilliant swordsman with the courage of the lion which was his family crest, generous to a fault, decisive in judgment, he was one for whom men would—and did—die. Ambrose Rookwood admitted that he 'esteemed (him) more dearer then anything else in the world'; Sir Everard Digby explained at his trial that his prime motive for joining the plotters was 'the friendship and love he bare to Catesby, which prevailed so much and was so powerful with him as that for his sake he was ever contented and ready to hazard himself and his estate'. It was an epitaph which many

* Jardine (Narrative, p. 80 n.) notes that 'it is remarkable that with these two mutilated exceptions none of the examinations of Fawkes or Thomas Winter in which Monteagle was probably mentioned are to be found'.
† I.e. 'think of' (from Latin, censeo).
Robert Catesby

others might have echoed, for as Father Tesimond left on record, 'he exercised an irresistible influence over the minds of those who associated with him'.

He bore a famous name and was heir to wealthy estates in Warwickshire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. In the little church adjoining the family manor-house at Ashby St. Legers, generations of his ancestors had their memorials which bore witness to the piety and charm and leadership which were in the Catesby blood. The church itself owed much of its fabric to the John de Catesby who lived in the reign of Richard II. In one of the windows knelt John Catesby, sheriff of Northampton in the reign of Henry V, with his wife and son. That son, who became the 'good Sir William' was himself commemorated by a painting on one of the walls recording the 'memorable thing' told of him. 'When he had lived long in the fear of God and works of charity one time as he was walking in the fields, his good angel appeared and showed him the anatomy of a dead man and willed him to prepare him, for he should die by such a time. The good knight, presently accepting the message willingly, recommended himself with fervent prayer unto our Blessed Lady in that place and then went home and settled all his business both towards God and the world and died at his time appointed.'

The next Sir William was a different temper—the favourite of Richard III, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Speaker of the House of Commons, who fought for his friend and king at Bosworth, was captured and beheaded by Henry Tudor. A brass of him on a marble slab stood just inside the altar rails, apart from the other family tombs in the north chantry.

The Sir William Catesby who was Robert's father remained through all the Elizabethan persecution a faithful Catholic and no longer worshipped in the church where his ancestors lay. He paid his fines for non-attendance until

* By perpetuating this story, says a modern writer on the plot, the Catesbys 'were unaware that they were proclaiming to future and scientifically enlightened [sic] generations that there was brain disorder or delusional insanity in the de Catesby family, with its congenital tendency to mental instability and de-control of reflexes in the descendants'. (Morgan: The Great English Treason for Religion.)
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1585, when he compounded for them by making over to the Queen, whose grandfather had beheaded his grandfather, a fifth of his entire income. His house and estate at Lapworth in Warwickshire were sold, probably for this reason, some time before his death in 1598.

Robert, his second and only surviving son, was born in 1573, according to tradition at Bushwood Hall, Lapworth, one of the Catesby houses. At the age of thirteen he was sent to Oxford as an undergraduate at Gloucester Hall (now Worcester College), though as a Catholic he was, of course, unable to proceed to his B.A. In 1592 he married Catherine, daughter of Sir Thomas Leigh, an influential Warwickshire Protestant. She bore him two sons of whom only the younger, Robert, lived. The child was baptized at Chastleton (which Catesby inherited from his grandmother in 1593), on 11th November 1595, in the parish church, and while he was still a child his mother died.

It was during the period at Chastleton that Catesby outwardly conformed to Protestantism (for, in spite of Father Gerard’s remarks, it is inconceivable that he was not baptized and brought up a Catholic and it is even possible that he was for a short time at Douay). He was in his early twenties, extremely wealthy, with the world at his feet, and it is hardly surprising that he should have revolted against the restrictions which his religion involved. He ‘was very wild and as he kept company with the best noblemen of the land, so he spent much above his rate’. But when, in 1593, his wife and his father died, he underwent a complete change. ‘He was reclaimed from his wild courses’, says Father Gerard, ‘and became a Catholic, unto which he had always been inclined in opinion, though not in practice. But after this time he left his swearing and excess of play and apparel and all wild company and began to use daily practices of religion instead of them, insomuch that his former companions did marvel to see him so much changed, for he concealed his being Catholic a long time.’

What wrought the change is neither narrated nor known. We have but the bare fact of it and the knowledge that death had taken from him his wife, his father and his eldest son before he was twenty-six. For the remaining seven years of his life, he was possessed by one single passion—to serve the
Robert Catesby

Faith. To this he devoted his sword, on which he had engraved the Passion of Christ, his wealth and his life. Of his part in the Essex rebellion mention has already been made* and of the sale of Chastleton to pay the fines levied on him as a result of it. After 1601, he made his home in the family manor at Ashby where his mother now lived and, according to the tradition of the neighbourhood, it was in the bay-windowed room over the gateway between the house and the west end of the church, that he held frequent conferences with his friends and fellow-Catholics about the Gunpowder Plot.†

In addition to his lodgings in the Strand in London,‡ he had a house not far from the capital at Uxbridge and ‘to avoid much company that pressed him there’ was negotiating for a house at Erith in Kent§ about the time of King James’s accession. But wherever he might be, his mode of life was constant. After his release from imprisonment, his zeal for religion had increased. ‘He then began to labour to win many to the Catholic faith, which he performed, and brought many to be Catholics of the better sort, and was a continual means of helping others to often frequentation of the Sacraments, to which end he kept and maintained priests in several places. And for himself he duly received the Blessed Sacrament every Sunday and festival day, and grew to such a composition of manners and carriage, to such a care in his speech (that it might never be hurtful to others, but taking all occasions of doing good) to such a zealous course of life, both for the cause in general and every particular person whom he could help in God’s service, as that he grew to be very much respected by most of the better and graver sort of Catholics and of priests and of Religious also, whom he did much satisfy in the care of his conscience; so that it might plainly appear he had the fear of God joined with an earnest desire to serve Him.’∥

Yet Robert Catesby converted was Robert Catesby still. His energy was devoted to religious ends, but the habit of command did not fall from him. He never quite achieved the humility which would have safeguarded his zeal and to the end in certain things he kept his own counsel and defined his own conscience. As one writer has expressed it, he ‘was

* Page 69 et seq.
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one of those most dangerous men to his own cause, a Catholic on Protestant principles. . . . He seems to have argued to himself that Pope, priests and Jesuits were not equal to the occasion; that there were times, of which his own was one, at which papal, spiritual and even Biblical teaching must for the moment be set on one side whilst the secular arm struck a violent blow for the relief of God's suffering people.11 Father Gerard, who knew him and nearly lost his own life because of him, made the same judgment, but safeguarded it with a charity and honesty which later historians have tended to dispense with: 'Although he and his complices did us as great wrong as might be and took themselves a most wrong course in their deceived zeal, yet I will not wrong them with false reports. . . . And to do him right, if he had not fallen into this foul action and followed his own judgment in it (to the hurt and scandal of many) asking no advice but of his own reasons deceived and blinded under the shadow of zeal: if, I say, it had not been for this, he had truly been a man worthy to be highly esteemed and prized in any commonwealth.'12

(iii) THE WINTERS AND JOHN GRANT

The Winters' family seat was Huddington Hall, a moated mansion in Worcestershire. Originally descended from the Castellan of Carnarvon, they had come to Huddington in the reign of Henry VI and in the windows and on the tombs of the church, their crest, a falcon alighting on a white tower, was a reminder of their Welsh origin—Gwyn tour. In the mansion itself, more recent glass commemorated the visit of Queen Elizabeth to Huddington when Thomas Winter was a boy—the Royal Arms in the Garter in the middle of the window of the best chamber, with the Winter arms quartered on each side and, underneath, the date 1584.13

Within a radius of ten miles from Huddington were Hindlip Hall, the seat of Monteagle's brother-in-law; Coughton Court, one of the houses of the great Catholic family of Throckmorton to which the Catesbys, the Winters and the Treshams were all related; Grafton Hall, the seat of Robert Winter's father-in-law, John Talbot, cousin and heir presumptive of the Earl of Shrewsbury; and Hewell

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The Winters and John Grant

Grange, the seat of Lord Windsor, Talbot’s brother. Twenty miles away was Norbrook, the mansion of John Grant, who had married the Winters’ sister, Dorothy.

With their property in the centre of the country which saw the last stand of the conspirators, the Winters were also, genealogically, the connecting link which gave the plot the appearance of a family affair. Not only were they kin to Catesby, Tresham, Monteagle and Grant, but through their mother, an Ingleby, to the Yorkshire Wrights, John and Christopher and their sister, Thomas Percy’s wife, as well as to Robert Keyes and to Ambrose Rookwood’s wife. And it was this Yorkshire strain in the Winters’ blood which was the more uncompromisingly Catholic. Their uncle, Francis Ingleby, was martyred for his priesthood at York in 1586; and if, in their earlier years, both the Winters seemed careless of their faith—Robert at home conforming outwardly to Protestantism, Thomas fighting in Flanders with the Protestant Dutch against Spain—it could be construed as a matter of family tradition of service to the Crown. The phase soon passed. Robert became ‘an earnest Catholic, though not as yet generally known to be so’ and Thomas withdrew from the anti-Spanish army when he realized that, for him at least, the religious issue took precedence of the national and political. He became ‘very devout and zealous in his faith and careful to come often to the Sacraments’.55

Robert, the elder brother and owner of Huddington, was not at first concerned with the Plot and when he was admitted to the secret immediately counselled caution. A landowner, with his standing in the county enhanced both socially and financially by his Talbot marriage, he attended to his property with its hop-yards and salt-pits and the brine-springs (or wyches) at Droitwich which gave him his wealth.56 Born in 1565, he was forty at the time of the Plot and in appearance ‘a man of mean stature, rather low than otherwise, square-made somewhat stooping, his hair and beard brown, his beard not much and his hair short’.57

It was the younger Winter, Thomas, who was the genius of the family as he was also the moving spirit of the Plot.

* There were thus (excluding Thomas Bates, Catesby’s servant) only two of those known to history as the ‘Gunpowder Plotter’ to whom the Winters were not related by blood or marriage—Guy Fawkes and Sir Everard Digby.
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Like Robert, he was short and stocky but he was 'comely and very valiant' and, as a good conversationalist, as a man of learning whose main interests were history and philosophy and as a linguist, speaking Spanish, Italian and French, he was obviously fitted for the diplomatic missions with which he was entrusted by his fellow-Catholics.

In 1600 he made a pilgrimage to Rome for the Holy Year; in 1602 he was, as has been already narrated, on his mission in Spain; early in 1604 he went to Brussels to discuss the state of English Catholics with the Constable of Castile, who was negotiating peace between England and Spain. If his 'Confession' is to be believed he returned, about the end of April or the beginning of May, with Guy Fawkes, whom he introduced to Catesby.

Thenceforth, Thomas Winter's travels were over. When engaged in business in London, he lodged at the 'Duck' in the Strand, not far from Catesby's lodging at the 'Irish Boy', and the two 'inseparable friends' must have been noticeable in the Strand and round about St. Clement's and the Temple—Catesby's tall elegance in his customary scarlet by the side of Winter's small, sturdy figure in light blue, with his pearl-coloured cloak lined to match his doublet. But most of his time was spent in the country, either at Huddington or visiting his Catholic friends, or in attendance on Monteagle in the days when, as he put it in a letter to his brother-in-law, Grant: 'My fortunes are so poor that they will not leave me mine own man; if they did, Jack, you should have more of my company.'

Lack of funds, indeed, immobilized him more than once. To Catesby he complained: 'I freely possess the sweet country air and, to say truth, would fain be among you, but cannot as yet get money to come up' and to Grant he wrote asking him to come over for a visit and bring with him a book, Botero's Della Ragione di Stato.

Of John Grant himself, little is known except his character. According to Father Tesimond, he was of a 'melancholy and taciturn disposition'—a sidelight which Father Gerard elaborates: 'He was as fierce as a lion, of a very undaunted courage as could be found in a country: which mind of his he had often showed unto pursuivants and prowling companions, when they would come to his house to search and
Thomas Percy, the Wrights and Robert Keyes

ransack the same, as they did to divers of his neighbours. But he paid them so well for their labour not with crowns of gold but with cracked crowns sometimes and with dry blows instead of drink and other good cheer, that they durst not visit him any more, unless they brought great store of help with them. Truth is, his mettle and manner of proceeding was so well known unto them, that it kept them very much in awe and himself in much quiet, which he did the rather use that he might with more safety keep a priest in his house, which he did with great fruit unto his neighbours and comfort to himself. It is also probable that he used his immunity to cultivate his estates, if we may so interpret the impecunious Thomas Winter's laconic remark in one of his letters: 'Commend me to my sister and wax rich,' and Father Gerard's further description of him as one who 'lived well in his country'.

One more member of the family was John Winter, the young half-brother of Robert and Thomas, son of their father's second marriage. He, too, lived at Huddington and though he was not actually involved in the Plot, he was later executed for his share in the attempted rebellion, not in London but at Worcester. By that time, the others were dead—Grant, when sentence was passed, standing 'a good while mute, yet after, submissively said he was guilty of a conspiracy intended but never effected'; Robert craving mercy; but Thomas saying nothing but to ask 'that he might be hanged both for his brother and himself'.

(iv) THOMAS PERCY, THE WRIGHTS AND ROBERT KEYES

If Catesby was the central figure of the Plot and Thomas Winter its diplomatist, Thomas Percy has some claim to be considered its organizer. His mission to Scotland on behalf of his cousin the Earl of Northumberland, has already been noticed; and his Northumberland blood gave him a pre-eminence among the conspirators which his age augmented. He was a man of forty-five in a circle in their twenties and early thirties; a Percy among landed gentry. As Constable of Alnwick and Warkworth Castles and as Captain of the Pensioners-in-Ordinary in attendance at Court, he had influence denied to his companions. He could move un-
suspected in circles to which the others (except Monteagle) had no easy access.

Quite apart from his position, the strange wild Hotspur strain in him gave him a personality which would have drawn them to him. If he lacked Catesby's charm, he had all Catesby's courage. In his youth 'he had been very wild more than ordinary, and much given to fighting, so much that it was noted in him and in Mr. John Wright (whose sister he afterwards married) that if they heard of any man in the country to be esteemed more valiant or resolute than others, one or other of them would surely have picked some quarrel against him and fought with him to have made trial of his courage'. 49 If he lacked Winter's stability, he was as accomplished a diplomat, to which his employment in Scotland bore witness no less than the hostile description of him as 'a subtle, flattering, dangerous knave'. 50 At the heart of him was the legendary and intolerable pride of the Percies. It is altogether in character that he should have regarded James's refusal to keep his word to the Catholics as a personal affront to himself, making him appear a dupe in his co-religionists' eyes, and should have threatened to kill the King to avenge the insult. 51 And Sir James Sempill, who encountered him on the eve of the Plot has left on record his impression of 'the haste and pride of the man'. 52

But with the assertiveness went an uncertainty. The neurotic strain in him shows in the revealing description: 'He did mightily overgallop and all too jade his body.... In his walking, his pace was very inconstant, sometimes hasty and quick, sometimes slow and remiss.' 53 He slept very little, got up before dawn and often climbed a hill called 'The Hay' from which he surveyed the scene below in the sunrise. His skin was so sensitive that he 'could not endure any shirt but of the finest holland or cambric'. 54 In appearance he was tall—long in the body but short in the legs—with stooping shoulders, a red face, a 'great broad beard' turning grey and his hair greyer still. According to Father Tesimond, his eyes were large and lively and 'notwithstanding the boldness of his character his manners were gentle and quiet'. 55 The contradictions appeared in his character. To provide funds for the conspiracy, he embezzled, in the year 1605 alone, £3,000 of his cousin's money for which, as
Thomas Percy, the Wrights and Robert Keyes

steward, he was responsible.\textsuperscript{56} He seems to have been bigamous—married.\textsuperscript{*} He was not converted to Catholicism— openly at least—till he was about forty;\textsuperscript{57} and was never altogether free from suspicion of double-dealing. On the one hand, he represented himself as being threatened with arrest by the Archbishop of York 'as the chief pillar of Papistry in that county'.\textsuperscript{58} On the other, one of those interrogated about the plot described him as 'no Papist but a Puritan'.\textsuperscript{59} He was said to visit Cecil secretly at night\textsuperscript{60} and some believed that he was the author of the anonymous letter to Monteagle.\textsuperscript{61} Thus, though the suggestion that he may have been the Government instrument who fostered and betrayed the Plot seems unlikely, it is certainly true that the charge of wildness and instability usually levelled against the Plotters in general is relevant to Percy in particular.

Of his brothers-in-law, John and Christopher Wright, little is known. Their home was Plowland Hall, in Yorkshire, and they were educated at the Royal Grammar School in York, as school-fellows of Guy Fawkes. They were hereditary Catholics, whose mother had suffered fourteen years' imprisonment for the Faith. John's early propensity for fighting has already been remarked on. During this period—and possibly under the influence of Percy—he conformed to Protestantism, but returned to the Church at the time of Essex's rebellion. He was 'of a very good wit, though slow of speech; much loved by Mr. Catesby for his valour and secrecy in any business,'\textsuperscript{62} and he was, with Catesby, Winter and Percy, in the Plot from the beginning.

Christopher, though unlike his brother in appearance 'as being fatter and a lighter coloured hair and taller of person, yet he was very like to the other in conditions and qualities'.\textsuperscript{63} He had accompanied Thomas Winter on his mission to the Constable of Castile and was 'both esteemed and tried to be as stout a man as England had and withal a zealous Catholic'.\textsuperscript{64}

Through their mother, the Wrights were related to the intermarried Yorkshire Catholic families of Mallory, Ingleby and Babthorpe, which connected them both with the Winters and with Robert Keyes, the conspirator of whom, perhaps, least is known. Father Gerard describes him as 'a grave and sober man and of great wit and sufficiency, as I have heard

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divers say that were well acquainted with him. His virtue and valour were the chiefest things wherein they could expect assistance from him, for otherwise his means were not great. He was tall, with a red beard and about forty.

He was the son of a Protestant, the Anglican rector of Stavely, Derbyshire, but his mother was a Catholic—a relative of Lady Ursula Babthorpe. He himself married a Catholic, who was chosen to assist in the education of the children of Lord Mordaunt, and, for some years before the Plot, the Keyes seem to have lived in Mordaunt’s house at Drayton in Northamptonshire. He ‘had horses and other necessaries found’ in return for his wife’s services. This association both explains Keyes’s participation in the Plot and gives it importance, for Mordaunt was one of the peers arrested and imprisoned on suspicion of being privy to the conspirators’ proceedings. His house at Drayton bordered on Cecil’s property of Brigstock Park—a circumstance which led to recurring friction between them, in the matter of killing deer and grazing sheep—and, according to one of Cecil’s memoranda, ‘appears to be a receptacle of most dangerous persons, and there is a continual concourse between it and foreign seminaries’.

As Keyes was a member of the household at Drayton, he must have seen King James at close quarters when the King stayed with Mordaunt in the August of 1604, during the very days when the Constable of Castile, with his train of two hundred and thirty-four persons, was making his way from Dover to London, to conclude the articles of peace with Spain. It is permissible to assume that the King’s calculated rudeness in refusing to cut short his hunting to return to the capital was known at Drayton, where, in any case, feeling must have been sufficiently intense. The peace with Spain meant an end to English Catholic hopes; a month earlier, the Elizabethan Recusancy Acts had been re-enforced; and (if Keyes’s confession is to be believed) he was already an initiate of the Plot.

One sidelight on Keyes’s character must be given, though it is on hearsay and from a hostile source: ‘A few days before the fatal blow should be given, Keyes being in Tickmarsh in Northamptonshire, at his brother-in-law’s house, Mr. Gilbert Pickering, a Protestant, he suddenly whipped out his sword
and in merriment made many offers therewith at the heads, necks and sides of several gentlemen and ladies then in his company: it was then taken for a mere frolic, and so passed accordingly: but afterward, when the treason was discovered, such as remembered his gestures thought he practised what he intended to do when the plot should take effect. If this does not seem altogether in character with his discretion, it is certainly in keeping with the strain of wildness which seems to have distinguished Keyes as well as Percy.

The remaining conspirators, Rookwood, Digby, Tresham and Bates have their places in the narrative at the point where they are drawn into the Plot, for they stand, properly speaking, on a different footing from these who form the inner and inter-related ring. Tresham, who belongs by blood to the centre, was in fact brought in at the last moment, though he may have had some vague knowledge or lively suspicions. And Guy Fawkes, the name most famous in history, appears in the milieu to which he belonged—the exiles at Brussels.
In Exile at Brussels

'A miserable troop of my unhappy countrymen (some of which were gentlemen of good houses in England) wandering in poor habits and afflicted gestures, heavily groaning under the burden of an extreme and calamitous necessity; on the one side, by their heedless demeanour there debared from return into the country; and, on the other; daily overlooked with the proud eyes of disdainful Spaniards and for want of due regard in that comfortless service perishing without either pity or relief'—so the anonymous author* of *The Estate of English Fugitives under the King of Spain and his Ministers*, published in 1595 describes the English Catholic exiles in the Low Countries.

It is possible that, for polemical reasons, he overstated his case; it is arguable that, even if he did not, the exiles might have retorted that their freedom and their hope outweighed their poverty and that, for a Catholic, life in Brussels (which, under the Archducal rule of Albert and Isabella, was to become one of the most fascinating and brilliant centres in Europe) was preferable to life in London. But it is indisputable that the little company, living on foreign pensions never generous and always intermittently paid, became, after the manner of all such refugees, increasingly blind to the true perspective of events.

Their delusions of grandeur increased as their hopes became longer deferred and their activity in sending representatives 'abroad' was hardly less feverish than the tensions and divisions which rent them 'at home'. There were not only the 'private quarrels wherein they have often wounded, maimed and slain one another' but also the 'long-enduring factions, wherein great parts of them are most maliciously

*Probably Sir Lewis Lewkenor.
Sir William Stanley

opposite one against the other to the great prejudice and slander of them all'.

Here, as among Catholics everywhere, there were partisans and opponents of the Jesuits—a bitter enough strife. There was also an over-riding and perennial quarrel between the English, the Welsh and the Irish, as well as an intellectual division between those 'who pretend to be great statesmen and deep politicians', reading and discussing Machiavelli's The Prince and Bodin's Republic, and the common run of men 'utterly void of learning, wit and civility, very dunces, not fit for any employment, the farthest drift of whose religion is to speak ill of the Queen, to say the Pope is a good man and to thump their breasts hard when they come to church'.

And among the throng of soldiers, politicians, adventurers and spies were some simple fanatics like the anonymous merchant who, in his detachment from practicality, is almost symbolical: 'One of them, having sometime been a petty merchant in England, sold all that ever he had and putting £200 in his purse went to Jerusalem to buy a pound of wax candles, which he brought home upon his back and withal as much earth of Mount Olivet as he was able to carry, imagining that every dram thereof was able to cast out a legion of devils. In regard to which relics, upon his return to Brussels he obtained a pension ... but ... he will not give his best friend the least mite of his holy things, saying that he reserveth them to furnish the churches in England when they shall come one day to be Catholic, and hath already appointed what churches they be that he means to make beholding unto him for this high benefit.'

(i) SIR WILLIAM STANLEY

First in eminence, if not in influence, among the refugees was the Lancashire knight, Sir William Stanley. Born in 1548, he had in his teens volunteered with the Spanish army and fought under Alva in the Low Countries. Then, for fifteen years—from 1570 to 1585—he did brilliant service for Elizabeth in the Irish wars and subsequently followed Leicester in his campaign in the Netherlands where, at Zutphen, he so distinguished himself that Leicester wrote of him that he was 'worth his weight in pearl'. He was made
Governor of Deventer and here, at the moment when Elizabeth (who had knighted him in 1579) was considering rewarding his services by creating him Viceroy of Ireland, he suddenly changed sides and delivered the city to the Spaniards.

To regard this as 'treachery' merely is to import into that century the clear-cut national distinctions of this. The Low Countries were, above all, the battleground for the Faith, and Stanley's action was an assertion of his religion rather than a denial of his nationality. He seems to have regarded Spain simply as the sword of Catholicism. Whoever had a right to Deventer, he was certain that it was not Elizabeth. In his speech giving back the city he said that 'he had regarded neither honours nor rewards, but the words of our Saviour "Render unto every man his own"' and Cardinal Allen in his published defence of Stanley's action was at pains to point out that 'the rendering up of such towns in the Low Countries as be in any Englishmen's custody is not only lawful but necessary to be done under pain of mortal sin and damnation', since it was a duty to restore property to its lawful owner.

From this year, 1587, until his death more than forty years later, Sir William Stanley was a servant of the King of Spain. He visited the Spanish Court regularly, gave Philip military and strategical advice on the subject of the invasion of England (insisting somewhat monotonously on Milford Haven as the ideal landing-place), raised his own regiment, which he called the 'English Legion', 700 strong, and took them to Nieuport in readiness to board the Armada. Throughout the following years, it was to this regiment of his—which, with the passage of time, became more Irish than English and eventually had to draw on Dutchmen and Walloons—that Catholic recruits came, intending to play their part in the 'liberation' of England.

Stanley's name was not a negligible factor of his importance. He was close kin to the Stanley Earls of Derby and, as early as 1564, their claim to the English crown had been advanced, on the grounds that Ferdinando, Lord Strange (later fifth Earl) was, through his mother, third in descent from Henry VII, whereas the Stuarts, though of the older line, were only fourth.
Captain Jacques

The relationship between Sir William Stanley and his cousin Ferdinando has in it much that is obscure, but it is certain that ‘the heirs of the two great Stanley houses were on terms of great and suspicious intimacy’, and in 1593 Sir William sent an emissary to England to propose that Ferdinando should claim the Crown. The Earl, suspecting a trap, denounced the messenger to the Government and himself died mysteriously a few days later, not without suspicion of poison. The messenger was tortured and executed as a traitor. Though the full facts of this episode are unlikely ever to be known, the comment on it made by an English Catholic spy to one of his fellows in France reveals a typical attitude to the refugees: ‘A worthy piece of work, suitable to the setters-on’ (i.e. Stanley and his friends) ‘who of the Catholics here at home are accursed.’

Among the English abroad, however, Sir William was held in honour. He was ‘the good old Knight’ and to him Peter Philips, the English organist to the Archduke and Archdeaconess at Brussels, one of the leading musicians of Europe, dedicated his Madrigals for Eight Voices, which suggests that he had some non-political interests. But in his old age he became a pathetic figure who had outlived his friends and his usefulness. Though the Spaniards had rewarded his services by making him Governor of Mechlin, he was, in 1624, when he was 76, ‘constrained to go to Spain, cap in hand to all the privy councillors, to crave his pension which had not been paid for six years’, and he said that ‘if his Majesty of Great Britain would grant his pardon and leave to live the rest of his days in Lancashire with beef and bag pudding, he would deem himself one of the happiest men in the world’.

Such pardon could, of course, never be forthcoming, even though King James made another of his cousins, John Williams, his Lord Keeper. He lived on into the reign of Charles I, dying at Ghent, and was buried with great pomp at Mechlin where, every day for thirty days after his funeral, a requiem Mass was said for the repose of his soul.

(ii) Captain Jacques

Stanley’s second-in-command, his lieutenant-colonel, was
In Exile at Brussels

Jacques Francesco (or Francis), familiarly known as 'Captain Jacques'. He had been born in Antwerp of Italian parents but from his infancy had been brought up in England, where he 'served the Lord Chancellor* who had always been his especial good friend and favourer'. For a time he had, like Stanley, fought in the Irish wars and it was there, in all probability, that the two men met. As his responsibilities were less, so his venom was greater than Stanley's. Among the exiles, Captain Jacques had no equal in his 'violent and irreverent course against the person of her Majesty' and he had no scruples about her assassination. As during Stanley's frequent absences from Brussels the Captain would have been left in charge, he had access to the Court and was said to be 'one of those who ruled the Archduke at their pleasure'.

(iii) GUY FAWKES

Among those serving in Stanley's regiment was a Yorkshireman, Guy Fawkes, who had come to the Low Countries in 1593, at the age of twenty-three. He fought at the Archduke's capture of Calais in 1596. Subsequently he found it difficult to make a living, according to his cousin Richard Colling, a Jesuit in York, who wrote to an influential friend: 'I pray you let me entreat your favour and friendship for my cousin-german, Master Guido Fawkes who serves Sir William, as I understand he is in great want and your word in his behalf may stand him in great stead. ... He hath left a pretty living here in his country which his mother, being married to an unthrifty husband, since his departure I think hath wasted away.'

He saw fighting again as Lieutenant to Colonel Bostock who was killed at the battle of Nieuport in 1600. After this crushing defeat, he took service under Stanley's illegitimate

* Presumably Sir Christopher Hatton, who died in 1591. At the time these words were written (1595), Sir John Puckering had succeeded to the Lord Keepership, but the actual title of Lord Chancellor was in abeyance. If Jacques had been a member of Hatton's household, he would have seen the Queen frequently as Hatton was one of her 'favourites'. He appears to have known her habits well enough, since he advises an assassin to make his attempt 'when the Queen went for a walk or to the sermon: then she might be shot or stabbed, as she takes no care'. If the assassin 'could only escape for two or three hours he would be safe.'
Guy Fawkes

brother and, on the disbandment of that regiment, returned to Sir William and ‘lived more domestically with him as a steward’. His subsequent visit to Spain suggests that he may have been used in a diplomatic capacity.

Fawkes had been born at York and educated at the Royal School of Philip and Mary there. Among the schoolfellows of his own age were the two Wrights, Christopher and John, who were later to be implicated with him in the Gunpowder Plot; and among his senior contemporaries were Thomas Morton (who was to become one of James I’s chaplains in the year that Fawkes was executed and later, as Bishop of Durham, to be known for his anti-Catholic propaganda) and Oswald Tesimond, the Jesuit ‘Father Greenway’, who has left this description of Guy in later years—‘a man of great piety, of exemplary temperance, of mild and cheerful demeanour, an enemy of broils and disputes, a faithful friend and remarkable for his punctual attendance upon religious observances’, one ‘sought by all the most distinguished in the Archduke’s camp for nobility and virtue’.

Guy was eight when his father, Edward Fawkes, Notary and Advocate of the Consistory Court of York, died and was buried in the Minster. His mother married again—a Catholic named Denis Bainbridge—and it was in the atmosphere of his stepfather’s house at Scotton, near Knaresborough, that Guy became a Catholic. Shortly after he attained his majority, he sold the property he had inherited from his father and went overseas, accompanied by his cousin, Harrington, who fought side by side with him until—probably at the time when Guy turned ‘steward’—he entered the priesthood and returned to England.

Fawkes, tall, with brown hair and an auburn beard was one of the more attractive figures among the exiles. He was genuinely pious; his background—his grandfather and father, lawyers; his uncle, a merchant-stapler; his stepfather, a country gentleman—had given him knowledge of life and learning; and he was temperamentally fitted to be a soldier. ‘Those who have known him’, wrote Father Gerard, Stanley’s cousin, ‘do affirm that as he did bear office in the camp under

* Guy’s maternal grandmother was Ellen Harrington, daughter of the Lord Mayor of York for 1536.
the English colonel on the Catholic side, so he was a man in in every way deserving it whilst he stayed there, both for devotion more than is ordinarily found in soldiers, and especially for his skill in martial affairs and great valour, for which he was there much esteemed.’

(iv) HUGH OWEN

The great rock of offence among the exiles, from the English Government’s point of view, was Captain Hugh Owen, a Welsh soldier of fortune who had been in the Spanish service in the Low Countries years before the advent of Stanley or Jacques or Fawkes. ‘Our friend, Mr. Hugh,’ as he was known to foreign Catholics: ‘Signor Ottavio,’ to give him the cipher name used by one of Cecil’s special spies: the man ‘whose finger hath been in every treason which hath been of late years detected’, in the words of Sir Edward Coke at the conspirators’ trials, was the object of the Government’s venomous and lasting hatred.

Cecil, in his instructions to Coke on the eve of the trials, wrote: ‘You must remember to lay Owen as foul in this as you can’ into the version of Fawkes’s confession in the ‘King’s Book’ was interpolated a sentence not in the original, expressly incriminating Owen;* the English Government, after 5th November 1605, made every effort to obtain his extradition from Flanders, and in his absence—since the Archduke, though he had Owen arrested and his papers seized and examined, refused, in the absence of any proof of his knowledge of a plot, to surrender him to Cecil’s vengeance—Parliament passed an Act of Attainder against him.

Owen’s character and career seem to justify the fear he inspired. In 1584, Father Person had mentioned him to Mary Queen of Scots as ‘a man of very good parts and secrecy and of special credit with the Prince of Parma and his secretary’ † and when Philip II decided to employ

*MS. version: I retired into the Low-countries lest by my longer stay I might have grown suspicious.

Printed: I retired into the Low-countries, by the advice and direction of the rest, as well to acquaint Owen with the particulars of the plot, as also, lest by my longer stay I might have grown suspicious.

† Margaret, Duchess of Parma, was at that time Regent of the Netherlands.
Hugh Owen

Parma on the 'enterprise of England', Owen was the only layman in whom the King advised him to confide.28

Owen's standing among the exiles reflected the trust that was placed in him. The writer of The Estate of English Fugitives says that he was 'the only man ever I knew advanced, credited or graced in his (the King of Spain's) service', though he adds that 'all that he getteth is no more than to maintain him in a mean estate or show, with a man only or two to serve him'.29 The English Ambassador at Brussels reporting to Cecil on the reorganization of the English regiments in Flanders points out that Owen is a controlling influence in appointments30 and Lord Arundel puts it even more strongly: 'None must stand here that stand not by the favour of Owen and the Jesuits.'31
Servants of the Government

(i) ROBERT CECIL, EARL OF SALISBURY

Robert Cecil, second son and political heir of Lord Burghley, was at the time of the Gunpowder Plot about forty years old and for the last nine years he had been, as Secretary of State, virtually the ruler of England. He was a dwarf and a hunchback, splay-footed, prematurely grey at thirty, not caring for wine but with a passion for jewels. He was constantly ill, usually overworked.

Trained by his father, he had early formed the habits of ruling. He had inexhaustible patience in mastering and applying the details and intricacies of any subject; an unruffled temper, quiet self-control and matchless dissimulation. In his official capacity he had, in his late twenties, inherited Walsingham’s secret service, the best in Europe. He so used and improved it that ‘he could tell you throughout Spain every part, every ship, with their burtens, whither bound, what preparation, what impediments’. He knew the names, aliases and usual places of residence of the Jesuits in England and regularly received copies of their correspondence in Flanders. Thus, from an early age, he was master of the science of using and directing for his own ends men’s weakness and venality and ambition.

He mastered, better perhaps than any other English statesman, the meaning of political power, knew every nuance of it—when a mere promise would secure service or

* For the understanding of the Plot, it is essential to keep in mind the fact of Cecil’s knowledge, for the official Government case rests on the assertion and assumption that had it not been for the almost miraculous anonymous letter on the eve of the planned explosion, they would, in their ingenuous simplicity, have been quite unaware of this diabolical plan of the subtle Jesuits.
Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury

when an appointment to office was safer; when a payment of money was a good investment; when merely a long imprisonment would break a man, or when an appearance of goodwill and understanding and kindly treatment might serve to throw him off his guard, or when torture was the quickest and most efficacious method. Machiavelli could have taught him little and with the theoretical mastery went ability in practice. He was economical of energy, never used a threat where a word would do, never resorted to hard measures if he could succeed with soft, never flattered too fulsomely, killed too many or paid too much.

To one with his peculiar knowledge of men and affairs, a certain cynicism was natural, nor should he be judged harshly for flouting principles whose existence he did not admit. It is improbable that he was ever moved by any consideration but that of personal power and its corollary, personal wealth. The Spanish Ambassador described him as a venal traitor who would sell his soul for money—a judgment not altogether surprising in view of the fact that Cecil, as chief minister of England, received a pension from Spain in return for the betrayal of diplomatic secrets and ‘when the opposition between the governments became more decided, he asked for an increase of his payments and demanded that they should be made in large sums as each piece of information was given’.

His dissimulation in high matters formed a habit that determined even his personal relations and, according to the French minister, his falsehood had become so second nature that he was unable to speak the truth even to his friends. It may be doubted, however, whether he had any friends. His was not a nature to hold or to require them and perhaps his most revealing characteristic was the loneliness which made him turn for what relaxation he allowed himself to books rather than to men. Even the King, who owed him his throne, had no personal friendliness for him. He rewarded him with honours—creating him successively Baron Cecil of Essendon, Viscount Cranborne and Earl of Salisbury—and at the same time wounded him where he was most sensitive by nicknames based on his physical appearance. As he once wrote ruefully: ‘I see nothing that I can do can procure me so much favour as to be sure one whole day what title I shall
have another. For from Essendon to Cranborne, from Cranborne to Salisbury, from Salisbury to "Beagle", from "Beagle" to "Thom Derry" (i.e. Tom Thumb), from "Thom Derry" to "Parrot", which I hate most, I have been . . . walked.  

In the country men called him worse names. On his death the hatred of him, checked by his power in life, flared out so that an observer could write: 'I never knew so great a man so soon and so openly censured' . . . 'the outrageous speeches against the deceased Lord continue still and there be fresh libels come out every day.'

Cecil was the typical product of the Reformation in England. It is not merely that to us, looking back through the centuries, he stands clearly enough as the symbol of it, in class, in character and in creed. It is that he himself was aware of it, knew better than anyone that his wealth came from the pillaged church lands, that his power was possible only because the Catholic nobility had been destroyed. His country house at Theobalds, one of the 'most sumptuous palaces of a sumptuous age' was, as it were, a shrine dedicated to the new regime. There among the gardens with their bewildering variety of flowers and trees and shrubs; their mazes, columns, pyramids; the summer house with its marble statues of the twelve Caesars; the leaden cisterns and fish-ponds which could be used in hot weather for bathing; the surrounding moat, broad and deep enough for boats—there at the centre stood the palatial mansion and, at its centre, the great hall 'so cunningly fashioned with fruit and leaves that the birds fly in to enjoy their advantages'. And in the Green Gallery, the motif was continued to its climax by genealogical trees proclaiming the pedigrees of the Tudors and of the families, like the Cecils, they had enriched and ennobled.

Here, actually and in symbol, was Cecil's background, seeming almost as fabulous as the cloud-capp'd palace of some splendid masque—and, given certain conditions, as evanescent. For in 1596, the year Cecil assumed the Secretaryship, the Continental Catholics undertook 'especially' that in the event of the return of Catholicism to England, restitution would be made 'in regard to the ecclesiastical property which was taken from the Church'. Cecil's one
principle—the continuance of his own power—could henceforth be understood in terms of the destruction of Catholicism and to this end the ‘proud and terrible dwarf’ quietly directed all his not inconsiderable talents.

(ii) Sir William Waad

'Salisbury's great creature' was Sir William Waad, nearly twenty years his senior, with whom he had been acquainted from his boyhood. Waad (or Wade), whom a modern writer has not unjustly described as 'one of the meanest men of a time exceptionally rich in such', was a Yorkshireman, the son of that Armagil Waad whose voyage to Newfoundland in the reign of Henry VIII had earned him the title of 'the English Columbus'. William Waad was twenty-two when both his parents died and he inherited the family estate, and, with such early freedom of choice and means to indulge it, he decided to link his fortunes with those of the Cecils. After a legal training at Gray’s Inn, he entered Burghley’s service and was sent to collect news for his master in France, Germany and Italy. On his return to England in 1581, his training in this respect was completed by his appointment as Walsingham’s secretary in London, where he could study the spy service from the centre of the web.

Two years later he was made Clerk to the Privy Council—'for the members of the Council choose always to have a man in their service to whose cruelty anything particularly odious may be attributed, instead of its being supposed to be done by their warrant'. Waad’s reputation as 'a man of great cruelty towards Catholics' was well enough known for Philip II not only to refuse to see him when, in 1584, he was sent on an official mission to Madrid, but to order him out of Spain, with the suggestion that he was fortunate to be allowed freedom to escape.

Waad’s usefulness to the Cecils was not only on account of the enthusiastic hatred which made him notorious as the 'chief persecutor' of Catholics, but also because his training had made him a master of intrigue and in character he was direct and unscrupulous. It was he who, while Mary Queen of Scots was decoyed away on a hunting expedition, arrested
Servants of the Government

her secretaries, rifled her room and stole a valuable collection of her papers which facilitated the forgeries of the Government-inspired ‘plot’ which brought her to her death, just as later it was he—‘that villain Wade’, as Ralegh called him—who tricked Sir Walter Ralegh into a signature used for his ruin. Thus in every ‘plot’, real or manufactured, this sinister Cecilian instrument, with his full beard, heavily-lined forehead, small mean mouth and hard, evasive eyes, acted as a kind of Inquisitor-General.

Like Cecil, he had literary interests—the writing of the classic apologia for Anglicanism, Hooker’s Ecclesiastical Polity was claimed to be due to his encouragement—and he shared Cecil’s love of great gardens (from Italy he sent Burghley fifty of the rarest kinds of seeds to be found in that country). As was proper in his father’s son, he interested himself in colonial expansion and was a member of the Virginia Company.

He was knighted by James in 1603 and a few months before the ‘discovery’ of the Gunpowder Plot was appointed Lieutenant of the Tower—a fortunate coincidence which ensured that he was in charge of both Guy Fawkes and Thomas Winter when they came to make their statements. He was later dismissed from his post for embezzling Arabella Stuart’s jewels and died peacefully at the age of seventy-seven at his mansion, Belsize House, in Hampstead.

(iii) Sir Edward Coke

Lord Campbell, writing in 1849 of Sir Edward Coke, ‘the greatest oracle of our municipal jurisprudence’, could deplore that ‘from his odious defects, justice has hardly been done to his merits’. The subsequent century of historical writing has more than redressed the balance. Coke’s decisive opposition to the Crown at the beginning of the constitutional struggle gave him a leading place among Parliamentary heroes and, though nothing can altogether obliterate his worst public fault—his habit of insulting and bullying his victims at the bar to an extent which resembled, even if it did not actually surpass, the conduct of the later Judge Jeffreys—his private character became gradually lost in the patriotic legend.

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Sir Edward Coke

Coke (or, as the name was usually spelt and invariably pronounced, Cooke) was born in 1552, the son of a Norfolk squire, was educated at Norwich Grammar School and Trinity College, Cambridge and, at nineteen, started on a legal career. A man of monumental industry, he devoted his powerful intellect, to the exclusion of any outside interests, to his chosen field of the law. But his ruling passion was money. 'Beginning on a good bottom left him by his father, marrying a wife of extraordinary wealth, having at the first great and gainful practice, afterwards many and profitable offices, being provident to choose good pennyworths in purchases, leading a thrifty life,' Coke set the seal on his fortunes by marrying into the Cecil family.

Burghley, noticing his abilities when he was a barrister in his twenties, had procured him early advancement. Coke had been made Recorder of Coventry at thirty-three, Solicitor-General at forty, Speaker of the House of Commons at forty-one and Attorney-General at forty-two. In 1598 his first wife, who had brought him a fortune and borne him ten children, died. She was buried on July 24th, ten days before Burghley's death. At Burghley's funeral, Coke approached the Cecils for the hand of the new Lord Burghley's daughter, twenty-six years his junior, who, as the widow of Sir William Hatton, was one of the richest women in England. The brothers agreed and, three months later, Coke became Robert Cecil's nephew by marriage. Henceforth any advancement was open to him, but he resisted elevation to the Bench. The honour might be greater, but the rewards were less. Though his salary as Attorney-General was only £81 6s. 8d., his official emoluments were £7,000 a year,* in addition to a very lucrative private practice. Despite his wealth, he remained his usual careful self and, during the time he had to spend in London, slept at his chambers in the Temple rather than incur the cost of a town house. He did, however, allow his wife £100 out of the £40,000* Hatton estate which she had brought him.25

The twelve years of Coke's Attorney-Generalship, 'the most discreet able portion of his career',26 came to an end after the trial of Garnet in 1606, when he was fifty-four. He

* In the currency of the time. Translated into terms of to-day, he would be a millionaire.
lived to the age of eighty-two, but his subsequent history is not relevant to this narrative. Neither, instructive and interesting as they are in themselves, are the stories of his domestic vicissitudes and of his vendetta with Francis Bacon, his rival both for the Attorney-Generalship and for Lady Hatton.* But of his characteristics, in addition to those already mentioned, it may be noted that he was neat but not gaudy in his dress; that he liked a game of bowls; that he was of a selfish, overbearing and arrogant disposition; that, like Waad, he took pleasure in torture† and that, as his small, careful handwriting on documents connected with the Gunpowder Plot still bears witness, he had no scruples about adding to, suppressing or altering evidence which he found inconvenient.

(iv) HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF NORTHAMPTON

Cecil, Waad and Coke formed the Government triumvirate in the matter of the Gunpowder Plot. Cecil discovered, Waad guarded, Coke prosecuted the prisoners. Round them other great officers of state revolved in varying degrees of apparent importance and actual insignificance; beneath them was a world of agents and secretaries and servants, spies and cipherers. Though neither milieu need be considered in detail, one representative of each demands attention—Thomas Phelippes, spy-master and cipherer, and Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, one of the Commissioners at the trial and a speaker, with Cecil and Coke, against the prisoners.

Lord Henry Howard, son of the poet Earl of Surrey executed by Henry VIII and brother of the Duke of Norfolk excecuted by Elizabeth, was an enigmatical, not to say equivocal, personality. A Catholic who ostensibly changed his religion at convenience, he was suspected of always remaining secretly loyal to the Faith, though King James probably made the shrewdest estimate of his devotion to it when, in answer to remonstrations against his taking Lord

* Lady Hatton refused to take his name when she married him.
† Although he laid it down in his writings that torture was contrary to the law of England, he considered the Crown was not bound by the law and when a warrant for torture had been granted by the Council, he 'unscrupulously attended to see that the proper degree of pain was inflicted'.27
Thomas Phelipps

Henry, as a Catholic, into his favour, he described him as ‘a tame duck with whom he hoped to catch many wild ones’.

In the reign of Elizabeth he had known the extremes of magnificence and poverty, of comfort and imprisonment, until, at the age of sixty—in 1600—he made terms with the realities of the political situation and became Cecil’s associate in the plans and correspondence for securing James’s succession. He was rewarded for this in the new reign by the Earldom of Northampton and the Garter.

Temperamentally he was a Renaissance prince, with a passion for vast and curious knowledge, a certain literary ability, a genius for intrigue and a taste for splendid building. He was probably the most learned man of his generation and certainly the most shameless and cynical flatterer at the Stuart court. He was able to disguise though not to master his ambition, with the result that he and Cecil, though they found it mutually beneficial to work together, neither liked nor trusted each other. Northampton, indeed, was distrusted, not without reason, on all sides and the words of Francis Bacon’s mother, warning her son against him, may stand as a just epitome: ‘Avoid his familiarity, as ye love the truth and yourself. Pretending courtesy, he worketh mischief perilously. I have long known him and observed him. His workings are stark naught.’

(v) Thomas Phelipps

Thomas Phelipps, ostensibly a Customs official in Leadenhall, was invaluable for his gifts as a decipherer, a forger, a linguist who could read and write French and Italian fluently, and an organizer of spies. Small, pock-marked and short-sighted, he looked about thirty in 1586. In that year he had rendered the Government considerable service by the forgery and delivery of letters which implicated Mary Queen of Scots in the Babington ‘plot’ and so brought her to death.

Among the many who worked for him as tools or subordinates or accomplices one of the most useful was Thomas Barnes, an even more brilliant forger than himself, who had the additional advantage of being, as a pretended Catholic, trusted by Hugh Owen and the exiles. Barnes had worked with Phelipps on the Mary Queen of Scots case and, after
Servants of the Government

her execution, they co-operated on another important project. Barnes managed to get himself used as Hugh Owen’s agent in England, delivered all Owen’s correspondence to Phelippes and wrote back to him an account of things in England dictated by Phelippes, who, of course, took his instructions direct from the Government.31

In the January of 1605, Phelippes, much to his surprise and indignation, found himself arrested, his house searched, his papers impounded, his servants taken for questioning and himself accused of having been in correspondence with Owen.32 In spite of his assertion that he was only acting in the Government’s interests and of his continual pleas to Cecil for release or at least some mitigation of his imprisonment—‘for all dogs will be upon a man thus disgraced’33—he was kept in the Gatehouse till Easter. Shortly afterwards he seems to have been set at liberty, after having assured Cecil that he desired ‘nothing more than to have opportunity to do you any service’.34

On the eve of the Gunpowder Plot, therefore, Phelippes was financially ruined, thoroughly frightened and only too anxious to reinstate himself with the Government. During those six months no record of his actions in this respect is discoverable, though he continued his correspondence with the exiles, partly in the hope of extracting from them some money to help him recoup his recent losses. In the January of 1606, two days before the trials of the conspirators started, he was suddenly arrested again and committed a close prisoner.

The circumstances of his second arrest (which did not become generally available till the publication of Volume XVIII of the Hatfield MSS. in 1940) throw a sufficiently interesting sidelight on the Cecilian strategy to be worth recording.

Just before Christmas, Barnes, with the cognizance of Cecil, forged a letter to Hugh Owen from Phelippes.35 On Christmas Eve, he was given a passport signed by Cecil36 to go to Flanders to deliver it and told to use the name of Thomas Wilson, one of Cecil’s secretaries.* That same

* Unless, of course, Thomas Barnes was Thomas Wilson—he had many aliases—and was telling the truth when he protested to Fane that he was usually known by his name of Wilson. On the whole, this seems improbable.
evening, Cecil wrote personally to Sir Thomas Fane, Lieutenant of Dover Castle and Deputy Warden of the Cinque Ports, asking him to arrest any man trying to leave the country under the name of 'Thomas Wilson', adding: 'Let there be no noise made of it, but carried as privately as may be, for therein consists the life of the service.' Fane dutifully carried out his instructions much to the indignation of Barnes who, when questioned, gave his real name and insisted that there must be some mistake, as Levinus Munck, Cecil's chief secretary, 'was privy to the whole drift and secret purpose of his letters' and, moreover, 'that he was with Mr. Levinus upon Sunday last in the morning'. Fane, however, was adamant, held him incommunicado in the Castle, and sent his portmanteau, containing the letters, with the key of it to London, so that Cecil and Northampton—as Warden of the Cinque Ports—might 'have the first view'.

Cecil's arrangement that Northampton should, in the course of his duty, discover the apparent letter of Phelipps to Owen was the crowning subtlety, since Northampton (who was not cognizant of the forgeries) had been mainly responsible for Phelipps's previous arrest. Thus, at one stroke, Cecil procured the close imprisonment of Phelipps without appearing to have any responsibility for it; he frightened Barnes who, after swearing that the letter emanated from Phelipps, was released and proceeded 'into Flanders with many vows and promises to do good service'; and he showed that he could still use Northampton (as he had used him in the correspondence with James in Elizabeth's reign) as his unsuspecting cat's paw.

This little comedy may be not without direct bearing on the Gunpowder Plot. Though nothing can be proved, it is almost certain that if Winter's confession was forged, either Barnes or Phelipps forged it. And it is at least interesting that, at the crucial moment (the end of November 1605) Phelipps was in the position that has been noted and Barnes in confidential contact with Munck; and that, by Cecil's contriving, Phelipps was in close confinement in London and Barnes was in Flanders at the exact time of Winter's trial when the 'confession' was produced.
Servants of the Government

(vi) Richard Topcliffe

Richard Topcliffe, a Lincolnshire gentleman in the Cecil’s pay and a Member of Parliament, died, at the age of seventy-two, in 1604. Though, in considering the actual year of the plot, it would thus seem superfluous to name him, his shadow lies so darkly over the previous years that it is impossible for a modern reader properly to understand the atmosphere of them without an acquaintance with him. In his day, he gave a new word to the language. Where we, using the name of a later connoisseur of cruelty, should say ‘sadistic’, the Elizabethans would say ‘topcliffian’. ‘Topcliffizare’ meant to hunt down and torture Catholics, and Topcliffe himself claimed, in a letter to Queen Elizabeth dated ‘Good or Evil Friday, 1593’ to ‘have helped more traitors (to Tyburn) than all the noblemen and gentlemen of the court’.42

‘The cruelties of this monster’, as one Protestant historian has put it, ‘would fill a volume... the restless ferocity of the man never allowing his persecuting mania to cease for an hour’, and the expedients to which he resorted ‘would be absolutely incredible were it not that the evidence of even his own admission is too strong to be controverted.’43 In one case he seduced the daughter of one of his victims and used her for playing on her own father. In another, he promised one of his accomplices who wished to inherit property to ‘persecute his father and uncle to death’ for £5,000 and, when the money was not forthcoming on the ground that, in spite of torture, they had ‘died naturally’, he sued him for payment.44

The main usefulness of Topcliffe, however, was that he was authorized to have a private rack ‘to torment priests in his own house in such manner as he shall think good’, thus relieving the Government of criticism ‘because the often exercise of the rack in the Tower was so odious and so much spoken of of the people’.46 Had he lived eighteen months longer, the Government would not have needed to resort to the open and official use of torture to get Guy Fawkes’s confession.

(vii) King James I

Last, because certainly least in importance, was the King.
King James I

Whatever may have been the exact relationship between Elizabeth and the Cecils, there is no doubt that Robert Cecil controlled James in the early days of his English kingship and that, in the context of the Gunpowder Plot, James's personal influence was negligible. He was more acted against than acting. His character, such as it was, is worthy of study only because it reveals to what influences he was susceptible.

Two historical actions are the most important factors. The first is the death of his father, Darnley, who was the victim of a gunpowder plot, when the Scots Protestant Lords blew up the lonely house in Kirk o'Field where he lay ill. The second is the death of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, in which he connived so that he might gain the English Crown.* Thus an attempt to kill him in the same way that his father had been killed just at the moment when he was settling down to enjoy the fruits of his mortal betrayal of his mother was calculated to drive him to the edge of unreasoning fury. No vengeance would seem excessive; no anti-Catholic legislation too severe. There is more than his temperamental sadism in his instructions to torture Fawkes: 'The gentler tortours are to be first usid unto him, et sic per gradus ad ima senditum, and so God speeded your good workes.'

Of James's character in general, as also of his appearance, we have accounts by eye-witnesses. He was thirty-nine at the time of the Plot, of middle height, 'somewhat plump, of a ruddy complexion.... His beard was scattering on the chin and very thin.' He looked stouter than he was because of his 'stiletto-proof' padded clothes. 'He was naturally of a timorous disposition, which was the reason of his quilted doublets; his eyes large, ever rolling after any stranger came into his presence... his tongue too large for his mouth, which ever made him speak full in the mouth and made him drink very uncomely, as if eating his drink which came out into the cup of each side of his mouth... his legs were very weak... that weakness made him ever leaning on other men's shoulders; his walk was ever circular.'

His physical cowardice was his dominant characteristic, with his pretensions to wisdom a close second. The former made him dislike 'the sight of a soldier or of any valiant

* The evidence for James's guilt is discussed at length in R. S.Rait's King James's Secret.
Servants of the Government

man’;* the latter prevented any flattery from seeming too gross. In the discovery of the Plot, both traits were considered. It was, on the one hand, the work of a group of young men of action, including the two best swordsmen in England; on the other, he was encouraged to think that it was his perspicacity alone which, from the warning letter, had deduced gunpowder.* ‘When the letter was showed to me by my Secretary (Cecil), wherein a general obscure advertisement was given of some dangerous blow at this time, I did upon the instant interpret and apprehend some dark phrases therein contrary to the ordinary grammar construction of them... to be meant by this horrible form of blowing us up all by powder; and thereupon ordered that search to be made whereby the matter was discovered.’

There is one other aspect of James’s character which played a part in the political situation immediately before the Plot. ‘He ever desired to prefer meane men in great places.’ The explanation of this may be, as the writer says, ‘that when he turned them out again, they should have no friend to bandy with them: and besides they were so hated by being raised from a mean estate to over-top all men that everyone held it a pretty recreation to have them often turned out.’ But it is more likely that his habit was not so much calculated statecraft as a temperamental consequence of his megalomania and homosexuality. He liked playing at being a god and creating his creatures; and he particularly liked doing it to good-looking young men. When he and his horde of Scots favourites crossed the Border, a minor pillage of the resources of England began which created sufficient of a social tension for Guy Fawkes’s famous remark that he intended to blow the Scottish beggars back to their native mountains, to have made him a national hero, had circumstances been slightly different.

The continuation of the economic persecution of the Catholics in the new reign had thus an additional exacerbation. As Gardiner himself admits: ‘The Catholic gentry must have been especially aggrieved by the knowledge that much of the money thus raised went into the pockets of

* That is, assuming that he was not privy to the whole proceedings, as Elizabeth was, for instance, to the Babington conspiracy, about which she made ingenious and constructive suggestions.

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courtiers. For instance the profits of the lands of two recusants were granted to a footman and this was by no means an isolated case."

Whatever hopes may have been aroused among the Catholics at James's accession or have remained among those who were personally unacquainted with him were slowly but surely dispelled and even the un lamented English Deborah seemed in retrospect to compare favourably with the Scottish Solomon.
BOOK THREE

THE PLOT
The Birth of the Plot

(i) The First Conspirators

The process of disillusionment was not without its paradoxes, the chief of which was the reversal of the roles of the Jesuits and the seculars. The Jesuits acting under the orders of the Pope and their general now stood for peace and co-operation with the State, believing that toleration would be gained. The revolutionary element was provided by a secular priest, William Watson, whose insane scheme to kidnap the King—'the Bye Plot' was revealed to the Government by the Catholics themselves.

The immediate result of this evidence of co-operation was a personal disposition on the part of James to fulfil his original promises of toleration. In the July of 1603 he received a Catholic deputation, with Sir Thomas Tresham as spokesman, and promised them to remit the recusancy fines. In August he learnt through the Papal Nuncios in Paris and Brussels that the Pope, on his part, would countenance no insurrection of Catholics and that any Catholics conspiring against the State would incur ecclesiastical censures. For the remainder of the year—the first nine months of James's reign—the atmosphere was so peaceful that no less than a hundred and forty priests entered England, the chapels of the Catholic embassies were thrown open and 'in some sections, sermons were delivered in the open air to which the faithful flocked by the thousands'.

Cecil was seriously alarmed. His brother's complaint to him that 'the infection of Popery does so spread abroad as many that held clear heretofore begin to decline by reason of the nonchalance had of the laws. . . . It must be looked to in time,' was the echo of his own thoughts which he subse-
The Birth of the Plot

quently expressed with unequivocal directness: ‘I love not to yield to any toleration... I will be much less than I am, or rather nothing at all, before I shall ever become an instrument of such a miserable change.’ To the Venetian Ambassador he was even more outspoken: ‘There are laws and they must be observed and there is no doubt but that the object of these laws is to extinguish the Catholic religion in this kingdom.’

By the February of 1604 the King was induced to issue an order for all Catholic priests to leave the country—the proclamation was made, presumably intentionally, on Ash Wednesday—but at the opening of Parliament in March, he made it clear that he considered this a political move only and that he had no intention of persecuting the Catholic laity or of enforcing the recusancy fines. The Venetian Ambassador observed that ‘the tone of his speech at the opening of Parliament showed a disposition very favourable to the Catholics and it is a fact that, in spite of the proclamation, very few priests have left the kingdom, and no great diligence is used towards their expulsion; nay, even those who are actually in prison and could easily be expelled have not been moved yet; and the Catholics begin to entertain lively hopes.’

Nevertheless, whatever James’s private intentions may have been and however slow the machinery of persecution may have been in restarting, the fact remained that the penal legislation had been re-enforced. And for the wilder spirits among the Catholics, this could be construed as a signal for action.

Thomas Winter had been at Huddington since the beginning of November 1603. Ill and depressed, he had decided to leave England altogether and live abroad when, a few days after the Ash Wednesday proclamation banishing the priests, a messenger arrived from Catesby asking him to come to London to confer with some of his friends. For the first time, Winter refused Catesby’s summons. He pleaded his indisposition and the messenger returned alone. But hard on the heels of his refusal another letter came insisting that he was ‘in any wise to come’. This time he went immediately and found Catesby, in a house at Lambeth, in conference with John Wright. They urged him to abandon his idea of
The First Conspirators

leaving England and insisted that it was the duty of them all not to forsake their country 'but to deliver her from the servitude in which she remained'.

Winter answered that he had often risked his life for lesser causes and that he was quite prepared to take his part in anything that 'might do service to the Catholic cause' but that he saw no possible course of action which would be beneficial.

Catesby then told him that 'he had bethought him of a way at one instant to deliver us from all our bonds and without any foreign help to replant again the Catholic religion'. This way was 'to blow up the Parliament House with gunpowder'. 'In that place', he said, 'they have done us all the mischief and perchance God hath designed that place for their punishment.'

Winter 'wondered at the strangeness of the conceit' and pointed out that though such a plan would certainly strike at the root of the mischief and would 'breed a confusion fit to beget new alterations', yet if the design failed—as it probably would—the attempt would bring such scandal on Catholicism that not only their enemies but their friends would justifiably condemn them. Catesby retorted: 'The nature of the disease requires so sharp a remedy' and asked if he might depend on him for help.

Faced with the direct question, Winter said: 'Yes. I will venture my life on this or anything else if you have decided on it,' but immediately began to point out practical difficulties, such as the lack of a house near the House of Lords from which to work and the suspicion which their preparations would be bound to arouse in the neighbourhood.

Winter's scruples seem to have impressed Catesby who decided that no steps should be taken until Winter had visited Brussels to see the Constable of Castile, who was negotiating the formal peace between England and Spain, 'entreating him to solicit his Majesty at his coming hither that the penal laws may be recalled and we admitted into the rank of his other subjects'.

Winter accordingly crossed to Flanders where he stayed for about a month. 'He delivered his message unto the Constable as in the name of all the Catholics of England, whose answer was, that he had strict command from His Majesty
The Birth of the Plot

of Spain to do all good offices for the Catholics; and, for his own part, he thought himself bound in conscience so to do, and that no good occasion should be omitted.* But, in spite of fair promises, Winter was convinced that nothing would be done—'Good words', as he told Catesby on his return, 'but I fear the deeds will not answer'. Spain's political need of peace was too great to allow consideration for English Catholics to constitute an obstacle to it, and, for the same reason, a Catholic rising would find no support abroad. Winter eventually returned late in April in the company of Guy Fawkes, who had been introduced to him by Sir William Stanley at Ostend and was said to be a trustworthy man in any dangerous enterprise.

A fortnight after their return, Thomas Percy came up to London—either on business of his own or because Catesby or John Wright had sent for him—and, on meeting the others, burst out immediately: 'Shall we always, gentlemen, talk and never do anything?' The remark seems to have been addressed chiefly to Catesby, for when, on an earlier occasion, Percy had threatened to kill the King for breaking his word to the Catholics, Catesby had said: 'No, Tom, thou shalt not adventure to small purpose; but if thou wilt be a traitor, thou shalt be to some great advantage' and had told him that he was 'thinking of a most sure way'.

He now took Percy aside and told him that he had a plan which he would reveal after they had all sworn an oath of secrecy. Such a weighty decision could obviously not be taken on the spur of the moment and two or three days elapsed before the five men met in a house near St. Clement's Danes in the Strand. Here 'on a primer' they administered to each other the oath: 'I swear by the Blessed Trinity and by the Sacrament I now propose to receive, never to disclose directly or indirectly, by word or circumstance, the matter that shall be proposed to me to keep secret, nor desist from the execution thereof until the rest shall give me leave.' Having made the vow, they went into the next room where a priest (who, of course, knew nothing of the oath) said Mass and gave them Holy Communion. When Mass was over, Catesby told Percy, and Winter and Wright told Fawkes* of their plan.

* It will be remembered that Wright and Fawkes were old school-fellows.
The Government's Knowledge

While Winter had been abroad, Catesby had endeavoured to meet one of his practical objections—the lack of a house near the House of Lords—and had discovered that Henry Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton leased from John Whynniard, Keeper of the King's Wardrobe, 'a house in Westminster belonging to Parliament House' which could serve as a base. He now suggested that Percy should use his influence to get the lease transferred to him, which Percy succeeded in doing, partly owing to 'great entreaty of Mr. Carleton, Mr. Hippsley and other gentlemen belonging to the Earl of Northumberland', by May 24th.  

The keys of the house were entrusted to Fawkes, who took the name of Johnson and was assumed by the neighbours to be what he professed to be—Percy's servant. No further action was taken by the five. In any case, they had to wait to see whether the Constable's visit in August would, despite general scepticism, result in any good for the Catholics, and Parliament was prorogued until 7th February 1603. The conspirators therefore 'departed several ways into the country to meet again at the beginning of Michaelmas term'.

(ii) THE GOVERNMENT'S KNOWLEDGE

For these events we have one authority and one only—Thomas Winter's confession. Robert Catesby, Thomas Percy and John Wright were all killed before they could be questioned. Guy Fawkes, even if his confession under torture be accepted, was obviously not in the inner counsels of the group since he imagined, for instance, that the original scheme was Winter's.  

As there is reason to suppose that Winter's confession is not what it seems, the difficulty at once arises as to what, in fact, is to be believed. It can only be said that the story, as I have told it, is credible and in accord both with the situation and with the characters of those involved. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that the only verifiable portion of it

* Michaelmas Term 1604 began on October 9th.
† 'We (Fawkes and Winter) imparted our purpose to three other gentlemen more, namely, Robert Catesby, Thomas Percy and John Wright.' (Fawkes's Declaration)
‡ See Appendix I.
The Birth of the Plot

is that Percy did take a lease of the house, and that this fact can be interpreted as indicating no more than that he wanted a convenient house in London near the Palace for his new duties as Gentleman Pensioner, to which Northumberland, as Captain of the Gentlemen Pensioners, appointed him on June 9th.

Certainly this explanation is entirely adequate. It is the reason he gave for wanting the house; it is the reason why his endeavours to obtain it were supported both by Northumberland himself and by members of his household; and the sequence of the dates—the lease on May 24th, the appointment on June 9th—seem to confirm a theory to which Cecil’s false description of the house as the ‘bloody cellar’ may be regarded as additional support.

Even the return of Fawkes and his employment as Percy’s servant has no necessarily sinister significance. It was natural that, with the return of so many exiles during the peaceable first months of the reign, Fawkes should visit his home and family in Yorkshire—which he presumably did during the summer when the conspirators went their several ways into the country. It was equally natural that he should take service with Percy (who, a Yorkshireman like himself, probably knew his parents), for he needed means of subsistence; and his false name, like those taken by most Catholics returning from the Continent, was a conventional precaution if not an actual necessity.

Yet, admitting all this, there is no real reason to doubt that this part of the narrative at least is substantially true and as Winter gave it. There was no need on his part to lie, since the story incriminated no one who could be hurt by it. For the same reason, there was no need for the Government to falsify it. And there are, in fact, grounds for supposing that during this early period the Government was aware of the plot.

It can obviously never be proved that the idea of a Gunpowder Plot had its origin in Cecil’s brain rather than in Catesby’s, but as an hypothesis it is worth consideration. Cecil’s problem was how to wean the King from a policy of toleration. It was useless to argue, for it was a subject, as Cecil admitted, ‘no creature living dare propound to our religious sovereign’; but he knew that James’s attitude
The Government’s Knowledge

varied in proportion as he felt himself affected by the actions of Catholics. James’s megalomaniac temperament was such that ‘anything which gave him personal annoyance would have considerable influence on his policy’* and such things as, for instance, the sending of relics to the Queen (who was a secret Catholic) did more to stiffen his policy than the activities of many Jesuits. And nothing, as we have seen,* could have been better calculated to drive James to a frenzy of fear and fury than a Gunpowder Plot, an attempt to kill him in the way his father had been killed. Whether Cecil invented it or not, it is certain that for Cecil’s purpose nothing better could have been invented.

Catesby’s reason, on the other hand—‘that in that place have they done us all the mischief and perchance God hath designed that place for their punishment’—sounds as much an unconvincing rationalization to us as it did to Winter (who, of all men, understood Catesby) when he ‘wondered at the strangeness of the conceit’. It appears even more out of place in Fawkes’s Declaration where, having been hardened into a carefully phrased manifesto and attributed to the conspirators in general, it reads: ‘Which place (the upper House of Parliament) we made choice of the rather, because religion having been unjustly suppressed there, it was fittest that justice and punishment should be executed there.’

The thesis that the plan originated in Cecil’s brain and was by some means transferred to Catesby’s would be untenable but for two circumstances—that the Government had had long and successful experience in ‘planting’ such ideas (as the Babington conspiracy and others bore witness), and that Lord Monteagle’s services were available to Cecil.

Monteagle had already been restored to his dignities, had made terms with the King about religion and had been appointed one of the acting Commissioners for the Legislative Union between England and Scotland. In that capacity he knew that the King intended—in honour of what he hoped would be that session of Parliament which would bring the Union into being—to take the unusual course of opening in Royal state a Parliament which merely stood prorogued. In normal circumstances, there would have been no point in the gunpowder project for the simple reason that

* See page 101.
there would have been no ceremony. That Catesby knew that the circumstances were to be exceptional and made preparations accordingly suggests at least a conversation with Monteagle on the subject.

There is another circumstance worth noting. It was not in Cecil's nature completely to trust anyone and least of all to trust the people he used. He saw to it that his spies were spied on. One of his informers, Gage, whose property adjoined that of the Treshams in Rushton, often urged Francis Tresham to improve his financial position by turning informer. Some time between March 13th and August 22nd 1604—that is to say, while the plot was being hatched—Gage approached Tresham again, asking him particularly to find out and reveal to him any 'Popish plot' that might be on foot. As Francis Tresham was Monteagle's brother-in-law, this could well have been a move on Cecil's part to obtain independent information about Monteagle and the circle of conspirators.

Whatever may be thought of the hypothesis that Cecil through Monteagle inspired the plot, it can at least be said that, without any incongruity of character or circumstance, things could have happened this way, even though it cannot be asserted that they did. What is beyond dispute is that Cecil knew about the plot from the beginning.

Among those concerned with the organization of the spy service was Sir Thomas Chaloner, diplomat and son of a diplomat, who had been employed as envoy to Scotland at the end of Elizabeth's reign, had accompanied James to England and was now Governor to the Prince of Wales. If Cecil, Coke and Waad were the final and controlling triumvirate, Chaloner and Popham, the Lord Chief Justice, represented the second grade and were responsible for much of the actual organization. Two of their most trusted agents were Thomas Allison, who worked mainly among the exiles at Brussels, and Henry Wright, who was given a post at Court.* In the April of 1604,† Wright revealed the existence of the plot to

* It is difficult to be certain of the exact relationships. We find, for example, Allison complaining bitterly to Chaloner that Popham lacked discretion in making arrests and so imperilled the efficacy of the spy-service (Hatfield MSS., xvi, p. 118) and, on one occasion at least (ibid., xviii, p. 52) Wright appealed direct to Cecil, suspecting that Chaloner was inefficient in passing on evidence 'considering what I have lately heard about the like negligences'.
The Renewal of Persecution

Chaloner and Popham and, as he said in his subsequent petition to the King pointing out that he had ‘never received any reward for his pains and charges laid out concerning the same’, he kept them informed ‘for two years space almost before the said treason burst forth by an obscure letter to the Lord Mounteagle’. 12

Since Wright appealed to the King himself as one who knew the facts and had given him an acknowledgment of them, it is obvious that the Government were, from the first moment, aware of the conspiracy through their ordinary spy-service channels. From the point of view of statecraft only one problem faced them—when the plot should be ‘discovered’ so as to secure the maximum anti-Catholic effect.

(iii) THE RENEWAL OF PERSECUTION

In the August of 1604, the Constable of Castile came to England, peace with Spain was proclaimed, Cecil was created Viscount Cranborne (and immediately accepted an annual pension from Spain for betraying state secrets) 13 and the state of Catholics was, as Winter had foreseen, no better than before. During the summer, indeed, it deteriorated. At the summer assizes, the judges on circuit ignored the King’s expressed wishes and returned to Elizabethan punishments. At Salisbury a priest and a layman, who had aided him, were executed; at Warwick, two priests were martyred for their priesthood; laymen were executed at York and Ripon and at Manchester the judges, after condemning many to death, including a layman who had merely ‘entertained a Jesuit’, laid it down that, as the law stood, anyone who heard Mass thereby incurred the death penalty.

An aged Lancashire Catholic, Thomas Pound, who had suffered long imprisonment for the Faith under Elizabeth, determined to test the truth of this statement and presented to the King a humble petition, calling attention to the renewal of the persecution and to the Manchester ruling. He

* "The man that informed Sir Thomas Challoner and the Lord Popham of the said Jesuitical practices, their meetings and traitorous designs in that matter, whereof from time to time they informed your Majesty, was one Wright, who hath your Majesty’s hand for his so doing."

† Pound was in fact a Jesuit, but in this case at least the Government was unaware of it.
The Birth of the Plot

asked that an independent commission headed by Lord Monteagle should be appointed to inquire into the proceedings of the assize judges. The Privy Council immediately ordered him to be arrested. He was brought before the Star Chamber where he was abused and brow-beaten by Coke, told by Cecil that he was ‘a weak and feeble-witted old man’, sententiously addressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury who quoted St. Cyprian at him ‘which Mr. Pound peremptorily reproved, saying it was St. Jerome and not St. Cyprian, whereto the Archbishop replied not’ and sentenced to be imprisoned during the King’s pleasure, to pay a fine of £1,000 and to stand in the pillory at Westminster and at Lancaster. A majority of the Privy Council, including Coke and Cecil’s brother Burghley, pressed for the additional punishment that he should be nailed to the pillory and have both his ears cut off, one in London, the other in Lancaster, but this was eventually overruled, though Cecil insisted that, while he stood in the pillory, placards stating his crime should be hung on him, since ‘of himself he would not acknowledge it’, and the Archbishop of Canterbury laid down the general principle, in a diatribe against Rome as ‘the purple harlot and seat of anti-Christ’, that as Catholics refused to inform against each other, it was necessary ‘to put some Judas among them’.

Pound’s case, which was heard in November, confirmed the Catholics’ worst fears. Already in September, a commission had been appointed to preside over the banishment of the priests and such priests as were in prison had been sent overseas. Now the Government, despite James’s promise to Sir Thomas Tresham the previous year, determined on the re-enforcement of recusancy fines.

The cumulative effect of this policy was to drive the Catholics to despair and when the conspirators met again in London in the autumn, any doubts that they may have had about the necessity of desperate remedies must have been dispelled. About this time, possibly at the end of September, Robert Keyes was admitted to their number to be in charge of the house in Lambeth where Catesby usually lodged, which they decided to use as a storehouse for wood and powder—‘which being there made ready’, says Winter’s confession, ‘should in a night be conveyed by boat to the house by the Parliament’. 
The Renewal of Persecution

'The house by the Parliament', however, was for the moment unusable for any conspiratorial purpose. From the Government point of view, the more obstacles that were placed in the plotters' way at this moment the better. The longer they had to wait, the more bitter would be their feeling and the greater the number of Catholics, forced to extremes by the new legislation, who would be disposed to join a rebellion. When Guy Fawkes returned from the country at the end of September to visit the house of which he was custodian, he found that it had been commandeered by the Government for the use of the Committee, on which Montague was sitting, to discuss the Union of England and Scotland. As, according to the evidence of the owner's servant, the house was in any case so small that when Percy came there to spend the night Fawkes had to lodge out, it would seem that it could have been used only as a kind of robing- or retiring-place for the Commissioners. But, whatever its use, it was effectively barred to the conspirators who were thus forced to continue inactive till a fortnight before Christmas.
2

The Mine

(i) The Conspirators at Work

The topography of the surroundings of the House of Lords in 1605 has been the subject of several conjectural reconstructions. As exactitude is impossible and continued reference to a diagram apt to be irritating, the plan may be reduced simply, for practical purposes, to an H. The bridge of the H is the House of Lords: the top part of the left-hand upright is the Prince's Chamber, which served as the Peers' robing-room, the lower part houses of Court servants, including Whynniard's, which could be used during session as additional accommodation, such as withdrawing-rooms—as it was, in fact, used by the Commissioners for the Union. The upper part of the right-hand upright is the Painted Chamber, used as a conference-room for Lords and Commons; the lower part, other houses of no particular importance to the story. Below the H, about fifty yards away, is the River Thames, running parallel to the House of Lords. The problem of the conspirators was to construct an underground passage from the cellar of Whynniard's house—the lower left-hand part of the H—by which they could convey thirty-six barrels of gunpowder to a cavity they intended to excavate under the House of Lords, the bridge of the H.

The House of Lords was a long two-storied building, seventy-seven feet in length and about twenty-four feet in width. The Chamber itself occupied the upper story; the equivalent room on the ground-level had once been the kitchens of the Palace of Whitehall, but was in 1605 let out as a store-room to a coal merchant, named Bright. The gunpowder, therefore, would not be immediately under the room.
The Conspirators at Work

in which Parliament assembled, but beneath this ground-level coal store.

The five conspirators, Catesby, Thomas Winter, Percy, John Wright and Fawkes, started their mining operations from the cellar of Whynnard's house as soon as, on 11th December, the departure of the Commissioners for the Union left them free to do so. According to Winter's confession: 'We all five entered with tools fit to begin our work, having provided ourselves of baked meats, the less to need sending abroad. We entered late in the night, and were never seen, save only Mr. Percy's man (i.e. Fawkes), until Christmas eve, in which time we wrought under a little entry to the wall of the Parliament House, and underpropped it as we went with wood.' According to Fawkes's confession: 'Whilst they were in working, I stood as sentinel to descry any man that came near, whereof I gave them warning, and so ceased until I gave notice to proceed again.'

To have reached the foundation-wall of the House of Lords in a fortnight was no mean achievement, since all the four 'laborers in their Vault of Villainy' were amateur excavators—'gentlemen not accustomed to labour or to be pioneers'—two of them, at least, Catesby and Percy, must have found their height an exhausting handicap, and the one man who had had some experience of mining, Fawkes, took no part in it. One thing, however, was quite certain—that it was, with all their will and energy, unlikely that, as they had taken two weeks to tunnel through the earth, they would manage to get through the eleven-foot-thick foundation wall in the six weeks remaining at their disposal before Parliament met. The same thought may have occurred to others. For no adequate reason, the Government, on Christmas Eve, decided to postpone the reassembling of Parliament from February 7th to October 3rd.* The conspirators, welcoming

* The official reason given was that infection from the plague might linger in the country districts, which the returning Members of Parliament would bring back with them to London. (Lords' Journals). This was the recurring conventional excuse which no one could question though it is doubtful whether it was ever taken seriously. On this particular occasion, a variety of explanations were considered. 'Some say that this proroguing is because of the bringing in of the privy seals which are yet most behind, the avoidings of the clamour of Puritan ministers, and giving time to our Union-makers to play upon the bit.' (Winwood's Memorials, ii, 45.)
The Mine

the respite, went to their homes in the country for the Christmas holidays, though Fawkes, at least, was present at the Whitehall festivities in connection with the Earl of Montgomery's marriage to Cecil's niece on December 28th.*

They decided they needed more help. By general consent, Christopher Wright was initiated into the plot and Robert Keyes released from his guardianship of the twenty barrels of gunpowder which had so far been accumulated in the Lambeth house by the transference of them about the beginning of February to the Westminster lodging.† Throughout the following weeks the seven of them laboured at the wall 'which was very hard to breach through' and, according to Fawkes's confession 'all we seven lay in the house and had shot and powder, being resolved to die in that place, before we should yield or be taken'.

On February 7th, the further prorogation of Parliament formally took place in the House of Lords, where twenty-nine peers, including Cecil, assembled without misgiving— a circumstance which appears to have escaped the conspirators' notice.‡

They had fears of another kind. According to Father Tesimond, they were one day surprised by the tolling of a bell, which seemed to come from the middle of the foundation wall. Alarmed by the mysterious sound they sent for Fawkes from his lookout point above. The tolling continued and was heard by him as well as the others. 'Much wondering at this prodigy, they sprinkled the wall with holy water, when the sound instantly ceased. Upon this they resumed their labour and after a short time the tolling commenced again and was again silenced by the application of holy water. This process was repeated frequently for several days till at length the unearthly sound was heard no more.'§

Some time later, they were again disturbed by an un-

* Part of Fawkes's confession which was suppressed by the Government from the official version, stated: 'He confesseth he was at the Earl of Montgomery's marriage, but, as he sayeth, with no intention of evil having a sword about him and was very near to His Majesty and the Lords there present.'

† Or in an outhouse. Fawkes says: 'in a low room new-builted'; Winter says: 'in Mr. Percy's house.'

‡ Father Gerard's comment (What was the Gunpowder Plot? p. 69) is just. It is surely 'incomprehensible' that, had they known it, they should have made no mention of it, considering their explanations of other obstacles.
Some Later Doubts

explained noise. This time it was not a bell but a rushing noise in the coal store almost immediately above their heads. Thinking they had been discovered, they sent Fawkes to reconnoitre. He reported with some relief, that it was nothing but the coal merchant selling off his coals, as he was about to relinquish the lease of the room. This fortunate circumstance meant the end of the mining operations. As Fawkes put it in his confession, ‘finding that the coals were a-selling and that the cellar was to be let, viewing the commodity thereof for our purpose, Percy went and hired the same’.

Thus, on 25th March 1605, the large ground-level room immediately under the Peers’ Chamber—to be known to posterity as ‘Guy Fawkes’s cellar’—passed into the possession of the conspirators, who transferred to it their barrels and casks of gunpowder, which they covered with firewood—500 faggots and 3,000 billets—so that any suspicion might be allayed and, according to Winter’s confession, ‘we might have the house free to suffer anyone to enter that would’.

(ii) SOME LATER DOUBTS

So ended the arduous and difficult work at the mine. The question round which controversy has raged, however, is whether in fact it ever began—whether the mine is anything but a myth. The point is not, perhaps, of so great importance as the Victorian controversialists thought it, for, on the one hand, there is ample evidence of Government falsifications without any need to rely on this in particular and, on the other, the conspirators’ activities between 11th December 1604 and 25th March 1605, do not affect their general attitude or their final acts. But the arguments have an interest of their own.*

The evidence for the mine is certainly more tenuous than usual. Fawkes made no mention of it until his fifth examination. In his original deposition, he said that the barrels of gunpowder were moved from Lambeth about Christmas. The words ‘to the cellar under the Upper House of Parliament’ are inserted in another hand. In addition to Fawkes, only Thomas Winter and Keyes mention the mine, and the Government, in the printed version, deliberately inter-

* The arguments will be found in full in Gardiner and Gerard passim.
The Mine

changed the names of Robert Winter and Keyes, making Robert Winter a worker in the mine (which he certainly cannot have been) and Keyes one of those ‘who wrought not in the mine’.

Why the Government indulged in this particular falsification must remain a mystery; nor is their explanation of the absence of any tangible evidence of the mine altogether clear. Coke explained in his speech at the trial: ‘If the cellar had not been hired, the mine work could hardly, or not at all, have been discovered, for the mine was neither found nor suspected until the danger was past, and the capital offenders apprehended, and, by themselves, upon examination, confessed.’ That is to say, as Father John Gerard pertinently comments, ‘the government could not, though provided with information that there was a powder-mine under the Parliament House have discovered this extraordinary piece of engineering; and, moreover, after its abandonment, the traces of the excavation were so artfully hidden as to elude observation till the prisoners drew attention to them. Such assertions cannot possibly be true; but they might serve to meet the objection that no one had seen the mine.’

The other two main points inducing scepticism are perhaps best expressed in Fr. Gerard’s words. The first concerns the disposal of the soil. ‘No man who has had practical experience of the unexpected quantity of earth which comes out of the most insignificant excavation will be likely to rest satisfied with the explanation officially given, that it was sufficiently concealed by being hidden beneath the turf in the little garden adjoining. What, moreover, was done with the great stones that came out of the foundations? Of these there must have been on hand some sixty cubic feet, probably much more, and they, at any rate, can scarcely have been stowed away beneath the turf.’

Gardiner agrees that the greater part of the soil must have been disposed of some other way than the official explanation asserts and suggests that it was thrown in the Thames. ‘The nights were long and dark, and the river was very close.’

The second point is ‘how proceedings so remarkable could have escaped the notice, not only of the Government, but of the entire neighbourhood. This, it must be remembered, was most populous. There were people living in the very
Some Later Doubts

building, a part of which sheltered the conspirators. Around were thickly clustered the dwellings of the Keeper of the Wardrobe, auditors and tellers of the Exchequer, and other such officials. There were tradespeople and workmen constantly employed close to the spot where the work was going on; while the public character of the place makes it impossible to suppose that tenants such as Percy and his friends, who were little better than lodgers, could claim the exclusive use of anything beyond the rooms they rented—even when allowed the use of these—or could shut against the neighbours and visitors in general the precincts of so much frequented a spot."

Into the ramifications of this argument it is not necessary to enter, if only because there can be no certainty either way. It is really beside the point to argue about the noise the miners made, the times they worked, the tools they used and the suspicion they aroused. All through history secret plans, escapes and plots have been successfully accomplished in circumstances which, in cold logic, would seem impossible. And, in this case, as the Government were aware of their movements, suspicion hardly mattered. The essential consideration was their own feeling of secrecy and security.

The mine, assuming that it existed, was never used. The convenient coal store became the necessary 'cellar' and after the March of 1605, the problems facing the conspirators were of a different nature—the organization of the Catholic rising which was to transform the coup de foudre into a coup d'état.
Full knowledge of the conspirators’ plans died with them. Only from fragments of the confessions of Winter and Fawkes, the evidence of some of the Jesuits, a stray letter or two and the proof of some preparations actually made can they be conjecturally pieced together. This is the more unfortunate because, whatever the truth about the mine or the gunpowder, this part of the plot undoubtedly existed and is the most important part of it. The destruction of King and Parliament was, in one sense, merely incidental—a necessary prologue to the setting up of a new Government which should rule in the name of the next sovereign. As Henry, Prince of Wales, would presumably be with his parents in the House of Lords, this sovereign would be either the five-year-old Prince Charles, or, if he were killed or inaccessible to them, the nine-year-old Princess Elizabeth.

The kidnapping of Charles was, according to Winter’s confession, entrusted to Percy, who, as Gentleman Pensioner would have easy access to the Court. ‘By his acquaintance, he with another gentleman* would enter the chamber without suspicion, and having some dozen others at several doors to expect his coming, and two or three on horseback at the Court gate to receive him, he would undertake (the blow being given, until which he would attend in the Duke’s chamber) to carry him safe away, for he supposed that most of the Court would be absent, and such as were there not suspecting, or unprovided for any such matter.’ Fawkes, on the other hand, says ‘they knew not well how they should

* Might this have been Monteagle?
Plans

come by the person of the Duke Charles, being near London where they had no forces'.

Their forces were to be concentrated in their own part of the countryside, the Worcestershire-Warwickshire area where their seats were. Here, too, at Combe Abbey, about twenty miles from Ashby St. Legers, Princess Elizabeth lived in the care of Lord Harington. 'For the Lady Elizabeth', says Winter's confession, 'it were easy to surprise her in the country by drawing friends together at a hunting near the Lord Harington's and Ashby, Mr. Catesby's house, being not far off was a fit place for preparation.' Events were to prove how carefully this part of the plan, at least, was prepared.

Assuming success to this point, how was the country as a whole to be won over? Catesby, realizing that it would be useless to expect general support for a Catholic government, decided to appeal to nationalist prejudices. In all classes and at all levels, there was an intense hatred of the Scots, the hereditary enemies, more alien than the French, the northern barbarians who were swarming like locusts over the country in the wake of their king. Adding insult to injury was the project for the Union of England and Scotland which, as far as anyone at the moment knew, was to be enacted by the reassembled Parliament.* To the bitter, almost revolutionary, feeling engendered by this policy Catesby determined to appeal. According to Fawkes, a Proclamation was prepared 'as well to avow and justify the action as to have protested against the Union and in no sort to have meddled with religion therein'.†

The final part of the plan concerned foreign aid. It was not in the nature of things that the conspirators who had, almost from childhood, envisaged Continental support for a Catholic coup d'état, should eliminate this factor from their calculations, even though peace with Spain was concluded and Winter himself had been satisfied that they could expect no help. At the very least, they must tell the exiles what they

* This, of course, in spite of James's efforts, did not take place till over a century later.
† This passage was omitted by the Government in their printed copy. It will be noticed that this makes quite clear the meaning of Fawkes's remark that he intended to blow the Scottish beggars back to their native mountains.
The Summer of 1605

intended to do and Fawkes was accordingly sent back to Brussels for the summer.

It is impossible to be certain of his exact mission. The Government’s determination to involve Hugh Owen in the plot led to undoubted falsifications* of the evidence at this particular point. Fawkes merely said that 'the true purpose of his going over was lest, being a dangerous man, he should be known and suspected'. Winter's confession says that Fawkes went both on those grounds of prudence and 'also to acquaint Sir William Stanley and Mr. Owen with this matter' and adds 'the reason why we desired Sir William Stanley should be acquainted herewith was to have him with us so soon as he could and, for Mr. Owen, he might hold good correspondence after with foreign princes'.

Meanwhile the position in Flanders could, in one aspect, be turned to their advantage. The Archduke had been granted permission to raise 2,000 volunteers from England for his forces and it was generally assumed that Sir Charles Percy (brother of the Earl of Northumberland, and cousin to Thomas Percy) would be in command of the regiment.¹ This offered considerable scope. Catesby and Winter thought of taking service with him, Catesby apparently as Lieutenant-Colonel 'thinking by that means to have opportunity to buy horses and arms without suspicion'.² He also contrived that several officers should be appointed from among his friends and entered into an understanding with them that they would return to England whenever the Catholic cause necessitated it.³ There was, in addition, the suggestion that Sir William Stanley was on some pretext or other to lead these and other English troops, as well as any others he could manage to influence, towards the coast about the time that Parliament was due to reassemble.⁴

At the end of March, according to a letter sent by Robert Winter to John Grant,⁵ Thomas Winter in London was still delaying his return to Huddington on account of Sir Charles Percy's 'going-over', though what position Winter was to have is not clear.

Sir Charles Percy, however, did not go over. Early in May Cecil wrote to the English Ambassador in Brussels: 'Where the Ambassador had appointed Sir Charles Percy to be

* See page 88.

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general commander of the English, his Majesty did not so well approve the choice of him, because he is one his Majesty intendeth to use otherways."

The plan, thus, fell into a coherent shape, each conspirator playing his part. Fawkes was to blow up the House of Lords; Percy (and possibly his brothers-in-law, the Wrights, for, in such an exploit, John Wright's swordsmanship would be an invaluable asset) was to kidnap Prince Charles; Catesby was to make a proclamation to Londoners, pointing out that the Parliament which had been destroyed was about to ratify the Union of England and Scotland and so appealing to nationalist prejudices; at the same moment in Warwickshire, a Catholic insurrection, arranged under cover of a hunting match, would break out, would secure the person of Princess Elizabeth and would form a rallying point for Catholics everywhere; while simultaneously a regiment of English Catholic exiles would land on the south coast.

Because the plan so completely miscarried, the historian's proverbial wisdom after the event is apt to regard it as more fantastic than it was. It is, I think, legitimate to assume that Catesby who, of all people, knew the difficulty of rousing Londoners to revolt, who had experienced the despair bred by the apathy of the citizens in the Essex rebellion and proved the futility of mere personal courage, would have carefully gauged the position. He must have calculated that a London which refused to rise with Essex against Elizabeth would respond to his *fait accompli* against James the Scot, that the atmosphere of 1605 was totally different from that of 1601. And, making every allowance for his prejudice, mistakes and misconception, it is reasonable to suppose that he knew what that atmosphere in fact was far better than any later historian can possibly know it.

(ii) WIDENING THE CIRCLE.

One thing, however, was certain: the circle of the conspirators must be widened. For one thing, funds were needed. Up to this point, according to Winter's confession, Catesby had been bearing all the expense and 'it was necessary for to call in some others to ease his charge'. Even more important, the proposed rising in Warwickshire needed the connivance
The Summer of 1605

of at least one or two other owners of houses. The obvious choices were Robert Winter and John Grant, which would give Huddington and Norbrook as auxiliary bases to Ashby, as well as supplying potential sources of wealth. According to their indictment at the trial Thomas Winter’s brother and brother-in-law were admitted on Easter Day (March 31st) 1605.* Another to join the circle was Ambrose Rookwood.

Rookwood was twenty-six. At the age of twenty-two, he had succeeded to his father’s estates in Suffolk and was a man of considerable wealth. He was an hereditary Catholic who had been educated on the Continent. Father Gerard describes him as ‘brought up in the Catholic religion from his infancy and ever very devout. His parents also were very virtuous and suffered much persecution for their Faith, both in payment of money and loss of their goods and many other molestations; yet was their house a continual receptacle for priests and a place wherein many other Catholics did often find great spiritual comfort.’ Father Tesimond adds: ‘I knew him well and loved him tenderly. He was beloved by all who knew him. He left behind him his lady, who was a very beautiful person and of a high family, and two or three little children, all of whom—together with everything he had in this world—he cast aside to follow the fortunes of this rash and desperate conspiracy.’

His wife was a Tyrwhitt, sister of Lady Ursula Babthorpe, and was thus related to the other conspirators on the Yorkshire side. Something of her greatness of spirit was to be shown to watching London when, after the failure of the plot, Rookwood paid the penalty for his implication in it. As he was being drawn on a hurdle along the Strand to the place of execution, he ‘had provided that he should be admonished when he came over against the lodging where his wife lay: and being come unto the place, he opened his eyes (which before he kept shut to attend better to his prayers) and seeing her stand in a window to see him pass by, he raised himself as well as he could up from the hurdle, and said aloud unto her: “Pray for me, pray for me.” She answered him also aloud: “I will; and be of good courage and

* Though in their own examinations they give the date as January, on the whole the Easter date seems the more likely. But see p. 173 for the possibility of an even later admission of Rookwood.
Widening the Circle

offer thyself wholly to God. I, for my part, do as freely restore thee to God as He gave thee unto me.”

It was not, however, on his wife’s account that Rookwood joined the conspirators. Nor was it the result of his Catholic background, though both must have been important factors. The over-riding reason seems to have been his fascination by Catesby, whom, as he himself said, he ‘esteemed dearer than anything else in the world’.* And, on their side, the conspirators made choice of him at least partly ‘to have help by his living . . . and some provision of horses, of which he had divers of the best’. At his mansion, Coldham Hall, in the parish of Stanningfield, near Bury St. Edmunds, he had in fact one of the best stables in England and his famous horses were to play their part in the tragedy before the year was over.

Suffolk, however, was far from the centre of operations in Warwickshire and, in order to be on the spot, Rookwood about mid-September, rented Clopton Hall,† near Stratford-on-Avon, a mere seven miles from John Grant at Norbrook. The owner of Clopton was Lord Carew who was united in ‘unmovable friendship’ with Cecil and who was looked on by many as Cecil’s successor in the Secretaryship.

There was a fourth newcomer to the conspiracy. At some period† after the beginning of operations, Thomas Bates, Catesby’s servant, had become suspicious of what was afoot. According to his own confession, he had originally been sent by Catesby to ‘procure a lodging near the Parliament House, whereupon he went to seek some such lodging and dealt with a baker that had a room joining to the Parliament House, but the baker answered that he could not spare it’. About a fortnight later, Catesby ‘called him to him at Puddle Wharf in the house of one Powell (where Catesby had taken a lodging) and in the presence of Thomas Winter asked him what he thought what business they were about’. He replied that ‘he thought they went about some dangerous business, whereupon they asked him again what he thought the business might be, and he answered that he thought they intended some dangerous matter about the Parliament House because

* See page 70.
† Bates, in his examination, gives it as December 1604 (G.P.B. 145) but the whole of Bates’s confession is suspect.
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he had been sent to get a lodging near that House. He was then sworn to secrecy and admitted to the plot.

Bates was the only one of the conspirators not of gentle birth. As Father Gerard put it: ‘Only one man of meaner condition they admitted into their secret, to help them in making provision of their powder, and that was one Bates, a servant of Mr. Robert Catesby’s, whom he had a great opinion of for his long-tried fidelity towards him, which the poor fellow continued even until he saw his master dead; and then, it is like, his heart was dead withal, for he showed some fear after, when he was taken, which gave others occasion to work upon his weakness.’

Bates was an old family retainer. He had his own manservant, Christopher Storie, and his own suit of armour; he lived with his wife Martha and their children, one of whom was Catesby’s page, in a cottage on the Ashby estate. He had, according to Father Tesimond, been ‘much persecuted on account of religion’ and if, at the end, he was tortured into a false confession, it was a weakness of the flesh he shared with his betters.* His loyalty to Catesby was beyond question and he proclaimed in his last speech on the scaffold that he joined the conspiracy ‘only for his love to his master’. And his honesty and shrewdness shine through his last letter written from prison to his Father-Confessor. He says that just before the deaths of Catesby, Percy and the Wrights ‘Mr. Christopher Wright flung me out of a window £100 and desired me, as I was a Catholic, to give unto his wife and his brother’s wife £80 and take £20 myself. I took out by guess some £22, as I think, and left it with a friend of mine, and desired him, if I did miscarry in this action, he should bestow it among my children. Now, I would entreat you to give my fellow George instructions what to do with it. I refer it to you. Mr. Wright had of me at times, in money and kine, as much as came to some £28, but my master told me he would pay me, but he did not. Now whether my wife may take that money out of that I refer to you... This morning I was sent for down, and there was a fellow ready with a new suit of fustian, and my keeper made me to essay it, and neither said it was for me nor anything, but I knew it was

* Cecil, in a letter to Faunt, admitted the torture of the prisoners on the day of Bates’s examination (Brit. Mus. Add. MSS., 6178, f. 625).
Scruples

provided for me. The meaning I know not. And before that my Lord of Salisbury asked me what I wanted, and caused the keeper to buy me a new gown, and bade him use me extraordinary well. All this makes me full of doubts, for I fear it is but to serve their own turns of me and then to hang me. Is it not best for me, if the clothes be offered me, to refuse them? I pray you resolve me in that, for I have a purpose to tell the keeper: "I have clothes to serve me as long as I live, I fear, and therefore will none." 17

Thomas Bates could take the measure of Cecil and Waad.

(iii) Scruples

The new conspirators did not enter the plot without grave misgivings. Rookwood, in particular, was horrified at the idea of the intended massacre, not only because 'it was a matter of conscience to take away so much blood' but also because it would mean the death of many innocent people, including the Catholic peers who would be present at the opening of Parliament. As regards the latter, Catesby told him that 'a trick would be put on them' to prevent their attendance, so he need have no fears on that score.18 On the general principle, he assured him that he had been resolved by good authority that the deed was lawful, even though some innocent men might lose their lives in the explosion.

The authority which Catesby quoted was, in fact, no authority at all, but a personal interpretation based on a false analogy which he had discussed with Father Garnet, the Superior of the Jesuits. Catesby, on one of his visits to Father Garnet in London at the beginning of June, had led the conversation on to the subject of the wars in the Low Countries.* Since it was assumed that he might be going out as Lieutenant-Colonel in the new regiment, the ethics of warfare was a topic on which he might, without rousing the Jesuit's suspicion, legitimately ask for guidance. He put the question how far in a just war it was morally lawful for 'the party that

* This conversation took place on 9th June 1605 at Garnet's lodging in Thames Street (Cal. Hatfield MSS., xviii, p. 96) at the house of Bennet, a costard-monger (C.S.P. Dom., xvi, 97), though Gerard implies that it was just after Christmas 1604 (Narrative, p. 65).
had right to wage battle against the enemies of their commonwealth to sack or destroy a town or fortress.

Garnet replied that, given the circumstances of a just war, the 'common doctrine of all divines' was to concede that right, since it rested on Natural Law that every commonwealth must 'be sufficient for itself, and therefore as well able to repel injuries as to provide necessities; and that as a private person may vim vi repellere so may the commonwealth do the like.' The judge of this necessity was the head of the commonwealth.

Catesby admitted that this was obvious common sense and that it had, moreover, been the rule of 'all well-governed commonwealths that ever have been, were they never so pious or devout'. Nevertheless he contended that there were certain types of military action, common in the Low Countries, which seemed less easy to justify. If, for instance, the capture of certain leaders or men of great importance was—as it was—a legitimate objective in war, and those men were safe in a fort or a town which would have to be destroyed in order to take them, what about the innocent who would suffer in the enterprise? 'How then those who have right to make the war may justify that destruction of the town or fort, wherein there be many innocents and young children, and some perhaps unchristened, which must needs perish withal?'

Garnet replied that this was a problem of extreme difficulty. 'It was a thing could never be lawful in itself, to kill an innocent,' he said. Indeed, 'Considering the thing only in itself, it were not lawful to put any man to death' even a criminal. The considerations which governed official executions rested on other grounds, the relationship of the general good to the personal good. But 'as for the innocent and good, their life is a help and furtherance to the common good, and therefore in no sort it can be lawful to kill or destroy an innocent'.

'But', said Catesby, 'that is done ordinarily in the destruction of these forts I was speaking of.'

'It is true', said Garnet, 'it is permitted there because it cannot be avoided.' But, as he went on to point out, there was no intention to destroy the innocent. Their destruction was per accidens. As an analogy, he instanced the possibility in
Scruples

warfare of being shot in the arm by a poisoned bullet. Here to save life, the arm must be cut off; but this involved not only the seat of the poison but the hand and fingers too which, though healthy enough, were inseparably joined to the arm. The example, perhaps, was not very convincing. Garnet fell back on the Bible and adduced the wholesale vengeance which fell on the cities of Benjamin for the crimes committed by a few in the city of Gibeah, 'wherein many were destroyed that had not offended'.

Catesby was satisfied. He had his justification wherewith to quieten all scruples, both of himself and of others. 'All were animated in their proceedings without any further scruple for a long time, but applied all by their own divinity unto their own case, persuading themselves belike that they had all the conditions of a lawful war.' They saw their cause as just, 'in defence of their goods, lives and liberty, both of themselves and their brethren, and especially for the delivery and safety of so many thousand souls enthralled by sin and heresy'. Secondly, they persuaded themselves that they had a right intention, that is to say, not to destroy the innocent, but to suppress an evil Government and set up a good one in its place. And, thirdly, they must have convinced themselves that they had some kind of authority for their action, though it is difficult to see how they could have construed this, especially as they knew that the Pope 'had given strict charge there should be nothing attempted against his Majesty and the State, but that all Catholics should seek in patience to possess their souls and thereby, and not by force, to plead for favour'.

'But', comments Father Gerard, 'it is an easy matter for an earnest desire to draw a man's opinion after it, and so their great and unadvised zeal to remedy the wrongs done to Catholics both in soul and body, might perhaps make them think that this opportunity of the Parliament being omitted, they should never again have power or opportunity to defend the Catholic party.'

If, at the outset, Garnet thought Catesby's problem 'as it were, an idle question' he became suspicious when Catesby on taking his leave asked him with great earnestness not to let anyone know of the conversation as long as he lived.

* Judges xx.

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Garnet did as he was asked. Only after Catesby's death 'when the matter was known, he told some friends what had passed between Mr. Catesby and him about this matter, and that he little suspected then he would so have applied the general doctrine of divines to the practice of a private and so perilous a case, without expressing all particulars, which of course may give occasion of great errors, as we see it did in this'.

After this conversation, Garnet's apprehension increased. 'Understanding by some friends that Mr. Catesby was much missing from the places where he was wont continually to resort for spiritual helps; and hearing also that he and other gentlemen of his forward humour did keep much together and had many secret meetings, he began to suspect they had something in hand that might tend to some commotion and that they did labour to get adherents for some attempt to be performed in a forcible manner.' He determined that, next time he saw Catesby, he would reopen the subject with him. 'Fearing lest he should intend the death of some great persons and by seeking to draw them together enwrap not only innocents but friends and necessary persons for the Commonwealth, I thought I would take fit occasion to admonish him that upon my speech he should not rush headlong to so great a mischief.'

(iv) THE EFFECT OF PERSECUTION

Quite apart from this particular 'mischief', the Jesuits were finding it difficult enough to persuade Catholics to abide by the Pope's command to suffer in silence, for this year the Government had decided to enforce against them measures calculated to drive them to despair. Once again, in 1605, as in 1604, Ash Wednesday had been chosen as the day to initiate measures. The King had addressed the Council on the subject of the Catholics 'protesting his utter detestation of their superstitious religion' and adding that 'if he thought that his son and heir after him would give any toleration thereunto, he would wish him fairly buried before his eyes'. He had then charged 'the Lords of the Council and the Bishops present that they should take care themselves and give order to the judges of the land, to the justices and other inferior
The Effect of Persecution

officers, to see the laws speedily executed with all rigour'. Before the Assizes, he had called together the judges going on circuit and 'gave them a very straight charge to be diligent and severe in their circuits against recusants and to execute the laws in that behalf made'.

The results were what might have been expected. The worst years of Elizabeth's reign were surpassed. In 1605, 5,560 persons were convicted of recusancy; the total of fines exceeded that of any other year:* by April, the Venetian Ambassador was commenting on the 'rigour and severity' with which the laws were administered and by July, the French Ambassador wrote: 'The King treats the Catholics with greater rigour than ever and I foresee that their condition will become daily worse.' Three months later, Father Garnet reported: 'The courses taken are more severe than in Queen Elizabeth's time. Every six weeks is a several court; juries appointed to indict, present, find the goods of Catholics, prize them, yea in many places to drive away whatsoever they find contra ordinem juris and put the owners, if perhaps Protestants, to prove that they be theirs, and not of recusants with whom they deal. . . . If any recusant buy his goods again, they inquirè diligently if the money be his own, otherwise they must have that too. In fine, if these courses hold, every man must be fain to redeem once in six months the very bed he lieth on.'

As long ago as the August of 1604, when the conclusion of the peace with Spain had adumbrated the end of the tolerant phase, Garnet had written to the General of the Jesuits: 'If the affair of toleration go not well, Catholics will no more be quiet. What shall we do? Jesuits cannot hinder it. Let the Pope forbid all Catholics to stir.' Now, in the summer of 1605, he was faced with the realization of his fears. 'All are desperate; divers Catholics are offended with Jesuits; they say that Jesuits do impugn and hinder all forcible enterprises.' At the beginning of July, when Catesby and Monteagle visited him at Fremland,† he did his best to dissuade them from any violent courses they might have in

* Rookwood, incidentally, was among those indicted for recusancy at the London and Middlesex sessions in the February of 1605, on the day after the King's instructions to the Lord Mayor (Ecclesiastical Papers, No. 53, P.R.O.).
† See page 68.
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mind and when he next saw Catesby, a short time afterwards, he showed him the letter he had received from Rome in answer to his appeal. Father Persons had written ‘with strict charge in the name of His Holiness, with Father General’s letters also, that he and his should continue, by all means possible, to hinder any insurrection or undutiful proceedings against His Majesty or the State’.

Catesby merely answered that if the Pope knew what he intended to do, he would not oppose it, for it was for the general good of the country.

Thereupon Garnet became ‘earnest with him’ and pointed out that the Pope’s expressed will was absolute and overrode all other considerations. Catesby retorted that he was not bound to take notice of the Pope’s will merely on Garnet’s private word.

‘I said indeed,’ records Garnet, ‘my own credit was but little, but our General, whose letter I had read to him, was a man everywhere respected for his wisdom and virtue, so I desired him that before he attempted anything he would acquaint the Pope.’

Catesby, realizing that there was no answer to this argument, said ‘he would not for all the world make his particular project known to him for fear of discovery’.

The utmost that Catesby would consent to was that he would do no positive act until the Pope had been informed in general terms of the state of affairs in England by Sir Edmund Baynham, who was starting for Flanders and would give to the Nuncio at Brussels, if not to the Vatican itself, an assessment of matters in England both as seen by Garnet and as seen by Catesby and his friends.

With this Garnet had to be content, though it was not many days before he was thrown into a fever of anxiety by learning the exact nature of Catesby’s plans.

(v) The Seal of Confession

The secrecy of the confessional is absolute. Not only may a priest never reveal in any circumstances whatever, even if it means for him imprisonment and death, what he is told in the confessional, but outside the confessional he may not even speak to the penitent himself (without his consent) of
matters which have been mentioned sub sigillo, 'under the seal'. Further, his ordinary actions in regard to the penitent must not be influenced in any way by what he has heard in confession. This obligation, which binds by natural, divine and ecclesiastical law and admits of no exception, is so well known and established that it should be unnecessary to stress it, were it not that Gardiner, in discussing the matter as regards the Plot, says that 'the law of England takes no note of the excuse of confession' and suggests that no blame would have been due 'either to the Government which ordered Garnet's prosecution or to the judges and jury by whom he was condemned' if they had indicted him for not breaking the seal.*

But, whatever may be the case to-day, the secrecy of the confessional was, in fact, as far as the Church of England was concerned, protected by law in 1605. On 6th September 1604, was confirmed by Letters Patent under the great seal the new Code of Canon Law, of which the 113th Canon runs:

'If any person confesses any secret or hidden sin to a Priest for the unburdening of his conscience and to receive spiritual consolation and ease of mind and absolution from him, such Priest shall not either by word, writing or sign, directly or indirectly, openly or covertly, or in any other way whatsoever, at any time reveal and make known to any person whatsoever, any crime, sin or offence so committed to his trust and secrecy; neither shall any Priest make use of knowledge gained in the exercise of such ministry to the offence or detriment of the person from whom he has received it, even if there be no danger of betraying the identity of such person; neither shall any Priest, who is in a position of authority in any place, make use of any such knowledge in the exercise of his authority.'

It might possibly have been argued that, as authority to hear confessions was, by the same Code of Canons, limited to Anglicans, it did not cover confessions made to outlawed

* That they did not do so may have been, as Gardiner himself says, 'that they would be certain that they would be assailed with the most envenomed acrimony by the whole Catholic world if they executed a priest whose crime was that he had not revealed a secret entrusted to him in confession'. (History, i, 279.)
The Summer of 1605

Catholic priests; but no one was likely, even in the extreme of controversial bitterness, to adopt so untenable a position. *

It was under the seal of confession that, a day or two before 25th July 1605, Father Garnet heard of the Plot from Father Tesimond.

Father Oswald Tesimond, it will be remembered, was a Yorkshireman who had received his early education at the same school as Guy Fawkes. When he was seventeen, he had entered the English College at Rome where he studied philosophy and, after joining the Jesuits but before he was ordained priest, taught philosophy, first at Messina, then at Palermo. He was not sent back to England till 1597, when he was thirty-four. In addition to his account of the Plot (Greenway’s Narrative) which he wrote under the name he consistently used in England, he has left a fragment of his autobiography37 which tells of his return, his finding of Garnet and their narrow escapes from arrest. After a period as Garnet’s personal companion ‘a request came that I should go to the house of a person of note. I then began to labour in that vineyard, gaining by little and little those souls whom it pleased our Lord to help by my means. As labours like these are ordinary enough, I could only relate of the eight years that I stayed in England what befalls all those who work in that vineyard: that is, fatiguing journeys on foot, sufferings of every kind, and, above all, the frequent and almost daily perils of falling into the hands of our enemies, who are extremely vigilant and employ every means to take the priests and particularly Jesuits.38

The ‘person of note’ was Thomas Abington, husband of Monteagle’s sister, whose seat was Hindlip Hall, about four miles from the Winters at Huddington. This great mansion, built by Abington’s father, cofferer to Queen Elizabeth, had been made into one of the safest of the Catholic houses of the

* For the 113th Canon was merely Canon 21 of the Lateran Council of 1215 and binding on the whole Church. To deny its general applicability would have been to nullify the whole argument for the Church of England as a true part of the Catholic Church. It is true that, after the Gunpowder Plot, certain divines such as Lancelot Andrewes attacked the seal of confession, which he described as ‘the seal of iniquity’, but the practice and theory of confession has always been and is to-day the same in the ‘Church of England’ as in the ‘Church of Rome’, and to question the latter would be to destroy the former.
district. Abington ‘contrived many hiding-holes in different parts of the building. The access to some was through the chimney, others through necessary houses; others had trap-doors which communicated to back staircases; some of these rooms on the outside have the appearance of great chimneys’. Here, when he was not accompanying Father Garnet, Father Tesimond made his headquarters and was, with Father Oldcorne, his fellow-Yorkshireman who was also domiciled at Hindlip, the priest most easily accessible to the conspirators when they were at their own homes.

In character, Father Tesimond, despite his Italian philosophical training, retained all the qualities of a Yorkshireman of action. His adventures in eluding spies when in London; his conduct when after the discovery of the Plot he rode into Lancashire desperately trying to rally Catholic support; his final escape from England posing as the owner of a cargo of dead pigs are all in character with one who admitted himself to be of a choleric rather than a phlegmatic disposition. In appearance, according to the Proclamation for his arrest, he was ‘of a reasonable stature, black hair, a brown beard cut close on the cheeks and left broad on the chin, somewhat long-visaged, lean in the face but of a good red complexion, his nose somewhat long and sharp at the end, his hands slender and long fingers, his body slender, his legs of a good proportion, his feet somewhat long and slender. His apparel of cloth, hose and jerkin much after the Italian fashion, the jerkin buttoned on the breast, his cloak buttoned down before with ribands hanging down on his breast, his hat narrow-brimmed with a small band and a broad full crown, as now the fashion is.’ To him Catesby, sometime in the second or third week of July, went to confession and revealed the Plot, at the same time giving him permission to inform Father Garnet of it, also under the seal. Tesimond, extremely perturbed, sought out his Superior and told him all that he knew, walking up and down ‘because it was too tedious to relate so long a discourse in confession kneeling’, but at the end, on his knees including it in a formal confession.

Garnet was horrified, said ‘it was a most horrible thing, the like of which was never heard of, for many reasons unlawful’ and reprimanded Tesimond for discussing the matter.
at all with Catesby. Garnet indeed was now put in the impossible position of having a knowledge of Catesby's schemes and at the same time, because of the seal, being unable to take any steps about it, even the step of speaking to Catesby. Even worse, he had to perform the almost impossible feat of keeping distinct in his mind what he had suspected from Catesby's questions and behaviour and what he now knew to underlie them. Even to his Superiors in Rome, whose support and advice he needed more urgently than ever, he could say nothing which would reveal the true facts. The letter he wrote to the General on 25th July was, in fact, a masterpiece of discrimination:

'Four times up to the present I have hindered disturbances. Nor is there any doubt that we can prevent all public taking up of arms, as it is certain that many Catholics would never attempt anything of this sort without our consent, except under the pressure of a great necessity. But two things make us very anxious. The first is lest some, in some one province should fly to arms, and that then very necessity should compel others to like courses. For there are not a few who will not be kept back by a mere prohibition of His Holiness. There were some who dared to ask, when Pope Clement was alive, whether the Pope could prohibit their defending their lives. They further say that no priest shall know their secrets; and of us by name even some friends complain that we put an obstacle in the way of their plans. Now to soften these in some way, and at least to gain time that by delay some fitting remedy may be applied, we have advised them that by common consent they should send someone to the Holy Father, which they have done, and I have sent him into Flanders to the Nuncio, that he may commend him to His Holiness, and I have sent by him letters explaining their opinions and the reasons on both sides. . . . And this for the first danger. The other is somewhat worse, for the danger is lest secretly some treason or violence be shown to the King, and so all Catholics may be compelled to take arms. Wherefore, in my judgment, two things are necessary; first, that His Holiness should prescribe what in any case is to be done, and then that he should forbid any force of arms to the Catholics under censures, and by Brief publicly promulgated, an occasion for which can be taken for the disturbance lately
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raised in Wales, which has at length come to nothing. It remains that, as all things are daily becoming worse, we should beseech His Holiness soon to give a necessary for these great dangers.\(^44\)

Whatever might be the outcome, the interim for Garnet was a nightmare. Anxiety robbed him of sleep, but ‘every day’, as he said, ‘I did offer up all my devotions and Masses that God of His mercy and infinite providence would dispose all for the best, and find the best means which were pleasing unto Him to prevent so great a mischief; and if it were His holy will and pleasure to ordain some sweeter means for the good of Catholics.’\(^45\)

His one hope, on the level of practical politics, was that Catesby’s promise to await the outcome of Sir Edmund Baynham’s mission would indeed ‘gain time’ and that October 3rd would be safely past before the Papal verdict on the situation was received in England.

On July 28th, the Government announced that the re-assembly of Parliament was to be postponed from October 3rd to November 5th.

(vi) PREPARATIONS AND A PILGRIMAGE

It is doubtful whether, at any time, Catesby seriously intended to abandon his plans and through the summer they proceeded. In June, Grant went up to London and returned to Norbrook with fifty new muskets, eight barrels of gunpowder and three new suits of armour, which he ‘laid up in a secret place’.\(^46\) Several of the conspirators, including Winter, Rookwood, and Christopher Wright, ordered from Craddock, the cutler in the Strand, new swords with hilts engraved with the story of the Passion of Christ.\(^47\) Rookwood, unable to take up residence at Clopton till Michaelmas, became a guest of Robert Winter at Huddington and sent there ‘about twelve trunks of goods which arrived in two carts’.\(^48\) Meanwhile the Wrights also moved from Yorkshire into the centre of operations at Lapworth,\(^49\) Catesby’s birthplace about eight miles from Grant at Norbrook, while in London Percy, according to Fawkes’s confession ‘having the key of the cellar, laid in more powder and wood into it’.

Fawkes himself did not return from abroad till about the
end of August when, according to Winter's confession, he and Winter bought some new powder, 'as suspecting the first to be dank, and conveyed it into the cellar and set it in order as he resolved it should stand', * after which they went into the country till the autumn. And sometime in August Catesby, Percy and Winter, and possibly some of the others, met at Bath, 'where they agreed that, the company being yet but few, Mr. Catesby should have the others' authority to call in whom he thought best'.

Throughout the summer, the tension between the Government and the Catholics increased. In Worcestershire itself, at the beginning of July, an intensive search was made 'in all suspected houses for priests, Jesuits and obstinate recusants, which was done by the Justices themselves'; † over the border in Herefordshire, the Sheriff actually came into collision with bands of Catholics ‡ and the Bishop of Hereford complained that 'the woods on the one side and confines of Monmouthshire near adjoining (and almost wholly corrupted) hinder all service. The number of recusants near this city is incredibly increased within three years. They are grown to boldness to take up weapons. . . . I am advertised that at the Darrein, which is a house in the parish of Llanrothall, last Sunday, three hundred were at a Mass, strongly armed; on Monday and Tuesday a great part of them continued, waiting for my coming.' § The Bishop of Chester, who had had to hire a house in Lancashire as a centre for his proceedings against the Catholics, also encountered such obstacles as 'the excess of their numbers and the turbulent opposition of many great persons' and warned Cecil that at the time of Elizabeth's death 'much provision was made by the recusants in these parts of armour and warlike habiliments, which still remain amongst us. If commission were directed to some of trust here, who might out of their hands gather up and safely bestow the same in some chief towns

* There is a discrepancy of dates here, which it is impossible to resolve. Fawkes in his confession says that he did not return till 'about the beginning of September'. Winter says, in his confession, that 'Mr. Fawkes and myself alone' put in the new powder before the prorogation of Parliament, that is to say, in the last week of July.

† As this search must have included Hindlip and Huddington, it may explain why Norbrook, over the border in Warwickshire, was a more convenient 'secret place' for the arsenal.
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hereabouts, as Liverpool, Lancaster, etc., it would be a good means to hinder any sudden attempt, which the great numbers of them may happen to contrive. From Wales, the Bishop of St. Asaph complained to Cecil of 'the unfortunate and ungodly increase of Papists in my diocese who within the last three years are become near thrice as many. . . . With their number, their courage is increased. They little fear the words, until they feel the smart of the laws and among the Welsh mountains priests preached openly to great congregations.

The anger of the Catholics at the renewal of persecution was further increased by more martyrdoms of priests and laymen and the insurrectionary spirit in the north and west was such as to give encouragement both to Catesby that his plans had a chance of succeeding and to Cecil that, when the time was judged ripe for discovery of them, he would be able to indict the Catholics as a body for the attempt of a dozen desperate men. Thus the Catholic extremists played into the hands of their enemies, while the Catholic statesmen, the Jesuits, looked on appalled but powerless, distrusted and disobeyed by the one and hunted by the other.

Father Garnet, at the end of August, decided to leave White Webbs, which for some years had been the Jesuit headquarters in England. This 'low built, half-timbered dwelling by White Webbs gate' deep in Enfield Forest (or Chace), on the borders of Hertfordshire and Essex, about fourteen miles from London, had served the Jesuits for meetings, conferences and retreats, being, as Garnet said, 'a spacious house fit to receive so great a company that should resort to him thither; there being two beds in a chamber', though there were never more than about fourteen Jesuits there at one time. It had its own chapel and its own relics, including a piece of the hair shirt of Thomas Becket—St.

* It must be remembered that, whatever local bishops might feel about the 'stirs', Cecil had the situation completely in hand. In Wales, for example, he had his agent, John Smith, a pretended or renegade Catholic whom he had released from prison in June on the promise of good service. Smith was so successful that by the middle of October, the local authorities could report to Cecil 'of above 1,000 recusants in this county, the tenth part of them are now scarce left for the Pope, and most part of them women. Smith for his pains is so well-beloved amongst them that he is like to remain awhile unabsolved of any of his ghostly fathers.' (Hatfield MSS., xvii, pp. 259, 273, 396, 456.)
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Thomas of Canterbury—set in gold; and it was of necessity provided with ‘many doors, trap-doors and passages out on all sides’. The mistress of the house was Anne Vaux, the third and youngest daughter of William, Baron Vaux of Harrowden, who at this time was about forty and who posed as Mistress Perkins, Garnet’s widowed sister.

Anne Vaux was described by Father Gerard as ‘a noble gentlewoman who had for a long time showed great devotion and charity, serving Christ in His servants, much like, in her intended course, to those holy women of whom the Evangelist speaketh, “who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him”. This gentlewoman, out of her great and faithful charity to Father Garnet, followed him, indeed, not only when she might with liberty enjoy the comfort of his spiritual and fatherly counsel, but also with great constancy and an undaunted mind, seeking by all means possible how she might assist him in his troubles.’

Such a relationship is apt to be both misunderstood and deliberately misrepresented; and on the scaffold itself, Garnet was taunted with innundo and question. His dying speech was interrupted by: ‘But, Mr. Garnet, were you not married to Mistress Anne Vaux?’ “Thereupon he, turning himself from the people to those about him, said: “That honourable gentlewoman hath great wrong by such false reports. And for my own part, as I have been always free from such crimes, so I may protest for her upon my conscience that I think her to be a perfect pure virgin, if any other in England or otherwise alive. She is a virtuous good gentlewoman, and, therefore, to impute any such thing unto her cannot proceed but of malice.”

Anne Vaux’s devotion to Garnet and her consequent understanding of the Jesuit point of view made her suspicious of her cousins, Catesby, Winter and Grant, whose conduct she noticed, both on their visits to White Webbs and when she was staying in their houses. On one occasion ‘seeing at Winter’s and Grant’s their fine horses in the stable, she told Mr. Garnet that she feared these wild heads had something in hand, and prayed him to talk to Mr. Catesby and hinder anything that possibly he might, for if they should attempt any foolish thing, it would redound to his discredit’.

White Webbs became used more and more as a rendez-
Hindlip Hall from the south east.
St. Winifred's Well in the eighteenth century.
Preparations and a Pilgrimage

vous for the conspirators, and thus became increasingly untenable for the Jesuits. Though the Government was all along aware of Jesuit whereabouts, they now let it be known that they had White Webbs under observation. Thus it came about that Father Garnet, about Bartholomew-tide (August 24th) 1605, decided to leave it and informed the General in Rome that as the Council had discovered both his houses* and he had no safe headquarters, 'he resolved to spend most of the summer in travel to visit a holy well of St. Winifred, which is a great pilgrimage in England, and to do what good he could at friends' houses by the way, both coming and going, until a fit house could be provided for him wherein he might settle for the winter'. 'The increase of Catholics is great,' he wrote, 'and I hope in this journey (which I undertake to-morrow, both for health and want of a house) I shall have occasion of much good.'

St. Winifred's Well, which has given its name to the town of Holywell in Flintshire, had been a place of pilgrimage all through the Middle Ages and, among Catholics, the devotion had never died. The cures effected at the Well were at all times remarkable but, at this particular moment, St. Winifred was held in special veneration among the English Catholics, since Father Oldcorne, the Yorkshire Jesuit who was Chaplain at Hindlip, had been cured by the saint of cancer of the tongue.

The pilgrimage set out from the mansion of Gothurst, the seat of a wealthy young convert to Catholicism, Sir Everard Digby, who, even more completely than Rookwood (if that were possible) had fallen under the spell of Catesby. Digby did not, however, accompany the pilgrimage because he was engaged in arranging a marriage between Lord Vaux, Anne Vaux's nephew, a boy of fourteen, and the daughter of the Earl of Suffolk, the Lord Chamberlain. Neither did Catesby go. But Lady Digby was in the company, and Anne Vaux, with her sister and brother-in-law, Eleanor and Edward Brooksbys, Rookwood and his wife, Father Garnet, with the faithful 'Little John' in attendance† and Father Strange,

* The other was presumably his London lodging with Bennet in Thames Street.
† See page 36.
Digby’s chaplain with other priests and laymen to the number of about thirty.

The way to the Holy Well lay through the Catholic areas of the Midlands and the company spent one night with Grant at Norbrook and the next with the Winters at Huddington.* Each day Mass was said in the chapels of the houses in which they stayed or in some convenient room if as at Shrewsbury they were staying in an inn.

‘At St. Winifred’s Well, too, though the inn must have been small for so large a number, the Holy Sacrifice was again offered, and then the ladies went barefoot to the Well. At Holywell they stopped but one night. Returning next day, they slept at a farmhouse seven miles from Shrewsbury and after that they were again in the circle of their friends.’

Almost immediately after their night’s stay at Huddington on the return journey, the Winters set off for Yorkshire to their mother’s family in search of a further supply of money and horses. They visited their aunt, Lady Yorke, at Gouthwaite Hall, where Christopher Wright also met them, and from their uncle, Sir William Ingleby, of Ripley Castle, they bought two horses. But though both Gouthwaite Hall and Ripley Castle were Catholic houses, it is doubtful whether either the Yorkes or the Inglebys were taken deeply into the confidence of their nephews.

In the south, however, Catesby decided that the time had come to exercise the right entrusted to him at the Bath meeting. The pilgrimage had returned to Gothurst a few days after old Sir Thomas Tresham died, leaving his son Francis as his heir to the wealthy estates of Rushton Hall. Within a month, both the new master of Rushton and the owner of Gothurst were initiated into the Plot, Francis Tresham undertaking to contribute £2,000 and Sir Everard Digby giving £1,500.

* This may have been the occasion when Anne Vaux noticed ‘their fine horses in the stable’.
The Last Five Weeks

(i) Sir Everard Digby

Sir Everard Digby was twenty-four. Though his parents were both Catholics, the early death of his father had left his education in the hands of guardians and he had been brought up a Protestant. After a period at the university, he had married, at the age of 15, Mary Mulsho, the girl heiress of Gothurst and, for six years, was in attendance as one of Queen Elizabeth’s pages at Court. Both he and his wife came under the influence of Father Gerard, who was and remained one of Digby’s closest friends, and Sir Everard—he was knighted by King James in 1603—‘made election rather to suffer with the Catholic religion and to bear with Catholics the cross of persecution than to rise with heresy and be advanced in the Court, which until then he had followed, and was as likely to be raised as any there’.

Digby, indeed, seemed the darling of fortune. He was extremely wealthy in his own right, apart from the property his wife had brought him. He was of an ‘ancient and great family’. He was happy in his home and had children, of whom his son and heir, Kenelm, had been born in 1603. He had outstanding physical and mental accomplishments. Six feet tall, ‘very little lower than Mr. Catesby but of stronger making’ and so handsome that he was reputed ‘the goodliest man in the whole Court’, he was a magnificent rider and swordsman. His stable, if inferior to Rookwood’s, was renowned and for ‘hawking and hunting, which gentlemen in England so much use and delight in, he had the best of both kinds in the country round about’. But he was also a good musician, being skilled in various musical instruments. Gerard, who knew him so well, left it on record that ‘those
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who were well acquainted with him do affirm that in gifts of mind he excelled much more than in his natural parts; although in those also it were hard to find so many in one man in such measure. But of wisdom he had an extraordinary talent, such a judicial wit and so well able to discern and discourse of any matter, as truly I have heard many say that they have not seen the like of a young man, and that his carriage and manner of discourse were more like to a grave Councillor of State than to a gallant of the Court, as he was.¹

At the beginning of October, he was staying with the Vauxes at Harrowden, when Catesby, on his way back to London after a visit to Warwickshire,* arrived there. Next day, as they were riding together back to Gothurst, a distance of about fifteen miles, Catesby determined to broach the matter of the plot to Digby. He told him the subject he was about to discuss was so secret that, in the case of the others who knew it, an oath, sealed and confirmed by the reception of Holy Communion, had been demanded. In the case of so honourable a man as Sir Everard, however, a simple oath would be sufficient. Digby, accordingly swore on a small poniard which Catesby handed to him.³

When, however, Catesby outlined the plan to him, he was overcome with horror and it was only with the greatest difficulty that he was induced to listen further. Two things turned the scale—Catesby’s inaccurate assurance that the Jesuits knew and approved the scheme† and his reference to a book which Catesby showed him when they reached Gothurst. ‘I saw’, he wrote later to his wife, ‘the principal point of the case, judged by a Latin book of M.D., my brother’s father-in-law.’⁴ ‘What book it may have been’, comments his biographer, ‘we have no means of knowing; but we do know that the perils of comparing parallel cases are notorious: and unfortunately the production of his book had the effect of turning the scale.’⁵

The role assigned to Digby, once he had given his assent,

* He had spent the previous day, Sunday, October 6th, with Lord Mordaunt at Turvey.
† Catesby was, at this point, probably phrasing the matter with some care and merely relying on the ‘textbook’ case he had presented to Garnet. It was only later, after November 5th, that he deliberately lied to Digby by giving him information which he knew to be untrue.
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was that of commander of the Warwickshire rising. Because of his known passion for hunting, he could without suspicion convene the hunting concourse on Dunsmore Heath which was to be the nucleus and rallying point of the insurrection and whose first move was to be the abduction of Princess Elizabeth from Lord Harington’s. As Gothurst, though in the same county as Ashby St. Legers, was too far to the east, Digby was, like Rookwood and the Wrights, to move into Warwickshire, and to rent for the ‘hunting match’ Coughton Court, the seat of the Throckmortons,* which stood at the very centre of operations within ten miles from the Winters at Huddington to the west, the Wrights at Lapworth to the north and Grant at Norbrook and Rookwood at Clopton to the east.

(ii) THE ENGLISH TROOP

Catesby had devised a way in which to augment his forces without divulging the secret of the Plot. Ostensibly his activities were directed towards raising the troop of 300 horse which he was to take to Flanders in the service of the Archduke. This afforded sufficient explanation for the horse-buying expeditions; it enabled him to assemble those Catholics who were of a soldierly disposition to whom he could tell as much or as little of his insurrectionary plans as he considered expedient; and, in one case at least, it served to allay suspicions. When he arrived at Harrowden just before the initiation of Digby, he quietened the agitated Anne Vaux to whom his appearance was ominous of doom by showing her a letter of introduction Father Garnet had given him to a Jesuit in Flanders and assuring her that he was so anxious to start that he was prepared to spend £500 in obtaining an exit permit, about which there was, so he said, some temporary difficulty.*

The usefulness of the ‘English troop’ in dealing with others was demonstrated in the case of the Littletons. Stephen Littleton of Holbeach House and his cousin, Humphrey, were prominent members of the Catholic circle in the Midlands, but, though friends of the Winters, they were not considered suitable for inclusion in the Plot. Catesby, while

* Thomas Throckmorton, a Catholic, had prudently gone abroad for the season.
he was staying with Robert Winter at Huddington, told them about his troop and suggested that they might join it. He promised Stephen Littleton command of a company and offered to take one of Humphrey’s bastards as his page. He invited them to meet him at Dunchurch where, he said, he intended to ‘make merry with his friends’ for three or four days at a hunting match on Dunsmore Heath. He would let them know the exact date later and, when they met there, he would be able to tell them the final plans for the Flanders expedition.⁷

In London, the same excuse enabled him to discuss general affairs at parties where unsuspecting Catholics mingled with conspirators. During that October, at least three such festivities were held. On October 9th, the day he arrived back at his lodgings at the ‘Irish Boy’, Thomas Winter and Francis Tresham, Lord Mordaunt and Sir Jocelyn Percy (who had been with them in the Essex rebellion), with other guests including a Benjamin Johnson, who is usually assumed to have been Ben Jonson, the poet, joined him there at a supper party.

A fortnight later, on October 23rd, Sir Jocelyn Percy was there again at a similar party with Thomas Winter, John Grant, John Wright and a cousin of the Winters, Sir Edward Bushell, who lived impecuniously on an annuity of £50 paid him by Robert Winter and who later made a virtue of his ignorance by informing Cecil that they considered him ‘too honest to be entrusted with so horrid a practice’.⁸

The next day, October 24th, an even larger party was held at the ‘Mitre’ tavern in Bread Street where Sir William Monson, the Admiral of the Narrow Seas, Richard Hakluyt, the naval chronicler, and Spero Pettigarre, together with Dr. Taylor, who was attached to the Archduke’s Ambassador, dined with Catesby, Lord Mordaunt, Sir Jocelyn Percy and others. From the nature of the company, it would seem that some kind of shipment to Flanders was under discussion, though whether it was that of the ‘troop’ or of the conspirators must remain unknown. Hakluyt’s interest, at least, was academic, for when he left his host he went off with Pettigarre ‘to peruse a “rutter” of Sir Francis Drake’s works of navigation’.⁹
(iii) FRANCIS TRESHAM

When Francis Tresham met Catesby at the supper party on October 9th, he knew nothing of the Plot. It was probably then that Catesby, having enrolled Digby the previous day, determined to enlist him, though the actual approach was not made till the afternoon of Monday, the 14th, in Tresham’s lodgings in Clerkenwell.

Francis Tresham was a man of a very different stamp from Digby. In his late thirties, he had always been wild and turbulent and involved with his brother-in-law Monteagle and his cousins Catesby and Winter in all their plans against the Government. He was an unsatisfactory son and perpetually in debt. His part in the Essex rebellion; his visit to Garnet with Monteagle and Catesby; and the overtures made to him to act as informer have already been noticed; but, at least as far as finance was concerned, he was less whole-heartedly the friend of his relatives than they imagined† and Catesby’s choice of him as a conspirator at the very moment when he had inherited the family estate, when youth and daring had gone but stability had dawned, was a psychological blunder on Catesby’s part second only to the enlistment of Digby. Whether or not Catesby would have endorsed to the full the judgment that ‘Tresham ‘was known to be mean, treacherous and unprincipled’, he almost immediately repented of his action. According to Father Tesimond, Catesby afterwards admitted that he always mistrusted him and that from the moment of his introduction, ‘fearful forebodings and incessant anxiety, excited and supported by ominous dreams portending the failure of the scheme, took possession of Catesby’s mind’.‡

Tresham, on his part, proved no less difficult to convince than Digby. According to his own account, he immediately remonstrated violently with Catesby, pointing out that, even if they succeeded, they would not be able to sway the nation

* See pages 60–61, 68, 114.
† On May 18th of that year, 1605, for instance, he had written to his father: ‘I was with my cousin Catesby this morning, who promiseth money to-morrow to pay the interest, but you know his promises.’ (Tresham Papers, p. 148.)
and that it was not the Catholics but the Protestant clergy, as the only organized body remaining in existence after the destruction of the Government, who would seize power. But in the end, he too gave way to his cousin’s persuasiveness.

On the same day as Tresham’s initiation, Monday, October 14th, there was a meeting of several of the other conspirators at Daventry. Guy Fawkes, riding down from Yorkshire, arrived at the ‘Bell Inn’ there and ordered a meal for six. Presently Thomas Winter with one of his servants, Thomas Bates and Christopher Wright (whom the landlord identified as a Yorkshireman by his accent) arrived from Ashby, expecting to find not only Fawkes but John Wright. After they had eaten, as John Wright had still not arrived, Bates asked the landlord whether anyone could be found in Daventry to ride over to Lapworth with a message to their missing companion, asking him to join them immediately. Eventually the local blacksmith, Will Rogers, volunteered and made the journey—it was full moon that night—bringing John Wright back with him by seven o’clock the next morning.¹³

Immediately on John Wright’s belated appearance, Winter took him into the ‘inner garden’ and showed him a letter he had just received. They walked up and down for half an hour discussing it, after which they all ‘had breakfast together and then went their way’.¹⁴

(iv) GREAT ARGUMENT

After their arrival in London to join Catesby on October 15th, there were to be but eleven days left before the Government ‘discovered’ the plot officially by means of Monteagle’s little comedy of the anonymous letter at Hoxton. During this time, there were fierce disputes, both in London and at White Webbs (which was now given over altogether to conspiratorial purposes), on the practical aspect of the moral issue which Catesby had first propounded to Father Garnet and which the objections of Digby and Tresham had recently emphasized—the involving of the innocent in the doom of

* It seems reasonable to assume that the letter was from Catesby informing Winter of Tresham’s admission to the plot the previous day, since Catesby had taken that step on his own initiative.
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the guilty. How were Catholic peers to be kept from attending the opening of Parliament? All the conspirators wanted to save the intrepid Lord Montague, who had been imprisoned during the last session for alone, in the House of Lords, daring to oppose the recusancy laws, arguing that Catholicism was the ancient faith of England and that the country was being misled and tyrannized over. All wanted to save the young Earl of Arundel, whose father had died for the Faith, and who, though not yet of age, had petitioned to be allowed to take his seat on November 5th. The Earl of Northumberland, as the cousin of Percy; Lord Mordaunt as the friend of Keyes; Tresham’s two brothers-in-law, Montague and Stourton, had their particular claims on clemency. And there were many Protestant peers who, though consenting to Government policy, could not justly be considered persecutors.

Against every argument, Catesby stood firm. For the House of Lords as a whole, he had nothing but contempt. 'He made account of the nobility as atheists, fools and cowards and said that lusty bodies would be better for the commonwealth than they.'\textsuperscript{14} To the suggestion that the Catholic peers should be warned in general terms, he, backed by Winter, retorted that hints were more dangerous than knowledge and that either would spell ruin. Lord Montague? He had been persuaded not to go in any case, since his single voice would avail nothing. The young Earl of Arundel? Catesby would see that he met with a slight accident which would keep him indoors. Lord Mordaunt? Catesby 'would not for a chamber full of diamonds acquaint him with the secret, for he knew that he could not keep it'.\textsuperscript{16} And, in any case, Mordaunt would not be there on the opening day, because he objected to sitting in his heavy robes in the House of Lords throughout the hours the rest of the peers were with the King at the service in Westminster Abbey. As for the others, they could probably be prevented coming up by some device or other. Catesby had given Digby his word: 'Assure yourself that such of the nobility as are worth the saving shall be preserved and yet know not of the matter'\textsuperscript{17} and Digby at least trusted him so far as to write to his wife when all was over: 'Divers were to have been brought out of danger... . I do not think there were three worth saving
that should have been lost. You may guess that I had some friends that were in danger, which I prevented." But if they could not be prevented from attendance, by such hints or stratagems as were possible, the innocent must be sacrificed. Fanatically, Catesby declared: 'Rather than the project should not take effect, if they were as dear unto me as my own son, they also must be blown up.'

It was Tresham who caused Catesby the most trouble. First of all he asked that the project should be delayed till the end of the session. Catesby answered that he had no power to alter the plans without consultation with Percy and as Percy was in the north collecting Northumberland's rents (of which he had promised to embezzle £4,000 for the Cause) and could not return till the eve of the explosion, it was impossible to ask his opinion.

Tresham clutched at a financial straw. He said that he could not let them have the £2,000 he had promised until he had sold his estates, which would take time. 'This was the only way', he confessed later, 'that I could resolve on to overthrow the action, to save their lives and to preserve my own fortunes, life and reputation.' They told him to go to Rushton and raise the money immediately. Meanwhile Winter went to his lodgings at Clerkenwell to get £100 ready money from him and arranged to meet him at Barnet on October 28th or 29th when, after the visit to Rushton he was to have the remainder.

Everything was now in train. Fawkes and Winter had replenished the gunpowder in the cellar. Fawkes had arranged to fire it with a slow-burning match which would give him a quarter of an hour to board a waiting vessel in the river, in which he would sail immediately to Flanders with the news.* Digby had so planned his hunting-match on Dunsmore Heath that after the seizure of Princess Elizabeth, his force would seize the horses at Warwick Castle and the armour belonging to Lord Windsor at Hewell Grange, by which time they would have reinforcements from such Catholic supporters as the Littletons. In London, Catesby would proclaim the new sovereign and Percy, under cover of pretending to save Prince Charles from danger, would lead him to a

* It may have been this which was finally arranged at the party at the 'Mitre' on October 24th.
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waiting coach to be driven at full speed to Warwickshire.* Their plans, the conspirators thought, were unsuspected. Thomas Winter had been present with Monteagle at the prorogation of Parliament on October 3rd and, by observing carefully the attitude of the peers, had decided they were ignorant of the store of gunpowder just beneath them. That store, Fawkes and Winter knew by secret marks they had arranged, had remained undisturbed. The movements of all the conspirators could be satisfactorily explained, were the Government interested, on the hypothesis of the ‘English troop’ for the Archduke, and some at least of the company they publicly kept—as for example their guests at the ‘Mitre’ on October 24th—was above suspicion.

But, on October 24th, Cecil wrote to his intimate, Sir Thomas Lake, who was with the King at Royston, telling him to ‘let his Majesty know that I dare boldly say no shower nor storm shall mar our harvest, except it should come from the middle region’.  

Even if the London trap was perfectly sprung, the result of the Midland rising was, in the nature of things, unpredictable.

(v) ‘THE LITTLE COMEDY AT HOXTON’

The phrase is Gardiner’s,* and describes well enough ‘the event which forms the official link connecting the secret and the public history of the Plot’—the receipt of the anonymous letter by Lord Monteagle in his house in Hoxton on the evening of Saturday, October 26th.

The letter itself and the circumstances of its delivery have already been noticed,† and it is not necessary to waste time in arguing that the scene must have been prearranged, since no modern historian questions the fact. The identity of the writer, however, is likely to intrigue the curious in the future as it has in the past, since it is one of those ‘historical mysteries’, like the identity of the Man in the Iron Mask, which exercise a perennial fascination. The most varied suggestions

* Percy arranged to meet some friends at Doncaster on the night of November 5th, which suggests that he may have thought of delivering his charge to the others in Northamptonshire and himself proceed to raise the North.

† Pages 65–66.
The Propaganda in a Picture, linking the Armada with the Gunpowder Plot.
The gallant *Eagle* soaring up on high:
Beares in his beaky, *Treasors* discovery.
Mount, noble *Eagle*, with thy happy prey,
And thy rich *Prize* to the *King* with speed convey.

Cartoon of the Delivery of the Letter to Cecil.
'The Little Comedy at Hoxton'

have been put forward with differing degrees of erudition and calligraphic convincingness—Tresham; Tresham’s servant, Vavasour; Mary Abington, Montague’s sister; and even, oddest of all, Father Oldcorne—but their common weakness is the basic assumption that the letter came from one of the conspirators or their friends. Though, as the handwriting is in a disguised script, it is improbable that the problem will ever be solved, the would-be detective must obviously start from the hypothesis that the writer was either one of the many Government agents employed on such matters or a trusted servant of Montague himself.

Another point to be noticed is that Montague was not the only peer to be warned. We know that Digby warned some of his friends;* and Montague, Mordaunt and Stourton were also, as Catesby had promised, persuaded to be absent from the House of Lords. Had a mere warning been intended, the melodramatic method at Hoxton would hardly have been suitable. The point of the communication was not a private word to Montague but a public excuse for Cecil to move openly.

Out of this arises a third consideration—the inconsistency of the Government’s accounts of the sequel to the delivery of the letter. The one point of importance was the letter itself. ‘The famous letter was exhibited to the world with a persistence and solicitude not easy to explain; being printed in the King’s Book and in every other account of the affair; while transcribed copies were sent to the ambassadors at foreign courts and other public personages.’ The Government, knowing where the weak point lay, determined to convince the world that there really had been a letter. But, once the comedy at Hoxton had been played, the ambiguities of statecraft once more usurped the stage. There are at least three Government accounts of the sequel which ‘cannot by any possibility be true as on every single point they are utterly and hopelessly at variance’.† As Father John Gerard has epitomized it: ‘We are told that King James was the first to

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* Page 155.
† The accounts are the official version in the King’s Book, Cecil’s account sent to the Ambassadors abroad and the Deputy in Ireland on November 9th and his account furnished for the information of the King of France on November 6th.
understand and interpret the letter which had baffled the sagacity of his Privy Council; that the Lords of the Council had fully interpreted it several days before the King saw it; that the said lords would not credit the King’s interpretation; that the King would not believe their interpretation; and that neither the one nor the other ever interpreted it at all; that His Majesty insisted on a search being made in spite of the reluctance of his ministers; that they insisted on the search in spite of the reluctance of their royal master; and that no such search was ever proposed by either; that Knypey was despatched expressly to look for gunpowder, with instructions to rummage the firewood to the bottom, leaving no cover in which a barrel might lie hid; and that having no instructions to do anything of the kind, nor any reason to suspect the existence of any barrels, he discovered them only by a piece of luck, so purely fortuitous as to be clearly providential. On this last point especially the contradictions are absolutely irreconcilable.27

In the same way as we are dependent on contradictory Government accounts for our information about Cecil’s proceedings, so we have only Thomas Winter’s confession for those of himself and Catesby. According to the King’s Book, Cecil discussed the Monteagle letter with other Privy Councillors and decided to leave the matter until the King’s return from Royston on October 31st. According to Winter, on Sunday night, October 27th, ‘in came one to my chamber and told me that a letter had been given to my Lord Monteagle to this effect, that he wished his Lordship’s absence from the Parliament because a blow would there be given, which letter he presently carried to my Lord of Salisbury. On the morrow I went to White Webbs and told it to Mr. Catesby, assuring him withal that the matter was disclosed and wishing him in any wise to forsake his country.’

(vi) Tresham is suspected

Catesby, however, had no intention of abandoning the Plot. His coolness at this point proclaimed him indeed a leader. It was necessary, he urged, to find out exactly where they stood and how much the Government knew. He told Winter that ‘he would see further as yet and resolved to send
Tresham is Suspected

Mr. Fawkes to try the uttermost, protesting if the part belonged to himself, he would try the same adventure. They decided that on Wednesday, October 30th, Fawkes should go up and visit the cellar to see whether the private marks he had made there had been in any way disturbed. Meanwhile to-morrow (Tuesday, October 29th) they would go into Barnet to interview Tresham, who had appointed a meeting with them at two in the afternoon as he passed through the town on his way back from Rushton. The money he had promised to bring was now a secondary consideration. The urgency was to find out what he knew about the Hoxton incident.

It was inevitable that they should suspect him. His earlier attempts to persuade them to give up their design and escape to Flanders now took on a new aspect. It was at the Tresham house at Hoxton that the curious warning had been given to Monteagle, his brother-in-law. Their suspicion increased when, instead of Tresham himself, Winter received a message from him to say that he had been delayed and would not be at Barnet till Wednesday the 30th. It became almost a certainty when they missed him on that day, because he had specified no time of meeting and had in fact passed through Barnet at the strangely early hour of eight in the morning.

That evening, Fawkes returned from London with the news that nothing in the cellar had been disturbed—a report which convinced both Catesby and Winter that even if the Government had been warned they had not acquired any details of the Plot and that it was safe to continue with the original plan. Only in one respect was a change made. The idea of kidnapping Prince Charles was abandoned, since, a day or two earlier, Monteagle had told Winter that Henry, Prince of Wales, did not intend to be present at the opening of Parliament.*

Next day, Thursday, Winter himself went into London to see Tresham. He found him at his lodgings and ordered

* Of the plans to secure the person of Henry we know nothing except Catesby’s remark reported in Winter’s confession that they must have their horses ‘beyond the water and provision of more company to surprise the Prince’. Gardiner suggests that the Prince may have been with his mother at Greenwich, which would explain the phrase ‘beyond the water’. (What the Gunpowder Plot was, p. 67.)
him to come to Barnet† on the following day to give an account of himself to Catesby. So, on All Saints' Day, Tresham at last faced Catesby and Winter, who charged him with having written the letter and were prepared to kill him for his treachery, unless he could convince them beyond a shadow of doubt of his innocence. He not only convinced them, but made once more an impassioned plea that they should abandon the matter, at least for the moment, and fly the country. Next day, November 2nd, when Winter visited him again in London and was given £100, he reiterated his warning and added that Cecil knew everything and had laid it before the King. At last he produced an effect. Catesby was, for the first time, shaken. He would wait only for Percy's return from the north—for he could not act without him—and then they would follow Tresham's advice.²⁸

That Tresham was able to convince his cousins, who would have ponciared him without scruple had they had any doubts is, it seems to me, the strongest evidence of his innocence. And that Tresham is still conventionally referred to as 'the betrayer of the Gunpowder Plot' is irrelevant, since the Plot was 'betrayed' by no one; Tresham's role as the Judas depends on regarding the official version of events as true and Catesby's presumption of the Government's ignorance as valid. But there can be no traitor where there is nothing to betray.

There does, however, remain the question of Tresham's real knowledge. If most of his conduct is explicable on the theory that he was appalled by the scheme and that, in addition, he had no wish to put himself into jeopardy when he had just entered into his inheritance, there are still certain features which suggest more than this. When the 'discovery' had taken place, Tresham did not fly with the rest, but showed himself openly in the London streets and even offered his services to the Council. His name was omitted by the Government from their published proclamations naming the traitors and he was not taken into custody till November 12th. Though he was examined, he was never brought to trial, but died in the Tower just before Christmas. It was

† Barnet is the nearest town to White Webbs. It is possible that the actual meeting would be held there, though Tresham, of course, would not specify that in his confession.
Digby Leaves Gothurst

officially announced that he died of a 'strangury', 'a natural sickness, such as he hath been a long time subject to', according to Cecil; but as he was in prison for less than six weeks and was apparently perfectly healthy up to that point, no one either then or since placed much confidence in the explanation.

Adding to the suspicion is the fact that throughout his illness, both he himself and his fellow-conspirators declared that should he survive it, 'they feared not the course of justice'. His death was generally ascribed to poison and Monteagle has been (I think, rightly) credited with the murder. At the very least, as one Protestant historian of the Plot has put it, 'that his death was extremely opportune, so far as Monteagle's position was concerned, need not be disputed. It was clear that Tresham not only "knew too much" to suit both Salisbury and Monteagle: and of his possession of this knowledge he foolishly made no secret.'

A possible solution is that Tresham did, in fact, verbally warn his two brothers-in-law, Stourton and Monteagle, only to find, from the latter, the truth of the situation. This would explain not only his hesitancy in meeting Catesby and Winter until he had had time to decide on a course of action in an almost intolerable situation, but also his convincing protest that he had nothing to do with the Hoxton affair as well as his persistent attempts to persuade the others to save themselves before it was too late. It would also explain the Government's initial delay in arresting him and, when he was considered too dangerous to be left at large, their interest in his timely death. This can be put forward only as a tentative hypothesis which would explain the facts; but, in the nature of things, the truth is unlikely to be certainly known. All that can be asserted is that, on November 5th, Tresham was still recognized by Catesby and Winter as a trusted conspirator.

(vii) DIGBY LEAVES GOTHURST

During the last week in October, Sir Everard Digby's time was spent in making preparations to move from his mansion at Gothurst to Coughton Court for the meeting on Dunsmore Heath. Among those who were accompanying him, his wife, children and servants in the move, were Father Garnet and Anne Vaux, for they, unwilling to return to
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White Webbs now that it had become Catesby’s headquarters, had accepted hospitality at Gothurst since the return of the pilgrimage. Father Garnet had particular reasons for wishing to be at Coughton by October 31st, All Saints’ Eve. He was to sing Mass at Coughton on All Saints and All Souls* for which the Catholics of the neighbourhood would assemble and he was determined in his sermon to make one last effort to prevent the ‘stir’.\(^{32}\) Also, Catesby had promised to be at Coughton on October 31st\(^{33}\) and Garnet had decided to ask his permission to discuss with him what he knew under the seal. To make things more certain, he had also summoned Father Tesimond. ‘I assuredly, if they had come, had entered into the matter, and perhaps might have hindered all’, he was to write later.\(^{34}\) But Catesby did not come. On All Saints’ Day, he and Winter were dealing with Tresham.

Garnet, however, kept the appointment. On Tuesday, October 29th, Lady Digby, with her children, guests and servants, started on the fifty-mile journey to Coughton, accompanied by most of Sir Everard’s retainers, with his horses, greyhounds, a cart containing ‘great provision of armour and shot’,\(^{35}\) some valuables, possibly some money—he ‘had made ready above £1,000 in ready coin’\(^{36}\)—and other necessities for both open and secret purposes. Sir Everard himself stayed behind to superintend the closing of Gothurst, keeping with him the seven servants who were to accompany him when he followed a few days later, with his personal belongings, including the trunk which ‘had in it clothes of mine as a white satin doublet cut with purple, a jerkin and hose of De-roy colour satin, laid very thick with gold lace; there were other garments in it of mine, with a new black winter gown of my wife’s. There was also in the trunk £300 in money.’\(^{37}\)

But before he left home, he received on November 2nd, a visit from his closest friend who, of all men, was at that moment the most unwelcome to him. Father Gerard rode over to Gothurst to say his All Souls’ Day Mass.

‘I desire you to bear witness’, wrote Father Gerard to him later, ‘whether, coming to your house upon All Souls’ Day

* November 1st and 2nd. Sunday, November 3rd was St. Winifred’s Day, so it seems probable that the three Masses would constitute something of a special festival.
last, before dinner, with intention and hope to celebrate there, and finding all things hid out of the way and many of your household gone, you did not perceive me to be astonished at it, as a thing much contrary to my expectation. Whereupon I asked you what was become of them. And when you told me you had sent them into Warwickshire, and your hounds also, and yourself were going presently after, about a hunting match which you had made, though I seemed satisfied for the present because I stranger was there with you, yet whether I did not soon after (when I had compared many particulars together which seemed strange unto me) draw you into a chamber apart, and there urge you to tell me what was the reason both of that sudden alteration in your house and of divers other things which I had observed before but did not until then reflect upon so much, as, for example, the number of horses you had not long before in your stable, the sums of money which I had been told you had made of your stock and grounds, which (said I) in one of your judgment and provident care of your estate, are not likely to be done without some great cause, and seemed to think you had something in hand for the Catholic cause.'

Digby answered: 'No, there is nothing in hand that I know of or can tell you of.'

Gerard explained his suspicions and fears. Digby paid the recusancy fines without attempt at evasion, so there was no reason for him to sell his property as he had. No one would attempt to confiscate it. For one who cared for his land as Digby cared for it, guarding his family responsibilities, there must be some overmastering reason for him thus to 'hurt his estate'. 'Look well that you follow counsel* in your proceedings', said the priest, 'or else you may hurt both yourself and the cause.'

'I care for the Catholic cause', replied Digby, much more than I care for my own possessions, as will be quite clear when I undertake to do something.'

Gerard, by now extremely suspicious, pressed him again as to whether there was some scheme on foot and whether, in that case, they were relying on foreign aid.

* This is presumably used, considering the context, in the technical sense of counsel given by a priest in confession; and Gerard seems to be hinting that Digby should make his confession.
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Digby, indicating the tip of his finger, answered that he 'would not adventure so much in hope thereof'.

But Gerard was still not satisfied. 'I pray God you follow counsel in your doings,' he reiterated. Then he asked whether, if there were any insurrectionary plans, Father Garnet knew of them. Digby assured him to the contrary.

Gerard now tried another line. Gothurst was, as it were, a citadel to which, in times of persecution and danger, the Catholics in the countryside round about could find shelter and protection. 'In truth, Sir Everard,' he said, 'if there should be anything in hand and you and your company retire into Warwickshire, as into a place of most safety, I should think you did not perform the part of a friend to some of your neighbours not far off, and persons that, as you know, deserve every respect, and to whom you have professed much friendship.' With the closing of Gothurst, the simple Catholics—priests and laymen—would have no opportunity or warning 'to defend themselves from rogues'.

Digby realized that Gerard was including himself among those who would be left without defence. 'I warrant you it shall not need,' he said and proceeded to assure him once more that had there been any plan with which Gerard or Garnet ought to have been acquainted, he would certainly have told him.

There was nothing more Gerard could do. 'So,' he wrote in his letter to Digby when all was lost and he was his 'companion in tribulation though not in the cause', 'I rested satisfied and parted from you, and after that I never saw you, nor any of the conspirators.'

Less than forty-eight hours later, on Monday, November 4th, Digby, accompanied by seven servants, left Gothurst and went, not to Coughton, but to the inn at Dunchurch, where he took his supper alone. After supper he was joined by his uncle, Sir Robert Digby of Coleshill and other of his relatives and friends and by the Littleton cousins, Stephen and Humphrey. Next morning they all heard Mass said by the Jesuit Father Hammond, and after breakfast spent the day—the fatal fifth of November—hunting and coursing on Dunsmore Heath. This hunting match at least was as innocent as it seemed, though Digby took the opportunity of informing his guests that they might possibly receive a
message summoning them to arms for the Catholic cause a little later in the week.

(viii) THOMAS PERCY RETURNS

Thomas Percy, who had been collecting the Michaelmas rents due to his cousin Northumberland, left the Border some time after October 25th—on which day the Northern Commissioners made out a pass for him, requiring all postmasters on the road to London to keep him supplied with three horses.41 On Friday night—November 1st—he was at Gainsborough and next morning, before pushing on for London, he wrote to his trusted servant, John Walker: 'I cannot yet come to York, but will meet you at Doncaster. Let no man take charge of the money but yourself.'42 (The money—between three and four thousand pounds in 'five horse loads'43—eventually arrived at Doncaster on November 7th, too late to be any use to the conspirators). Somewhere on the road nearing London, Percy met Fawkes, bearing news of the critical situation which had developed in his absence.* They appear not to have reached London till very late on the Saturday night or the early hours of Sunday, for—according to Winter's confession—it was not till Saturday evening that, in Lincoln's Inn Walks, Tresham at last persuaded Winter that Cecil knew everything and that, in consequence, Catesby 'resolved to be gone, but stayed to have Mr. Percy come up whose consent herein we wanted'.

Percy eventually met Catesby and Winter on Sunday evening at the same house near St. Clement's where the original conspirators had first taken the oath eighteen months before. They were still the same five with the addition, on this occasion, of Christopher Wright. Percy's decision was 'to abide the uttermost trial'.44 Nevertheless it was decided that next day he should ride over to Sion House, where the Earl of Northumberland was in residence. Here he might be

* Fawkes, it will be remembered, was officially Percy's servant and it would excite no surprise when he returned to London with him. Coke, in his notes on the examination of Fawkes, says that he was out of London between Thursday and Saturday and went northward; so it would seem that, having satisfied himself and the others that the powder had been undisturbed on the Wednesday, he was deputed to inform Percy of the anonymous letter and other developments while Catesby and Winter dealt with Tresham.
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able to gain some information—for it could be presumed that Northumberland would have heard any talk at Court—or at least to 'sense' the atmosphere; and his visit would appear nothing but a business appointment to give a report to his cousin on the rent-collecting.*

Percy spent the Sunday night with his nephew Jocelyn at Essex House. According to the young man: 'Before I was out of my bed, my uncle came into my chamber and delivered me the key of his trunk to deliver such things as his man, Davidson, came for. About 10 o'clock, his man came and took a cloth cloak lined with velvet and an old taffety suit and two pairs of silk stockings.' But by this time Percy must have been well on his way to Sion, where he arrived about 11 o'clock. Meanwhile in London, Catesby engaged Rookwood 'for the buying of necessaries for him' and, at dinner, calmed his fears by assuring him that nothing had yet been discovered. But an hour or two later, according to the Government story, the Lord Chamberlain 'went to the Parliament House, accompanied by my Lord Montegle, being, in zeal to the King's service, earnest and curious to see the event of that accident whereof he had the fortune to be the first discoverer: where having viewed all the lower rooms, he found in the vault under the Upper House, great store and provisions of billets, faggots and coals; and, inquiring of Whynneard, Keeper of the Wardrobe, to what use he had put these lower rooms and cellars, he told him that Thomas Percy had hired both the house and part of the cellar or vault under the same, and that the wood and coal therein was the said gentleman's own provision. Whereupon the Lord Chamberlain, casting his eye aside, perceived a fellow standing in a corner there, called himself the said Percy's man and keeper of that house for him, but indeed was Guido Fawkes, the owner of that hand which should have acted that monstrous tragedy.'

(ix) The Government acts

When the Lord Chamberlain returned to the palace, having noticed everything 'with a heedful, yet to outward

* Unfortunately for Northumberland, it cost him his liberty for fifteen years; for the visit was so interpreted by the Government as to involve him in misprision of treason.

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The Government Acts

appearance with but a careless and reckless eye (as became so wide and diligent a minister), he informed the King and some of the councillors—including Cecil—that there was certainly ground for suspicion. He could not fail to wonder 'at the extraordinary great provision of wood and coal in that house, where Thomas Percy had so seldom occasion to remain'. He was struck by the appearance of Fawkes—'a very tall and desperate fellow'. And he reported a remark that Monteagle had made. Monteagle, he said, 'no sooner heard Thomas Percy named to be the possessor of that house but, considering both his backwardness in religion and the old dearness in friendship between himself and the said Percy, he did greatly suspect the matter and that the letter should come from him.' It was therefore decided, on the King's suggestion, that another surprise search should be made at midnight by Sir Thomas Knyvet, a gentleman of the Privy Chamber who was also Justice of the Peace for Westminster, 'accompanied with such a small number as was fit for that errand'.

Thus the official printed account—which has so potently established the story that it can hardly be told in any other way. But the balance of probability is on the side of the Lord Chamberlain's visit never having taken place, but being a complete (and not very circumstantial) fiction. Father Tsi-mond's remark: 'To speak my own mind, I do not see in this portion of the story any probability'\(^47\) can be generally endorsed; and can be supplemented by Bishop Goodman's opinion that the episode was invented for stage-effect: 'The King must have the honour to interpret that it was by gunpowder; and the very night before the parliament began it was to be discovered to make the matter the more odious and the deliverance the more miraculous. No less than the Lord Chamberlain must search for it.'\(^48\) In Cecil's first account of the matter, there is no mention of the afternoon search. He merely states that at midnight Sir Thomas Knyvet went by chance into the vault by another door,* and

* If there was another door of which the Government had the key, the whole argument based on the secrecy of the 'cellar' collapses, as Father John Gerard has pertinently pointed out. Cecil himself, presumably, would have seen this, which may be why, in the later versions, it disappears and the Lord Chamberlain's afternoon visit and its sequel is substituted.
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happened to find Fawkes. The point of the introduction of Montegagle is presumably to make the remark with which he is credited and to give further verisimilitude to the 'anonymous letter' by suggesting the writer was Percy—who, when the official account appeared, was dead.

All that can be said with relative certainty is that at 10 o’clock that night, Fawkes was visited by Keyes who gave him a watch that Percy had brought for him, so that he might be able to time the fuse correctly, and that by midnight Fawkes was a prisoner in Cecil’s hands.49

Meanwhile, during that Monday afternoon and evening, the conspirators occupied themselves as best they could. Catesby himself had determined to leave London without waiting to discover whether or not Fawkes would succeed. Whatever the upshot in London, the Midland insurrection needed a leader and if the one failed the other’s importance was the greater. Rookwood, who had posted relays of his famous horses along the road to Warwickshire, could remain until after the hour appointed for the opening of Parliament next morning and still, with the latest news, overtake Catesby before he reached Dunchurch.* Catesby’s own horses were standing ready at the ‘Red Bull’ in Drury Lane and, accompanied by one of his servants, he rode leisurely out of town while Fawkes was still undisturbed at his post.60

Percy arrived back from Sion House between five and six in the evening.51 He went, almost immediately,† to the rendezvous behind St. Clement’s where he told Winter, John Wright and Keyes that ‘all was well’ and that he had, in his interview with Northumberland, ‘flapt him in the mouth with a lie that a gentleman in Yorkshire would make him his heir of £400 or £500 by the year for £500 or £600’. The Earl, he said, was ‘glad’, though whether he offered to

* I am assuming here that what did, in fact, happen was intended to happen. The theory of a panic flight of the conspirators at this point (which is always assumed by historians) does not seem to me to be tenable. Catesby realized that, in any case, he was needed in Warwickshire and, had the Plot succeeded, Percy and Thomas Winter were quite capable of dealing with the situation in London. Catesby seems not to have left till the early evening, by which time he could have discussed matters with Percy on his return from Sion (or deputed John Wright to do so). Rookwood did not leave London till ten o’clock the next morning.

† He arrived, according to Keyes, ‘about six o’clock’.

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lend his cousin the requisite £500 to £600 in ready money to secure the inheritance does not appear.\textsuperscript{52}

Leaving Keyes to deliver to Fawkes the watch he had provided, Percy then went to Essex House in search of his nephew, Jocelyn, to whom, he said, he must speak urgently either late that night or early that morning.\textsuperscript{53} As, immediately after the interview at Sion House, Northumberland himself had come to London in his coach\textsuperscript{54} to spend the night at Essex House in preparation for the opening of Parliament next morning, Percy did not stay there, but went to his rooms at the ‘Red Lion’ in Gray’s Inn Lane where he told his men to have his four horses ready for the road in the morning.\textsuperscript{55}

Some time during the evening John Wright left London to join Catesby,\textsuperscript{*} but Christopher Wright, who during the afternoon purchased three beaver hats for the sum of £11, was still at his lodging at the ‘Maiden’s Head’ in St. Giles’s, though he had seen to it that his horse also was ready for immediate departure.\textsuperscript{56}

Rookwood, whose horses were stabled at the ‘Greyhound’ in Drury Lane,\textsuperscript{57} was lodging at the house of Edward More ‘without Temple Bar’—that is to say, within a stone’s throw of Essex House—where Keyes had also slept on the Sunday night and was to spend that Monday night also.\textsuperscript{58} While Keyes was delivering the watch to Fawkes, Rookwood was visited in his rooms—‘at eleven of the clock at night’—by John Craddock the cutler, who brought him his sword with ‘the story of the Passion of Christ’ more richly engraved than those of the others.\textsuperscript{59} Rookwood was prodigal of his money. He liked magnificence, as was apparent from his ‘very fair Hungarian horseman’s coat, lined all with velvet, and other apparel exceeding costly, not’—as Waad later commented—‘fit for his degree’.\textsuperscript{60} But Rookwood was never to use the sword. Within less than an hour of its delivery, Fawkes was under arrest.

\textsuperscript{*} I can find no record of the actual time. That he did leave is deduced from the fact that next day he was riding with Catesby far ahead of all the rest and that there is no record of his leaving with any of the other conspirators. He was present at the St. Clement’s meeting—which Catesby was not—though he may, of course, have joined him in Drury Lane immediately after the meeting and left London with him.
The Last Five Weeks

How the arrest was made is not clear, since the various versions contradict one another no less here than at other points. He was taken in his lodging, in the street and in the cellar. According to the received story, he was brought, fast bound, first to Cecil, then to the King (about four in the morning) and later was examined by the Council. ‘Seeming to put on a Roman resolution,’ says the official account, ‘he appeared both to the Council and to every other person that spake with him that day so constant and settled upon his grounds that we all thought we had found some new Mutius Scaevola, born in England. For notwithstanding the horror of the fact, the guilt of his conscience, his sudden surprising, the terror which should have been stricken in him by coming into the presence of so great a Council, and the restless and confused questions that every man all that day did vex him with, yet was his countenance so far from being dejected that he often smiled in scornful manner, not only avowing the fact, but repenting only, with the said Scaevola, his failing in the execution thereof, whereof (he said) the Devil and not God was the discoverer; answering quickly to every man’s objection, scoffing at any idle questions which were pro pounded unto him, and jesting with such as he thought had no authority to examine him. All that day could the Council get nothing out of him touching his accomplices, refusing to answer any such questions as he thought might discover the plot, and laying all the blame upon himself; whereunto, he said, he was moved only for religion and conscience’ sake, denying the King to be his lawful sovereign, or the anointed of God, in respect he was a heretic, and giving himself no other name than John Johnson, servant to Thomas Percy.’
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(i) THE FLIGHT FROM LONDON

While Fawkes was, in Cecil’s words, showing himself ‘no more dismayed—nay, scarce any more troubled—than if he were taken for a poor robbery on the highway’,¹ the Government were preparing to arrest the other conspirators. To John Lepton, a Groom of the Privy Chamber (one of the King’s minor Scottish favourites), was entrusted the taking of Percy. But, though Government spies had been watching the movements of the conspirators during the previous afternoon,* they seem to have lost track of them in the dark and to have imagined that Percy was still staying at Essex House.

It was about five o’clock in the morning of Tuesday, November 5th—that is to say, while Fawkes was still before the King—that Christopher Wright burst into Winter’s lodging at the ‘Duck and Drake’ with the news that all was lost. He told him that the Earl of Worcester (one of the Privy Councillors and the bitter anti-Catholic who had earlier in the year organized the search for Jesuits in Worcestershire) had called on Monteagle—who, like Worcester, had a town house in the Strand—and said: ‘Arise and come along

* This is the only possible explanation why the servant of Hewett, the hatter; Rookwood’s servant, Rookes; Elizabeth More, the landlady of Rookwood and Keyes; and other obscure people were examined before the Lord Chief Justice on Tuesday, November 5th. On the face of it, there was nothing to connect them in any way with the Plot, since, according to the Government story, the names of none of the conspirators except Catesby and Percy were known until Fawkes’s confession under torture on Saturday, November 9th. The mere fact of the immediate official examination on the Tuesday morning of people whom Wright, Keyes and Rookwood had visited on Monday afternoon is a conclusive argument for the Government’s complete knowledge—an argument which hitherto has been strangely overlooked and which alone is sufficient to destroy the basis of Gardiner’s case for the traditional story.

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to Essex House, for I am going to call up my Lord Northumberland." Wright had heard enough, in the sudden bustle of activity and conversation in the Strand at that early hour, to be certain that everything was known, but Winter ordered him to go back with the crowd to Essex Gate, ‘to learn what he could’. In a short time he returned and told Winter: ‘Surely all is lost; for Lepton is got on horseback at Essex door, and as he parted, he asked if their lordships would have any more with him: and, being answered ‘No’, is rode as fast up Fleet Street as he can ride.’

‘Go you then’, said Winter, ‘to Mr. Percy, for sure it is for him they seek, and bid him begone; I will stay and see the uttermost.’

Wright immediately went to find Percy and together they left London for Dunchurch, while Lepton and his company—ahead of them on the road north—were riding wildly up to the Border, where they presumed that Percy would take refuge among his own people.

As Percy was mounting at the ‘Red Lion’, he said to Talbois, his servant: ‘I am undone.’

‘What have you done that you should say so?’ asked Talbois.

Percy answered: ‘Let it satisfy thee that I said so.’

Winter, Keyes and Rookwood were now the only conspirators left in London. Keyes was the next to fly, leaving by way of Highgate and going, not to Dunchurch with the rest, but to try to hide, apparently in the neighbourhood of Lord Mordaunt’s house which had for so long been his home. (He was discovered a week or two later and sent a prisoner to London by Sir Richard Verney, the Sheriff of Warwickshire, on December 2nd.)

With only Rookwood and himself left, Winter decided to see for himself exactly how matters stood, though, as by this time the civil authorities of London and Westminster had ordered all the gates to be guarded and a proclamation made for the arrest of Percy, there was nothing that could be done. ‘I went to the Court Gates’, he says in his Confession, ‘and found them strictly guarded, so as nobody could enter. From thence I went down towards the Parliament House and in

* Tresham was also probably in London, but he seems to have had nothing to do with the rest after his final warning to them.
The Flight from London

the middle of King Street found the guard standing that would not let me pass; and as I returned I heard one say: "There is a treason discovered, in which the King and the Lords should have been blown up." So then I was fully satisfied that all was known and went to the stable where my gelding stood and rode into the country.

Cool and phlegmatic as ever, the stocky little man did not hurry, but rode quietly home to Huddington to his brother, calling on the way to see his sister Dorothy Grant, at Norbrook.7 As was proper, he was the last to leave and before he went knew that Rookwood had started on his epic ride to overtake the others with the final and fatal news.

Rookwood’s speed was such that, at one point, he rode thirty miles in two hours on one horse.8 He overtook Keyes only three miles north of Highgate and accompanied him until he turned off towards Turvey. He then put on pace and came up with Percy and Christopher Wright at Little Brickhill on the London side of Dunstable.9 (It is a revealing comment on the tensions of the last forty-eight hours that Percy appeared surprised to find that Rookwood was one of the conspirators.)910 Having told them of the state of affairs in London, he left them, and pressed on to overtake Catesby and John Wright a little farther along the road.

A servant had been sent by Digby from Dunchurch to Hockliffe near Dunstable, to meet Percy and his companion with two fresh horses. While he was waiting for them, ‘he saw John Wright passing Hockliffe, who gave him a note for Catesby’s boy to let him know where his master was’.11 (Catesby’s horse had cast a shoe and John Wright had apparently gone on alone.) When he asked the boy, ‘What news in London?’ he said ‘Nothing but evil news’ and wept and rode away. ‘Afterwards Percy and Christopher Wright came and asked for the geldings; and never stayed or went into the house, but only into the stable, and rode a-gallop away.’12

For the last part of the journey, the five seem to have ridden together—Percy and John Wright throwing their cloaks into the hedge so that they might keep up with Rook-

* If this be true, it argues a later date than is usually assumed for Rookwood’s admission to the circle and suggests that he was brought in during the late summer, not long before Digby and Tresham.
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wood’s furious pace—and, ‘notwithstanding the foulness of the winter ways’ arrived at Ashby St. Legers at six in the evening, just as Lady Catesby and Robert Winter, who had ridden over from Huddington, were sitting down to supper. The first intimation of their coming was a message from Catesby to Robert Winter, who thus described it: ‘Catesby sent for me into the fields, hard by the town’s end, and willed me to take my horse and come and speak to him, but that I should not let his mother know of his being there. So I went to him, who told me that Mr. Fawkes was taken and the whole plot discovered.’

(ii) NO RISING

To Robert Winter Catesby told the truth. But, as the party rode on to Dunchurch, he decided that, to ensure an insurrection, he would have to lie to Digby. At the inn at Dunchurch he took Sir Everard aside and told him that, though the plot had miscarried, both the King and Cecil were dead and ‘there was such a punner bred in the state... as if true Catholics would now stir, he doubted not but that they might procure to themselves good conditions.’ He urged Digby ‘by all the bonds of friendship to himself and all which the Cause might require’ to continue his part of the plan as if nothing had happened. Next day, he said, the Littletons would provide 1,000 men: Robert Winter’s father-in-law, Talbot of Grafton, with his unrivalled influence, would also aid the rising. They could then march through Warwickshire and Worcestershire into Wales, which was still seething with discontent, rallying the Catholic gentry and their retainers as they went. With an army in the west, the call for a general insurrection of Catholics would bring aid from other parts of the country. It was necessary to waste no time. At the moment, they held the advantage, since they were the first out of London with the news. They would march westward immediately, calling at Norbrook and Huddington, while Bates should be sent to Coughton, which lay a little north of their route, to give the news to Father Garnet, Father Tesimond and Lady Digby.

The plan was desperate enough, though Digby, yielding as always to Catesby, consented to it. But neither he nor the
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others were able to persuade many of the rest of the hunting party to follow them. ‘To the surprise of Sir Everard Digby and the disgust of Catesby, instead of rallying as one man to the call to arms, almost as one man they refused, with horror, to have anything whatever to do with an enterprise which had begun with an attempt at wholesale massacre and promised to end in the hanging, drawing and quartering of all who had a share in it. Sir Everard’s own uncle, Sir Robert Digby, was the very first to charge the conspirators with being a band of traitors and to order his men and horses to be got ready for immediate departure. With scarcely any exceptions, the other guests followed his example, not only condemning the treason, but also reproaching the traitors with having gravely injured the Catholic cause.’

The party, under the titular command of Sir Everard, which set off through the night ‘were not above fifty horse’ and as they went the servants and retainers took what opportunity offered of deserting. Innocent though they were, these simple men realized that the doom of the great was theirs also. One of Digby’s men asked him ‘what was to become of him and the rest of his poor servants’ who, he protested, were not ‘privy to this bloody faction’.

‘I believe you were not,’ answered Sir Everard, ‘but now there is no remedy.’

Digby’s realization of the consequences was not shared even by Robert Winter. Far removed from the centre of the Plot and told by his brother and Catesby only what they thought good for him to know, he was slow to grasp the full implications of his action. As the little company was nearing Warwick, Catesby remembered that there was in that town a stable of a horse-breaker of cavalry remounts and proposed that they should raid it, leaving their own tired horses in exchange for the fresh ones they should find there. Robert Winter protested against this open robbery ‘alleging that it would make a great uproar in the country’, and that, once done they ‘might not rest anywhere, the country would so rise about’ them.

‘Some of us may not look back’, Catesby reminded him.

‘But others,’ said Robert Winter, ‘I hope, may; and therefore I pray you let this alone.’

‘What! hast thou any hope, Robin?’ said Catesby. ‘I
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assure thee there is none that knoweth of this action but shall perish.\textsuperscript{21}

Rookwood also protested against the intended robbery, though from a more personal point of view. He was sufficiently well-horsed and ‘meant not to adventure himself in stealing any\textsuperscript{22} horses as he had fifteen or sixteen of his own. While the rest, leaving their trunk-horses with their servants at the gate of Warwick lest their raid should lead to retaliation, broke into the stable and stole nine or ten horses,\textsuperscript{23} Rookwood rode on ahead to Norbrook to warn John Grant of their approach. The rest caught up with him there about three in the morning of Wednesday, November 6th. On entering the hall, they found two tables furnished with the muskets and armour Grant had been storing, which they took with them\textsuperscript{24} when, after a short rest and refreshment, they set out again through the night.

It was daybreak before they reached the point on the road to Huddington where Bates left them to take the messages to the Jesuits. At Coughton the room in the Gatehouse which was used for a chapel commanded from its windows a view of the countryside in all directions,\textsuperscript{25} but Mass was over before Bates arrived. He was immediately taken to Father Garnet, who was in the hall and he delivered him the letter in silence.\textsuperscript{26}

The letter was signed jointly by Catesby and Digby and, according to Father Garnet, the effect of it ‘was to excuse their rashness and required my assistance in Wales, and persuade me to make a party, saying that if I had scrupulosity or desire to free myself or my Order from blame and let them now perish, I should follow after myself and all Catholics’. While Father Garnet was reading the letter, Father Tesimond came in and asked what the news was. At last both the Jesuits could speak openly and from ordinary knowledge of what they had so long known under the seal. Bates, unaware of the moment’s significance, heard the answer: ‘They would have blown up the Parliament House, and were discovered and we all utterly undone.’

And at last Father Garnet could give Catesby the admonition that hitherto he had been unable to give. He told Bates to take back the message ‘that I marvelled they would enter into such wicked actions and not be ruled by the advice of
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friends and the order of His Holiness given to all, and that I could not meddle but wished them to give over.

Father Tesimond, although he said that 'there was no tarrying for himself and Garnet' and that 'all Catholics were undone' was begged by Bates to go to Catesby, if he really wished to help him. Tésimond answered that he 'would not forbear to go unto him, though it were to suffer a thousand deaths', and though Catesby's conspiracy 'would overthrow the state of the whole society of the Jesuits' order'. About half an hour later, after Tesimond had had a private conversation with his Superior, he set out with Bates for Huddington, leaving Garnet to try to comfort Lady Digby who, when she had read her husband's letter, broke down, crying insconsolably.

The rest of the party arrived at Huddington about two in the afternoon and immediately posted sentinels round the moated manor. Catesby and John Wright urged Robert Winter to write to his father-in-law, Talbot, for aid: but this Robert Winter refused to do saying 'that they did not know him, for the world would not draw him from his allegiance.' And it is significant that there was no talk of rebellion in the presence of their hostess, Talbot's daughter.

To the tired and dejected company there entered during the evening, Thomas Winter from London and Bates with Father Tesimond, from Coughton. Tesimond went immediately to Catesby who greeted him with: 'Here at least is a gentleman who will live and die with us' and, after some conversation, persuaded him to ride over to Abington's house at Hindlip, about four miles away, asking him and his retainers to join them. But Abington was as adamant as Talbot had been. 'Alas, I am sorry', he said, but added that he 'would never join with them in that matter and charged all his house to that purpose not to go unto them'.

Father Oldcorne, Abington's Jesuit confessor resident at Hindlip, supported him in his decision, and the last parting of the two Yorkshiremen, old school-friends and fellow Jesuits, was taken 'in some heat', as Tesimond flung at him: 'Thus we may see a difference between a phlegmatic and a choleric person!' and 'said he would go to others, and especially into Lancashire, for the same purpose as he came to Hindlip to Mr. Abington'. So Father Tesimond rode away.
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Meanwhile at Huddington, the company, now reduced to about thirty-six, realized that the end might be near. After they had snatched some much-needed rest, they assembled between two and three in the morning (Thursday, November 7th) and all of them—‘servants as others’—made their confessions to Robert Winter’s chaplain, the Jesuit Father, Nicholas Hart ‘a little man, whitely complexion and a little beard’ who then said Mass and administered the Sacrament to them all. Housed and shriven, they set out a little before dawn, on the north-west road into Staffordshire, intending to recruit on the way and spend the night at Stephen Littleton’s house at Holbeach. Of the conspirators, Catesby, Percy, the Wrights, the Winters, Grant, Rookwood and Digby, four rode in front of the procession and four behind, ‘to keep the company from starting away’—deserting. They took with them ‘a cart laden with trunchees, pikes and other munition’ and from Hewell Grange, the seat of Lord Windsor, Talbot’s brother, where they arrived about noon to find the owner absent, they took more arms, armour and a quantity of gunpowder, which they put in another cart.

But though they were now well enough provided with ammunition, they could gain no adherents. As Catesby came out of Whewell Grange, he saw twenty or thirty villagers standing about, watching the proceedings with curiosity.

‘Will you come with us?’ he asked.

‘It may be, if we know what you mean to do,’ was the answer.

‘We are for God and the country,’ said Catesby.

Then one of the men struck the ground with his stick and answered for the rest. ‘We are for the King James as well as for God and the country, and we will not go against his will.’

As they continued their way north, ‘not one man’, Sir Everard Digby afterwards admitted, ‘came to take our part, though we expected so many’. Worse still, through that wretched day, which was stormy and very wet, with the roads deep in mud, the men, now weary and hopeless, lagged behind and, in spite of precautions, some managed to break away. ‘The leaders of the expedition threatened those who remained that the next man who attempted to desert should be instantly shot. When they rested, Sir Everard and his companions took it in turn to watch their men with a loaded
The Last Stand at Holbeach

pistol, determined to make an example of the first deserter they could get a shot at. When they rode on, they endeavoured to be equally vigilant; but with such a straggling, wearied, undisciplined cavalcade, in a wooded country like Worcestershire, on a dark and misty November afternoon, it was impossible to prevent men from sneaking away unperceived, and the desertions hourly continued. 37

Behind them, at a distance, they suddenly became aware of a body of horsemen. Thankful that at last some of the Catholics in the neighbourhood were coming to join them, they halted to enable them to come up with them. But the others halted also. They knew now that they were being followed—though their pursuers were evidently not yet inclined to attack a force so well armed, if so small. As long as the light lasted, they caught occasional glimpses of their shadowers, who grew in numbers; nor could they be certain that, even in the dark, they had thrown them off.

It was 10 o’clock at night before they arrived at Holbeach House.

(iii) THE LAST STAND AT HOLBEACH

The pursuing company was a posse comitatus led by the High Sheriff of Worcestershire, Sir Richard Walsh, accompanied by several of the local knights and gentlemen 'and the power and face of the country'. 38 The countryside was now roused. During the previous day messengers had come 'post haste continually, one after the other, from the capital, all bearing proclamations mentioning Percy by name', 39 and the fugitives in Holbeach House knew that there was no escape.

Nevertheless Thomas Winter decided to make a last attempt to win support from Talbot of Grafton. Early in the morning of Friday, November 8th, taking with him Stephen Littleton, he left the house, under pretence of reconnoitring, and rode over to Talbot at Pepperhill. His impossible hope was soon dispelled. The old man came out to meet him, asked him how he dared come to his house in the circumstances and drove him away saying 'that his coming to him might be as much as his life was worth'. 40

As they were returning to Holbeach, they were met by one of Winter’s servants who told them that, during their absence, a terrible accident had occurred. Catesby, Rook-
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wood and Grant were 'burnt up' with gunpowder and 'the rest of the company dispersed upon sight thereof'. The gunpowder which they had brought in the open cart from Hewell Grange had become, from the previous day's weather, so damp as to be useless. They had put it before the fire to dry, while they were preparing their weapons, and a spark had fallen into it and ignited it.

At this news, Littleton's courage snapped. He determined to fly and urged Winter to go with him. But Winter answered: 'I will first go back and see the body of my friend and bury it, whatever befall me.' So Stephen Littleton rode away into hiding and Thomas Winter returned to Holbeach.

He found that his servant had exaggerated. The explosion had, indeed, 'hurt divers of them especially Mr. Catesby, Mr. Rookwood and most of all Mr. Grant, whose face was much disfigured and his eyes almost burnt out' but they were 'reasonable well in respect of what he had heard'. He asked them what they intended to do.

'We mean to die here,' said Catesby.

'I will take such part as you do,' said Thomas Winter.

But during his absence Digby had deserted them and now Robert Winter decided to try to join Littleton. The explosion had shattered his nerve. As he looked at the faces of his friends he suddenly remembered a dream he had had—how 'he thought he saw steeplest stand awry and within those churches strange and unknown faces'. And now 'the faces of his associates so scorch'd resembled those which he had seen in his dream'. Besides Littleton, Digby and Robert Winter, Bates also fled. No one attempted to dissuade him. Everyone was now at liberty to 'shift for himself', if he wished to, before the Sheriff arrived. The gunpowder explosion had changed their hearts. 'They took it for a sign of God's will that He would not have them prepare to resist, but rather to prepare themselves to suffer, which they did.... They all fell earnestly to their prayers, the Litanies and such like' and spent the last hour before the Sheriff arrived in meditation.

The Sheriff, according to his own account, arrived 'about twelve or one o'clock in the afternoon—the greatest part of their retinue and some of the better sort being dispersed and fled before our coming, whereupon and after summons and
The Last Stand at Holbeach

warning first given and proclamation in His Highness’s name to yield and submit themselves, who, refusing the same, we fired some part of the house and assaulted some part of the rebellious persons left in the house.45

When the attack on the house began, the conspirators could not forget that they were fighters. In spite of their acts of resignation, blood and training and temperament were too strong. ‘They resolved that they would not be taken, but rather suffer death at that time in the field. Wherefore Mr. Catesby took from his neck a cross of gold, which he always used to wear about him, and, blessing himself with it and kissing it, showed it unto the people, protesting there solemnly before them all, it was only for the honour of the Cross and the exaltation of that Faith which honoured the Cross, and for the saving of their souls in the same Faith, that he was moved to undertake the business; and since he saw it was not God’s will it should succeed in that manner they intended or at that time, he was willing and ready to give his life for the same cause; only he would not be taken by any, and against that only he would defend himself with his sword.’46

Outside, the Sheriff ‘who kept himself close under the wall’ (which, though it had the advantage of safety meant that ‘he could not see what was done within’)* ordered the attack. The odds were in his favour—a company several hundred strong, armed with muskets, against a dozen men with no weapons but their swords.† They started firing into the courtyard. Winter, crossing it, was shot through the shoulder. Then John Wright fell and his brother, Christopher, mortally wounded by his side. Rookwood dropped, wounded in four or five places. Percy and Catesby were standing together back to back at the courtyard door, waiting for the attackers to enter ‘resolving to yield themselves to

* This account is taken from the Exchequer Depositions, James I, 4 Trinity No. 6, Worcester and Stafford, 27th June 1606, in which the various participants in the scene were trying to establish their claims to rewards and pensions. The proceedings were long and searching and the evidence occasionally contradictory; but there is considerable unanimity on the point of the cowardice of the Sheriff, which one witness epitomized by remarking that ‘he did not know of any service done by Sir Richard Walsh’.

† Five servants had remained with them and Henry Morgan, one of the hunting party.
Failure

no man but to death as to the messenger of God.' Catesby called out to Winter:

‘Stand by me, Tom, and we will die together,’ but Winter answered: ‘I have lost the use of my right arm and I fear that will cause me to be taken.’ A moment later, Catesby and Percy fell, shot by the same bullet.

Catesby, as his life was ebbing, managed to crawl into the house, where he took into his arms a picture of Our Lady: ‘And so, embracing and kissing the same, he died.’

It was now safe for the attackers to enter—for Grant, with his burnt eyes, had been useless from the beginning—but they still showed reluctance, and neither the Sheriff nor the gentlemen accompanying him would leave the shelter of the outer wall. At last one of the ensign bearers started to belabour five or six of his company who were preparing to run away, and made them run instead to the wall of the court, which, mounting upon their shoulders, he scaled. There was no one left who could resist. Percy and the Wrights were dying, Winter and Rookwood wounded and Grant blind. The way was now clear. Behind the ensign, the men poured in to secure their prisoners and their plunder. The ensign himself pulled off Christopher Wright’s boots to get his silk stockings. No mercy was shown. Sir Thomas Lawley, a gentleman of Staffordshire assisting the Sheriff, reported to Cecil: ‘Such was the extreme disorder of the baser sort that while I with my men took up one of the languishing traitors, the rude people stripped the rest naked, their wounds being many and grievous, and no surgeon at hand they became incurable and so died.’

Lawley himself indulged in plunder of another kind. He collected Catesby’s golden crucifix and the picture of Our Lady and any other devotional emblems he could find on the others and sent them up to London to Cecil—‘to show you’, as he put it in his accompanying letter, ‘such superstitious and Popish idols as were found about some of the said rebels’.

The surviving rebels themselves—Thomas Winter, Grant and Rookwood—were sent up to the Tower as speedily as possible, where they were joined by Keyes and Digby and Bates, who were captured separately and Tresham, who was arrested in London on November 12th. But Robert Winter was still at large at Christmas.
BOOK FOUR

TRIAL AND EXECUTION
Prelude to the Trial

(i) Loyal rejoicings

The news from Holbeach House was known generally in London on Sunday, November 10th, which had been set apart as a day of solemn thanksgiving in all the churches. The official sermon was preached at St. Paul's Cross by William Barlow, one of the more extreme Protestants, once chaplain to Queen Elizabeth, who had, during that year, 1605, been elevated to the episcopate as Bishop of Rochester.* He was an obvious choice for such an occasion, since he had performed a similar service after the execution of the Earl of Essex, and though, in the printed version of the sermon, a preface apologized for its shortcomings on the ground of the ‘horror in the preacher’s mind (able to have confounded his memory) who should have been one of the hoisted number’, he delivered himself creditably enough. Taking as his text the 51st verse of Psalm XVIII: ‘Great deliverances giveth he unto his King and showeth mercy to his anointed David and to his seed for ever,’ he described the Plot as ‘a cruel execution, an inhuman cruelty, a brutish inhumanity, a devilish brutishness and an hyperbolical, yea, an hyperbolical devilishness’. He read a version of the confession which during the week had been extracted from the tortured Fawkes, made public the recent news from Holbeach House, and concluded with hearty prayer to Almighty God ‘for the continuance of our good King, our State and our Religion’.1

The Bishop thus purveyed to a large popular audience of Londoners, drunk with excitement of the most sensational

* Though he subsequently became Bishop of Lincoln, he is not to be confused with the Thomas Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln who in 1679 brought out his edition of the Government’s version of the Gunpowder Plot.
**Prelude to the Trial**

week within living memory, the sentiments which the King himself had voiced the previous day to a more select assembly in the still-intact House of Lords. In his speech on Saturday, November 9th, proroguing Parliament, James had given the first official account of ‘this great and horrible attempt, whereof the like was never either heard nor read’ and expatiated on ‘the horrible and fearful cruelty of their device, which was not only for the destruction of my person, nor of my wife and posterity only, but of the whole body of the state in general; wherein should neither have been spared, or distinction made of young or old, of great nor of small, of man nor of woman. The whole nobility, the whole reverend clergy, bishops and most part of the good preachers, the most part of the knights and gentry; yea, and if that any in this society were favourers of their profession they should all have gone one way; the whole judges of the land, with the most of the lawyers and the whole clerks: and as the wretch himself that is in the Tower doth confess, it was purposely devised by them, and concluded to be done in this House; that where the cruel laws (as they say) were made against their religion, both place and persons should all be destroyed and blown up at once.’

The narrative was seasoned with the unique Jacobean flavour. James pointed out that ‘since kings are in the word of God itself called gods, as being his lieutenants and vice-gerents on earth, and so adorned and furnished with some sparkles of the Divinity’, it would be instructive to compare ‘some of the works of God the Great King towards the whole and general world to some of his works towards me and this little world of my dominions’. There was the saving of Noah in the Ark and there was the Last Judgment to come, in which believers would be purged but not destroyed by fire. ‘In the like sort’, pronounced the King, ‘I may justly compare these two great and fearful doomsdays, wherewith God threatened to destroy me’—the Gowrie Conspiracy of 5th August 1600 being the first and the Gunpowder Plot the second. The convincingness of the analogy was reinforced by the fact that both events occurred ‘upon one day of the week, which was Tuesday, and likewise one day of the month, which was the fifth; thereby to teach me, that as it was the same devil that still persecuted me, so it was one and
Loyal Rejoicings

the same God that still mightily delivered me.’ Parliament, therefore, was to be prorogued till a Tuesday—January 21st.

The King also felt that he had cause to thank God that, even had He allowed the Plot to succeed, ‘it should never have been spoken nor written in ages succeeding that I had died inglorious in an ale-house or a stew, or such vile place, but mine end should have been with the most honourable and best company’. He stressed his own perspicacity in diagnosing gunpowder from the wording of the Monteagle letter, which made the discovery of the Plot ‘not a little wonderful’, if not actually miraculous; and he emphasized his innocence of offence by explaining that the conspirators’ action might have been comprehensible had they ‘been bankrupt persons or discontented upon occasion of any disgrace done unto them’, but ‘as I scarcely ever knew any of them, so cannot they allege so much as a pretended cause of grief; and the wretch himself in hands doth confess that there was no cause moving him or them but merely and only religion.’

As for that religion, he explained that it was ‘indeed the mystery of iniquity’ and while admitting that there might be some Catholics who were good men and honest citizens because they did not correctly understand the Faith, he insisted that ‘none of those that truly know and believe the whole grounds and School conclusions of their doctrine can ever prove either good Christians or faithful subjects’.

The King’s insistence on this point was the more necessary, not only to give the lead to the official pamphleteers* and to prepare the way for the even more bitter anti-Catholic legislation already contemplated, but because the Archpriest Blackwell had sent out a letter to all Catholics protesting against the Plot and pointing out that it was ‘not lawful for private subjects by private authority to take arms against their lawful King, albeit he become a tyrant and that with-

* The first of a flood of pamphlets appeared within less than a month of the speech—on December 5th. Entitled An Exact Discovery of Romish Doctrine in the case of Conspiracy and Rebellion, it asserted that official Catholic doctrine taught, among other things, that neighbours, if heretics, might lawfully be spoiled of their goods by force; that parishioners might lawfully defraud Protestant ministers of their tithes; that all keepers for forts were freed from their oaths of subjection; that wives were not bound to render due benevolence unto their husbands if heretics, and that the right of Kings Christian must depend rather upon their religion than upon order of succession.
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out most grievous offence to God and Holy Church, private violent attempts cannot be thought of, much less aided and maintained by Catholics'. This letter was followed by another before the month was out, referring to the unlawfulness of the Plot and to 'the inward heart's grief generally conceived among us that any Catholics should be instruments in so detestable and damnable a practice, odious in the sight of God and horrible to the understanding of men' and stating in the most explicit terms that 'no violent act or attempt against the person of our dread sovereign lord the King, his royal issue, nobility, councillors or officers of state, can be other than a most grievous and heinous offence to God, scandalous to the world, utterly unlawful of itself and against God's express commandment'. The Archpriest added that 'as His Holiness hath already to me in general prohibited all such unlawful attempts, so undoubtedly, when notice of such shall come unto him, he will by his public instruments manifest and declare to the world his utter dislike and detestation thereof, with as deep ecclesiastical censures as are in his power to impose upon such as shall so wickedly and maliciously contrive such devilish devices'.

But it was, of course, impossible to stem the anti-Catholic tide. Popular hatred, canalized by Government propaganda, was too strong. Here at least Cecil's hopes had been abundantly realized. What might prove more difficult was to involve as associates in the Plot the Jesuits, who had throughout endeavoured to prevent it, and the exiles in Brussels, in particular Hugh Owen, who, in all probability, knew nothing about it.

To this end, the surviving prisoners who were in Government hands—Guy Fawkes, Thomas Winter, John Grant, Robert Keyes, Ambrose Rookwood, Sir Everard Digby, Francis Tresham and Thomas Bates*—should be 'examined' at leisure in the Tower during the next two months.

(ii) Guy Fawkes Confesses

Guy Fawkes was taken to the Tower on November 6th and placed in a subterranean cell under the White Tower, next to the torture chamber. The King sent special instruc-

* Robert Winter was not captured till 9th January 1606.
tions that he was to be slowly tortured to the uttermost, and next morning Waad informed him of what was in store for him. 'I protested I would never give him over, if I were not overruled by commandment, until I had gotten the inward secret of his thoughts, and all his complices, and therefore I willed him to prepare himself.' But before any violent steps were taken, he said he had been commanded to find out whether Fawkes had taken an oath of secrecy and so could not, without breaking it, give any information. After some hesitation, Fawkes admitted the oath, adding that he had received the Sacrament upon it, though the priest who administered it knew nothing of the Plot. He then remarked 'that he knew not what torture might do, but otherwise he was resolved to keep his vow.' On the rack he admitted that the Plot, which originated a year and a half previously, was at first confined to five persons; but he still refused to give their names. He admitted that his own name was Fawkes.

Officially, therefore, by the evening of November 7th, the Government knew nothing except that Fawkes and Percy and three other people were concerned in the conspiracy. This circumstance makes it all the more curious that during that day a Proclamation* had been issued for the arrest of Percy and his associates Catesby, the Winters, Rookwood, Grant, the Wrights and one of Catesby's servants named Ashfield.

Fawkes revealed no names until, under more severe torture on November 8th, he admitted them all, as well as

* If this proclamation were based on news from Warwickshire it makes nonsense of the Government's protestations of the slowness of travel. The mention of the horse-stealing episode, indeed, makes it certain that they must have received news from this source. On the other hand, the omission of Digby, who was in fact the leader of the attempted rebellion, suggests that the proclamation was not based solely on news from the Midlands; and the mention of Rookwood and the Wrights (of whom we know by the depositions taken in London on the 5th and 6th they were aware as conspirators—see p. 171n.) suggests that they were merely issuing the list of those they wished taken and had not yet determined to proceed against Digby. Gardiner himself (History, i, 266) says: 'On the 7th they obtained, from some unknown source, intelligence which put them in possession of the names of the other conspirators', without apparently noticing that this destroys the whole case for the Government's ignorance until Fawkes revealed the names under extreme torture on November 8th.
the fact that Thomas Winter had first broached the matter to him and he elaborated the plans for the seizure of Princess Elizabeth. It was this confession on November 8th which was referred to both by the King in his address to Parliament on the 9th and Barlow in his sermon on the 10th. On November 9th, Fawkes promised to make further revelations provided that he might disclose them, unwritten and in private, to Cecil. There is no record of this having taken place, but torture again induced full details of the meeting of the first conspirators behind St. Clement’s and the mention of the name of Gerard as the priest who administered the Sacrament, though even in the extremity of pain, Fawkes insisted that the Jesuit knew nothing of the conspiracy. This last deposition of Fawkes’s was not formally attested and signed till November 17th (by which time the other prisoners were in the Tower) ‘and so weak was the shattered frame of the tortured man that he only scrawled the word “Guido” and then, after making two faint dashes, swooned away.’

He had been examined again on the 16th, this time with the object of implicating Catholic noblemen, and he had declared that Catesby had tried to warn Lord Montague against attending Parliament on November 5th; that Lord Mordaunt had no intention of being present in any case; that Lord Stourton was to be detained by a trick; that Tresham wished to warn Lord Monteagle and that they all wished to warn the Earl of Arundel.

The confessions of Fawkes were, of course, of value to the Government in a general way in that his story could serve as the basis of their narrative of the Plot and be widely circulated at home and abroad, but, in another sense they were unsatisfactory. They did not involve the Jesuits or Hugh Owen or the rest of the Catholic population in England. The first point was remedied by the simple process of omitting Fawkes’s exculpation of Father Gerard—on the original of the confession, Coke marked in red ink the sentence for omission with the marginal instruction hucusque (thus far)—and the second by inserting into the published confession a sentence (absent from the original*), specifically involving Owen.

As for the English Catholics, there was perhaps no need

* See page 88.

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to inflame popular feeling further. The bell-ringing and bonfires which had expressed the loyalty of Londoners on November 5th was symptomatic of the sentiments of the simple, and the more worldly already understood the financial implications of a new persecution. By November 17th, for example, Huddington had been thoroughly pillaged: Winter's 'goods are of no great value which are left', reported the Sheriff, 'by reason much both has been and is conveyed away daily'; and, far from the scene of action and the circle of the conspirators, the Countess of Kent (to take one instance merely) wrote to Cecil saying that she knew that a Mr. William Willoughby 'should be one of this most hateful treason. His living in Suffolk is but £200, which by his most foul act is rightly His Majesty's.' Small, however, as it was, she would like it. In this atmosphere, there would be no difficulty in enforcing any confiscatory laws the Government wished, or of assuming that any Catholic, however innocent, was a traitor.

(iii) Prisoners
The prisoners taken at Holbeach, Thomas Winter, Rookwood and Grant, were kept in the custody of the Sheriff of Worcestershire, Sir Richard Walsh, while in the neighbouring county, Sir Richard Verney, Sheriff of Warwickshire, rounded up other suspected persons. These consisted mainly of servants and retainers of the leaders, but in the net was also Keyes, who was, presumably, making his way towards Wales and safety. Bates was captured during the following week in Staffordshire and Sir Everard Digby was taken within a short time of leaving Holbeach on his way to surrender himself to Sir Fulke Greville at Warwick. With his page and one other servant who refused to leave him, he tried to throw off some of the posse who were following him by making for a wood 'and thought there in a dry pit to have stayed with his horses until the company had been passed. But they tracked his horses unto the very pit side and then cried out "here he is, here he is!" Sir Everard, being altogether undaunted, answered: "Here he is indeed. What then?" and advanced his horse in the manner of curvetting (which he was an expert in) and thought to have borne them over, and so to break from them, esteeming them to be but
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ten or twelve persons, whom he saw about the pit; and though he made them easily give way, yet then he saw above a hundred people hard by and coming upon him; so that, seeing it in vain to resist, he willingly yielded himself to the likeliest man of the company.12

As soon as arrangements could be made and the wounded men were fit to travel they were sent to London, where they were all in the Tower before November 20th. The heads of Percy and Catesby were cut off to be ‘set upon the ends of the Parliament House’.13 The journey naturally attracted crowds, for ‘every one wished to see the faces of men whose name and whose deeds were now resounded from one end of the country to the other’.14 Lord Harington, who, as the guardian of Princess Elizabeth, was peculiarly conscious of his escape from danger, wrote: ‘I have seen some of the chief and think they bear an evil mark in their foreheads, for more terrible countenances were never looked upon.’15 The King himself at first intended to see them ‘but said he felt sorely appalled at the thought and so forbade’.16

Tresham who had remained in London was arrested on November 12th and committed to the Tower three days later and the Earl of Northumberland (who was originally put in the custody of the Archbishop of Canterbury), was, with Lords Montague, Mordaunt and Stourton, imprisoned there on November 27th. All over the country friends and relatives of the conspirators were arrested and questioned locally and Lady Mordaunt, Anne Vaux, the wives of Grant and Rookwood, and the widows of Percy and the two Wrights were among those sent to the capital.

In the ten weeks that elapsed between the capture of the conspirators and their trial, there were constant examinations before Cecil, Waad, Coke and the other Commissioners, of whom Northampton was the most energetic. They were, indeed, being tried daily in the Tower. ‘In the so-called Gunpowder Plot Room, in the Lieutenant’s House, with its panelled walls and high, wide windows, they underwent “a thousand interrogatories from Coke, a thousand hostilities from Waad, and a thousand treacheries from Forsett. This Forsett was one of Northampton’s spies; a useful and despicable wretch, whom his master employed in overhearing and reporting the private conversations of prisoners with each
Prisoners

Coke himself admitted at the trial that ‘twenty and three several days’ had been spent in examinations and these, extorted by fear, by cajolery, by deceit, from men never sure how far, under torture, they had been incriminated by their friends or what they themselves might find themselves saying, were woven into the indictment.

Though Guy Fawkes was the only conspirator to be officially tortured, there is no reason to suppose that torture was not employed on them all. Topcliffe, indeed, was dead, but his methods survived and Waad, who had so long been his colleague in secret cruelty, was in complete charge of the prisoners. Waad, indeed, brought into the Tower a special band of his own servants to deal with them—men, bound only to him, who had no standing among the regular staff at the Tower. This fact, taken in conjunction with the unvarying practice of the previous years and with such ominous sentences as ‘I have made all things besides ready as I was directed’ in one of Waad’s notes to Cecil, make it permissible to assume torture in the absence of direct and unimpeachable evidence to the contrary. But it so happens that there is evidence in the opposite sense, from Cecil himself. Writing to Faunt on 4th December 1605, he complains that ‘most of these conspirators have wilfully forsworn that the priests knew anything in particular, and obstinately refuse to be accusers of them, yea, what torture soever they be put to’.

The Government’s objective in all the examinations was the same—to implicate the Jesuits, the exiles and the Catholic population, in particular the nobility—for otherwise the story cannot be understood. The Plot had publicly to conform to the conventional pattern of the scheming priests, the dreaded invaders and the traitorous Catholics; otherwise much of its utility was diminished. The change of Papal policy, which ensured that the Jesuits were pacified instead of militant; the treaty with Spain, which made any idea of foreign aid no more than a fanatic’s dream; and the complete ignorance of Catholics as a whole, even the relatives of the conspirators, of the Plot or of the insurrection, made this end attainable only by forgery or by false statements obtained by torture, since such statements would be obviously untrue.

Furthermore, of the prisoners in their power, Digby,
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Rookwood and Tresham, by reason of their late admittance to the circle, knew very little (and what Tresham additionally knew was obviously dangerous to themselves) and Keyes and Grant were hardly more useful. Thomas Winter remained the key witness and Thomas Bates a useful one.

It was not till December 4th, however, that Cecil was able to inform the King that at last it seemed possible to involve the Jesuits in the Plot. He wrote to Nicholas Faunt, a clerk to the Signet: ‘You may tell his Majesty that if he please to read what this day we have drawn from a voluntary and penitent examination, that point I am persuaded (but I am no undertaker) shall be so well cleared, if he forbear much to speak of this but few days, as he shall see all fall out to that end whereto his Majesty shoots.’23 The examination he referred to was that of Bates, in whose statement occurred the information that in confession to Father Tesimond he had given a full account of the plot and that the priest ‘bade him obey his master, because it was for a good cause, and be secret, and mention the matter to no other priest’.23

Whether Bates was tortured into saying this or whether the confession is a forgery is immaterial, since it bears the mark of self-evident falsity. In the first place, no priest could say what was alleged; in the second, it is the opposite of what Father Tesimond did in fact say and do when Catesby himself revealed the plot in confession—a circumstance of which the Government was at that time unaware. It is not surprising that the original of Bates’s confession disappeared at an early stage of the proceedings and that it was only a copy which was officially endorsed, used in court, and eventually put into the State archives. But, however arrived at, it was enough for Cecil’s purpose. As Father Gerard put it: ‘This was the ground and the only foundation upon which they built that great and slanderous calumnyation against all the Jesuits in England.’23

When Bates was examined again on 13th January 1606, he told of his meeting with Father Garnet and Father Tesimond at Coughton, after the Plot had failed; of his ride with Father Tesimond to Huddington and of the latter’s departure for Hindlip. He said also that he had seen Garnet, Tesimond and Gerard at Harrowden about a fortnight before the Plot. Though he was, as it happens, mistaken about
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Gerard (who was entirely ignorant of the Plot),\textsuperscript{24} this was sufficient for the Government to include the names of the three Jesuits in the list of the actual conspirators. The Jesuits were not indicted as accomplices merely, but as principals, so that the order of the names in the official arraignment at the trial—even though, at the time, no Jesuit had been captured—was: ‘Henry Garnet, Superior of the Jesuits within the Realm of England (also called by the several names of Walley, Darcy, Roberts, Farmer, and Henry Philips), Oswald Tesmond, Jesuit (otherwise called Oswald Greenwel*), John Gerard, Jesuit (also called by the several names of Lee and Brook), Robert Winter, Thomas Winter, Gentlemen, Guy Fawkes, Gent. (otherwise called Guy Johnson),’ etc. The Plot was thus labelled, inescapably enough, the ‘Jesuits’ Conspiracy’. ‘The end whereto His Majesty shoots’ had been attained, and so that there might remain no shadow of doubt in the minds of loyal subjects, the indictment stated that ‘Henry Garnet, Oswald Tesmond, John Gerard and other Jesuits did maliciously, falsely and traitorously move and persuade [Catesby and the other conspirators] that our said Sovereign Lord the King, the nobility, clergy and the whole commonalty of the realm of England (Papists excepted) were heretics, and that all heretics were accursed and excommunicate; and that no heretic could be a King, but that it was lawful and meritorious to kill our said Sovereign Lord the King, and all other heretics within this realm of England.’

The most important confession, however, was inevitably Thomas Winter’s. He was the only living key to the conspiracy as a whole. As Father Gerard put it: ‘All these prisoners were divers times examined, but only two of their examinations published in print, which were of Mr. Guido Faukes and Mr. Thomas Winter, both of which agreed in one, only Mr. Winter’s was the larger.’ The controversy about the authenticity of this confession has already been mentioned and my own additional reason for thinking it a forgery will be found in Appendix I. Here it is only necessary to point out that thus to describe it does not, of course, mean that it is an entire work of fiction or that it does not

* Tesimond was apparently known as both Greenway and Greenwell. He used ‘Philip Beaumont’ only on the Continent.

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contain a considerable amount of truth. Obviously, as much
verisimilitude as possible was necessary for it to be effective.
The twists and insertions, if deadly, should also be small and
delicate. To evaluate exactly what in it is true, what untrue,
is, as matters stand at the moment, impossible. All that can
be said is that it is unsafe to assume the truth of anything
which cannot be independently verified and that where, in
the foregoing narrative, I have used it—for, without such
use, no connected story of the Plot could be told—I have
entered the caveat ‘according to Thomas Winter’s con-
fession’.

Another point to be remembered is that, as Catesby was
dead and Fawkes’s confession public property, there was no
need for Winter to hold back much information, since it
could now hurt no one; and, in many of the transactions—
such as the Spanish negotiations at the end of Elizabeth’s
reign—the Government knew all the details from Mont-
eagle. The utility of the confession to them was precisely that
it involved Spain and the exiles—even though the circum-
stances of 1602 were totally different from those of 1605—
and that, omitting Monteagle’s name, it could be published
to show the connection between them and some of the plot-
ters. In addition, Tresham (who with Monteagle, Catesby
and Winter was involved in the Spanish negotiations) was
threatened with torture unless he consented to name Father
Garnet as an accomplice of the ‘Spanish Plot’; and, in
general, Tresham’s admissions could be used to supplement
Winter’s. Thus, by the confessions of Fawkes, attested on
November 17th; of Winter, between November 21st and
26th; and of Bates on December 4th the Government had
obtained ‘proof’ against those whom it wished to implicate
and the shape of the story was settled.

(iv) THE DEATH OF TRESHAM

The day after Bates’s confession, December 5th, Sir
Edward Coke (who, it will be remembered, slept for reasons
of economy at his chambers in the Inner Temple) determined
personally to examine rooms in the Inner Temple which had
been rented by old Sir Thomas Tresham and, after his death,
had been for a time occupied by Lewis Tresham, his second
The Death of Tresham

son, and the confidential retainer-secretary of the younger Treshams, George Vavasour. In his search, Coke discovered in a box two manuscript copies of A Treatise of Equivocation. The quarto copy, which had belonged to Sir Thomas, had the title altered, in Garnet’s handwriting, to A Treatise against Lying and Fraudulent Dissimulation—a significant enough change, emphasizing the real point of a much-misunderstood word. The other copy—a folio—was one made for Francis Tresham by George Vavasour. When, four days later, Tresham was questioned, he denied all knowledge of the manuscript, presumably realizing that the discovery of it might further implicate Garnet.

Tresham was already a sick man. A fortnight after this examination he was dead and his last action, the night before he died, was to dictate to George Vavasour a letter to Cecil in which he withdrew the statement he had made about Garnet’s knowledge of the Spanish mission and added that he had neither seen nor heard of Garnet for the previous sixteen years.* He left it as a last charge to his wife (who had been allowed to be with him in his illness) that she should deliver this letter to Cecil.

Tresham’s death must remain one of the mysteries of the Plot. Bishop Goodman, a contemporary, has left on record that ‘Butler, the great physician of Cambridge’ declared him to have been poisoned, though the report of the three doctors who visited him on December 16th is missing. On the 15th he had written a letter to Cecil, which Waad forwarded, but which is also missing. If it is ever discovered, it may reveal the nature of the knowledge dangerous to the Government which Tresham undoubtedly possessed. The possibility that he may have been poisoned by his brother-in-law, Monteagle, has already been mentioned.† It remains only to quote Waad’s letter to Cecil, announcing the death, on December 23rd.

* This would mean the years 1586 to 1602 and there seems no reason to doubt that he was telling the truth. The Government construed it as being the years 1589 to 1605, in which case it was obviously untrue. Gardiner, following the Government, calls it ‘mere recklessness of lying’ and remarks that ‘he determined to crown his life with a deliberate falsehood’ which showed ‘how completely he had mastered the principles of the Treatise of Equivocation.

† See page 161.

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'As I certified your Lordship,' he says, 'there was no hope of recovery in Tresham, so it will please you to understand he died this night, about two of the clock after midnight, with very great pain; for though his spirits were much spent and his body dead, a-lay above two hours in departing. It may please your Lordship I may know His Majesty's pleasure for the burying of him, both because it will not be possible to keep him, for he smelt exceedingly when I was with him yesterday in the afternoon, and I perceive means will be made to His Majesty to have his body begged, for I find his friends were marvellous confident if he had escaped this sickness, and have given out words in this place that they feared not the course of justice.'

On this Jardine comments that 'the desire of concealing the body manifested in the letter . . . might indeed raise a shade of suspicion.' No one was permitted to see the body. Francis Tresham had 'his head chopped off and sent to be set up at Northampton, his body being tumbled into a hole' (on Tower Hill) 'without so much ceremony as the formality of a grave'.

(v) Digby in the Tower

Of all the prisoners, Digby, who knew least about the Plot and might with truth have claimed to have been deceived by Catesby, remained most untroubled in his convictions. He was, indeed, heart-broken by the consequences he had brought on his wife and children and in the poems he wrote during these days, he expressed it bitterly enough. In his last letter to his children, which they could read and remember when they were older, his devotion to his wife is seen again: 'Above all things in this world, seek to obey and follow your mother's will and pleasure; who, as she hath been the best wife to me that ever man enjoyed, so can she not fail to show herself equal to the best mother, if you deserve not the contrary. If it please God to send her life, though you have nothing else, I shall leave you enough. And, on the contrary, if I could leave you ten times more than myself ever had, yet she be taken from you, I should think you but poor.'

Lady Digby, on her part, besought Cecil for mercy for her husband: 'I hope his offence against His Majesty is not
so heinous in that execrable plot, as is said to be contrived by
some others; which in my heart I cannot conceive his nature
to give consent for such an act to be committed."38

Yet, in spite of all, Sir Everard remained, to a certain
extent, unrepentant. The censure of the priests and the
Catholics in general did indeed crush him: ‘When I heard
how Catholics and Priests thought of the matter, and that it
should be a great sin that should be in the Cause of my end,
it called my conscience in doubt of my very best actions and
intentions in question. . . . For some good space I could do
nothing but with tears ask pardon at God’s hands for all my
errors.’ But he insisted that he had entered into it with no
other cause ‘but zeal to God’s religion’ and concluded the
letter with: ‘O, how full of joy should I die if I could do
anything for the Cause which I love more than my life.’39

In other letters, he defended the plan of the Plot against the
charge of absurdity—‘the (umbrage?) I take at the uncharit-
able taking of these matters will make me say more than I
ever thought to have done; for if this design had taken place,
there could have been no doubt of other Success’39—and he
wrote to Cecil reminding him that ‘it was hoped that the
King that now is would have been at least free from persecut-
ing, as his promise was before coming into this realm, and as
divers his promises have been since his coming. All these
promises every man sees broken.’38

In his examinations, he was, on one occasion at least,
threatened with torture—‘which I will rather endure than
hurt anybody, and the Government’s main purpose with
him was to inculpate Father Gerard, who was known to be
his intimate friend. Shortly after his arrest, Lord Vaux’s
house at Harrowden had been surrounded—‘beset with at
least three hundred men’ and ‘strictly searched and watched
for nine days, with the especial hope of seizing Father
Gerard’39—but Gerard had managed to escape, nor did any-
thing that Digby said incriminate him. He even contrived to
send him a warning, in a letter written in lemon juice to Lady
Digby: ‘I am sure they fear him for knowledge of the plot,
for at every examination I am told that he did give the Sacra-
ment to five at one time.’40 At his trial, Digby was publicly
to exonerate Gerard once more and now, from his prison, he
wrote to tell the Government what they knew to be the truth
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about the real relationship between the priests and the plots—that a plot would have been contrived sooner if the priests had not hindered it.41

(vi) The Capture of Robert Winter

When Robert Winter and Stephen Littleton left Holbeach House on November 8th, before the arrival of the Sheriff and his posse, they hid themselves in a wood about half a mile away and, after some consultation, decided to make for Hagley House, in Worcestershire, the mansion of the widowed Muriel Littleton. They had to make a considerable detour, partly to avoid the bands of searchers, partly because the River Stour, which they had to cross, was much swollen by the recent rains. Not far from Rowley Regis, in Staffordshire, they decided to ask for shelter from a farmer who was one of the Littletons’ tenants; he gave them food and shelter and they remained with him as long as they dared.

From here, they made their way to another tenant of the estate, Perkes, who had originally been warrener to Mrs. Littleton and who, since his dismissal for improper conduct of some kind, was still in the habit of visiting the warrens in the capacity of poacher. Perkes, who knew the fugitives, offered them the shelter of his barn, close to Hagley Park, and here they concealed themselves in a mow of barley, while Perkes’s servants kept them supplied with food and drink.

Perkes, on his poaching expeditions, was in the habit of taking with him a companion named Poynter and one night, Poynter, who was drunk, decided not to return home but to sleep in the barn. Climbing up on the mow, he fell down the hole where Winter and Littleton were concealed. They, fearing he would betray them, refused to let him leave, but when the servant came with their food, they asked him to bring some salve for Poynter’s injured leg.

When the salve was brought, Poynter, on the excuse of getting near the light for applying it to his wound, managed to escape from the barn before Winter and Littleton could stop him. They realized that their hiding-place was no longer safe.

That same day, however, Muriel Littleton left for London.
The Capture of Robert Winter

and her brother-in-law, Humphrey, who was living in the house—Stephen's cousin, the 'Red Humphrey', who had been with him at the meeting on Dunsmore Heath—invited the fugitives to come and live in the house itself. He took into his confidence John Fynwood, the cook. 'Ah, Jack,' he said, 'little thinketh thy mistress what guests are now in her house, that in so long a space did never so much as look upon a fire!' The guests, not unnaturally, questioned the wisdom of admitting the cook as an accomplice, but Humphrey assured them that he was completely trustworthy.

Late at night, however—the night of 8th January 1606—when beer was wanted for supper, the cook suggested that, as the butler was in bed and it would be imprudent to get him up, he should go into the town to his mother, who kept an ale-house. When he got there, he informed his mother of the important fugitives hiding in the house and in the morning additionally told the steward, Mr. Hazlewood, who gave directions to the parties sent by the cook's mother for the purpose of searching the house and getting the reward. (The cook was, in fact, given an official annuity of forty marks.) Humphrey Littleton tried to secure the fugitives' escape by a back door, 'which being known to one David Bate, a servant in the house, he called to the constable, and he and the servants beset the house and apprehended Winter and Littleton in the court adjoining'.

The prisoners were no sooner taken than local pride almost provoked a riot. To whom did the honour of imprisoning them belong, to the Sheriff of Staffordshire or the Sheriff of Worcestershire? 'A great tumult arose amongst them for the conducting of the traitors, and some persons began to lay hold of the prisoners and to pull them, some one way and some another, inasmuch as there was the likelihood of a great affray among them.' Though the Sheriff of Worcestershire was absent through illness, his men established his claim and started to take Winter and Littleton towards Worcester; but, before they had gone as much as four miles, the Sheriff of Staffordshire's brother 'overtook them with a good company of men well appointed and said he would have the prisoners from them and carry them into Staffordshire and gave out that he would raise a thousand men but he would have them; and laid hold upon the bridle upon one of the
horses whereon one of the prisoners rode. But the Worcestershire men would not yield their prisoners... and safely brought them to Worcester, where they delivered them to the under-sheriff.'

It fell to the Sheriff of Staffordshire, however, to capture what proved to be the more important prisoner, Humphrey Littleton, seeing the others taken, 'got his gelding and rode away and being pursued by some of the servants fled to Prestwood in Staffordshire', where he was arrested by the same men who had tried to kidnap the other prisoners. He was imprisoned at Stafford, and within ten days brought to special trial and condemned to death at Worcester. 'Red Humphrey', however, determined to make a bid for life. He offered to betray the names and hiding-places 'of certain Jesuits and priests, which had been persuaders of him and others to these actions'. The first name he gave was that of Father Oldcorne* whom he had visited recently to ask whether or not he ought to arrest his cousin. Father Oldcorne, he said, had approved of the Plot, saying that 'albeit the action had not good success, yet it was commendable and not to be measured by the event'.† And Father Oldcorne was still Abington's chaplain at Hindlip House.

(vii) THE WATCH ON HINDLIP HOUSE

As it happened, Hindlip House was already being carefully watched. Shortly after the capture of Robert Winter and Stephen Littleton Cecil had written to Sir Henry Bromley, Justice of the Peace for the district, ordering a search of Hindlip. Bromley replied, on January 15th, that he would need some days to make preparation and asked Cecil to send

* Under his alias as Hall.
† The Relation of Humphrey Littleton: Hatfield MSS., xvii, 35, 26th January 1606. What Father Oldcorne in fact said was something different. In his own words (G.P.B., 202, 12th March 1606) 'I answered him that an act is not to be condemned or justified upon the good or bad event that followed it, but upon the end or object and the means that is used for effecting the same... Thus I applied it to this fact of Mr. Catesby's. It is not to be approved or condemned by the event, but by the proper object or end and means which was to be used in it; and because I know nothing of these, I will neither approve it or condemn it, but leave it to God and their own consciences.'
him 'the description and names of the parties and, if possible, one that knows them, as also the proclamation, and your pleasure what I shall do with Mr. Abington, if these parties be not there, if he shall refuse to confess them, considering your Lordship is so well assured that they have been there.'

It was not therefore till Sunday morning, January 19th, that Bromley arrived at Hindlip 'very early, accompanied with above a hundred men with him, armed and furnished all with swords and with staves' and with guns, and all kinds of weapons, more fit for an army than for an orderly search. And beginning to beat the gate with great importunity to be let in presently, the Catholics within the house, soon perceiving their intention, made all the haste possible to hide both the Priests and the Church stuff and books and all such persons and things as belonged to the priests, or might give cause of suspicion; in the meantime sending to the gates, as the custom is, to know the cause of their coming, and to keep them in talk with messages to and fro, from the master or mistress of the house, all to gain time, whilst they within were hiding all things in the most safe secret places they had. But Sir Henry Bromley, impatient of this delay, caused the gates with great violence and force of men to be broken down, which yet he could not perform in so short a time (by reason they were very strong and answerable to the greatness of the house) before they within had made all safe which they would hide from this violent invasion.'

They had, indeed, a prize to make safe. Not only were Father Oldcorne and the lay-brother who attended on him, Ralph Ashley,* there and the famous 'Little John'—Nicholas Owen—who had contrived most of the hiding-places, but Father Garnet himself had taken refuge at Hindlip. At Father Oldcorne's invitation, he had left Coughton, which was no longer safe, on December 4th—the very day when, in the Tower, Bates had implicated him in the Plot. Now he and Oldcorne were hurried into the safest 'hole', into which also, despite its smallness, some of the Mass 'furniture' and books were put; while Chambers and Owen shared another hiding-place.

Abington, who had ridden over to visit Talbot of Grafton, did not return till the following night, but his wife—Mont-

* He used the alias of George Chambers.
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eagle's sister—handed over all the keys to Bromley, who immediately began the most thorough and drastic search of the house. Some of the hiding-places were discovered, but yielded nothing but what Bromley described as 'a number of Popish trash'. He continued his search and 'sounded every corner in that great house till they were all weary, and found no likelihood of discovering that they came for, though they continued the daily search all the week following'.

A week of siege was enough for the two lay brothers. Themselves practically starving—they had only one apple between them for those seven days—they realized that Bromley had no intention of leaving. 'Therefore these two virtuous men being in hope that upon their taking, the searchers would be satisfied and depart (as either thinking them to be priests, or that if there had been any more to be found they would also have been forced to come out) this hope made them resolve to offer themselves to their enemies' hands, to save the lives of those whom they loved better than themselves.'

They waited till the guards who were stationed in the room out of which the panel of their hiding-place opened were as far away as possible and then came out 'so secretly and stilly and shut the place again so finely that they were not one whit heard', but were, of course, taken immediately the watchers noticed them walking down the long gallery.

Their calculation, however, that Bromley would then withdraw his forces was not justified. On the contrary, he began to search with redoubled vigour, smashing the wainscot and breaking down the walls in a number of places. And his guess that there were still others in hiding was confirmed by the news sent him of Humphrey Littleton's assurance that Father Oldcorne was in the house—a statement made the day after the capture of the lay-brothers, January 26th.

(viii) THE ESCAPE OF FATHER TESIMOND

Whether or not Bromley and Cecil realized that Garnet was in Hindlip House is impossible to determine, though there can be no doubt from the urgency of his instructions that Cecil, at least, hoped to take there one of the important
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Jesuits. The probability, as some historians have pointed out, is that his anticipated quarry was not Garnet but Tesimond; for Tesimond was known to have used Hindlip on many occasions; and, Bates’s second statement on January 13th (which was the immediate cause of Cecil’s letter to Bromley) had mentioned Tesimond’s ride from Huddington to Hindlip after the failure of the rising. But, by this time, Tesimond was beyond their power.

At the very time when Bromley was battering at the gates of Hindlip House, Tesimond was in London. During his service in England, he had had many narrow escapes and the last was to be the narrowest. The tall powerful Yorkshire-man was standing in a crowd which had gathered to read the proclamation for his own arrest, which had been set up at a street corner, when one of the men in the crowd, noticing that he bore a marked resemblance to the official description, took hold of his arm and suggested that he should accompany him to the authorities.

Tesimond, though he assured his captor that he had made a mistake, allowed himself to be led away quietly, until they came to a remote and unfrequented street, where, turning on his captor, he overpowered him and fled.

Leaving London, he made his way to the coast and eventually got safely to Calais in charge of a cargo of dead pigs. Thence he went to St. Omers and to Rome. He died in 1635, in his seventy-second year, after serving the Society of Jesus in several capacities in Sicily, Valladolid, Florence and Naples.

(ix) Parliament Reassembles

Parliament assembled again, as had been appointed, on Tuesday, 21st January 1606, in an atmosphere of patriotic fervour. The main business with which it concerned itself was to press for the invention of some new and ingeniously horrible torture to be applied to the conspirators, whose trial was now appointed to begin on Monday, January 27th. Both Lords and Commons concurred in this and the appropriate Committee was set up in the House of Lords. The Archbishop of Canterbury presided. But in spite of various suggestions the plan came to nothing.

It did, however, pass a Bill of Attainder against Hugh
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Owen, who was still in Brussels, but whom the Archduke refused to surrender on the grounds that he was a subject not of the King of England but of the King of Spain. Although the Government can hardly have supposed that the fact that he was a 'caitiff condemned by public sentence of Parliament' would weigh with a foreign ruler, the attainder had the required effect in England of connecting Spain with the Plot.

Parliament also, immediately it assembled, passed the enactment for November 5th to be observed every year as a day of public thanksgiving.

'Forasmuch as Almighty God hath in all ages shewed his power and mercy, in the miraculous and gracious deliverance of his church, and in the protection of religious kings and states, and that no nation of the earth hath been blessed with greater benefits than this nation now enjoyeth, having the true and free profession of the Gospel under our most gracious Sovereign Lord King James, the most great, learned, and religious king that ever reigned therein, enriched with a most hopeful and plentiful progeny, proceeding out of his royal loins, promising continuance of this happiness and profession to all posterity: the which many malignant and devilish papists, jesuits, and seminary priests, much envying and fearing, conspired most horribly when the king's most excellent majesty, the queen, the prince, and all the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, should have been assembled in the Upper House of Parliament upon the Fifth day of November, in the year of our Lord 1605, suddenly to have blown up the said whole house with gunpowder: an invention so inhuman, barbarous, and cruel, as the like was never before heard of, and was (as some of the principal conspirators thereof confess) purposely devised and concluded to be done in the said house, that when sundry necessary and religious laws for preservation of the church and state were made, which they falsely and slanderously call cruel laws, enacted against them and their religion, both place and person should be all destroyed and blown up at once, which would have turned to the utter ruin of this whole kingdom, had it not pleased Almighty God, by inspiring the king's most excellent majesty with a divine spirit, to interpret some dark phrases of a letter shewed to his majesty,
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above and beyond all ordinary construction, thereby miraculously discovering this hidden treason not many hours before the appointed time for the execution thereof: therefore the king's most excellent majesty, the lords spiritual and temporal, and all his majesty's faithful and loving subjects, do most justly acknowledge this great and infinite blessing to have proceeded merely from God his great mercy, and to his most holy name do ascribe all honour, glory, and praise: and to the end this unfeigned thankfulness may never be forgotten, but be had in perpetual remembrance, that all ages to come may yield praises to his Divine Majesty for the same, and have in memory this joyful day of deliverance:

'Be it therefore enacted, by the king's most excellent majesty, the lords spiritual and temporal, and the commons in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that all and singular ministers in every cathedral, and parish-church, or other usual place for common prayer, within this realm of England, and the dominions of the same, shall always upon the Fifth day of November say morning prayer, and give unto Almighty God thanks for this most happy deliverance..."  

The King asked the Archbishop of Canterbury if he could still further impress on the public mind the great deliverance wrought for him on a Tuesday by ordering 'generally in the realm where sermons be on weekdays that the same might be transferred to the Tuesday, that a universal thanksgiving might be on that day for this great work of God'.

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(i) The Course of Justice

Early in the morning of Monday, 27th January 1606, the eight surviving conspirators—the two Winters and Grant; Fawkes, Keyes and Bates; Rookwood and Digby—were taken by barge from the Tower to Whitehall, where they were kept waiting in the Star Chamber until the Lords Commissioners* had taken their seats in Westminster Hall. In front of the judges, a large scaffold had been erected, on which the prisoners were placed, so that all might see them. The Queen and Prince Henry were seated in a concealed chamber from which they could see but not be seen; and the King himself was reported to be in another.¹ In the Hall, a special part had been reserved for Members of Parliament, but they were so ‘pestered with others not of the House’ that one member complained and a committee was subsequently set up to make inquiries.²

The public interest was intense, and Fawkes, the ‘Devil of the Vault’ was naturally the centre of it. According to one contemporary account of the prisoners, ‘it was strange to note their carriage, even in their very countenances; some hanging down their head, as if their hearts were full of doggedness, and others forcing a stern look, as if they would fear (i.e. frighten) death with a frown, never seeming to pray, except it were by the dozen upon their beads, and taking tobacco, as if hanging were no trouble to them; saying noth-

* The Commissioners were the Earls of Nottingham, Suffolk, Worcester, Devonshire, Northampton and Salisbury, the Lord Chief Justice (Sir John Popham), the Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer (Sir Thomas Fleming) and two Justices of the Common Pleas (Sir Thomas Walmis and Sir Peter Warburton).
The Course of Justice

ing but in commendation of their conceited religion, craving mercy neither of God nor the King for their offences, and making their consciences, as it were, as wide as the world and to the very gates of Hell, to be the cause of their hellish courses, to make a work meritorious."

They were there for sentence rather than for trial, as everybody understood. The nature of a Jacobean trial has been well described by Professor Gardiner: 'Tactfully, at least, the prisoner at the bar was held to be guilty until he could prove his innocence. No counsel was allowed to speak on his behalf, and unless his unpractised mind could, at a moment's notice, refute charges which had been skilfully prepared at leisure, the unavoidable verdict was sure to be given against him. Such a course of proceeding was bad enough in ordinary trials; but when political questions were involved the case was far worse. . . . A man who was suspected of a crime the object of which was to bring the armies of Spain upon the free soil of England could never meet with sympathy and could hardly hope for the barest justice. The feelings of men were the more irresistible when the most learned judge upon the bench knew little more of the laws of evidence and the principles of jurisprudence than the meanest peasant in the land.

'As might be expected, the forms of procedure to which the prevalent feelings gave rise only served to aggravate the evil. The examination of the prisoners was conducted in private. Such a system was admirably adapted for procuring the conviction of a guilty person. . . . But it by no means afforded equal chances of escape to the innocent, who had no opportunity of meeting his accuser face to face, or of subjecting him to a cross-examination, and who, if he were accused of a State crime, would find in the examiners men who were by their very position incapable of taking an impartial view of the affair. In point of fact, these preliminary investigations formed the real trial. . . . If he failed in this, he would be brought before a court from which there was scarcely a hope of escape. Extracts from his own depositions and from those of others would be read before him, supported by the arguments of the first lawyers of the day, who did not disdain to bring against him the basest insinuations, which he had at the moment no means of rebutting. The evil was

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still more increased by the want of any real responsibility in any of the parties concerned. 4

For technical reasons, Digby was tried alone on a separate indictment, after the trial of the other seven had been completed. And Digby alone pleaded ‘Guilty’. When the long indictment was read, attributing the origin of the plot to the Jesuits,* the others pleaded ‘Not Guilty’. Fawkes, asked why he, of all men, entered such a plea, answered for the rest ‘that he had done so in respect of certain conferences mentioned in the indictment, which he said he knew not of; which were answered to have been set down according to course of law, as necessarily presupposed before the resolution of such a design’.†

After the lengthy arraignment had been read, Sir Edward Phillips, Serjeant-at-Law, rose. ‘The matter that is now to be offered to you, my Lords the Commissioners, and to the trial of you, the knights and gentlemen of the jury’, he said, ‘is a matter of treason: but of such horror and monstrous nature, that before now

The tongue of man never delivered,
The ear of man never heard,
The heart of man never conceited,
Nor the malice of hellish or earthly devil ever practised.

For if it be abominable to murder the least;
If to touch God’s anointed be to oppose themselves against God;
If (by blood) to subvert princes, states and kingdoms, be hateful to God and man, as all true Christians must acknowledge:

Then how much more than too monstrous shall all Christian hearts judge the horror of this treason, to murder and subvert

Such a king,
Such a queen,
Such a prince,
Such a progeny,
Such a state,
Such a government,

*See page 195.
† Gardiner considers the implication of the Jesuits as a statement ‘of minor importance’. (History, i, 268.)
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So complete and absolute;
That God approves;
The world admires;
All true English hearts honour and reverence;
The Pope and his disciples only envy and malign.'

The proceeding could be divided into three general heads—declaration, aggravation and probation. He was concerned only with the first. 'For the other two I am to leave to him whose place it belongeth'—the Attorney-General, Sir Edward Coke. This declaration could be divided into four parts—the persons conspiring, the matter of conspiracy, the manner of the conspiracy and the purpose of the conspiracy. He named the persons, beginning with the names of Garnet, Gerard and Tesimond ('Jesuits not yet taken') and ending with that of Francis Tresham ('lately dead')—'all grounded Romanists and corrupted scholars of so irreligious and traitorous a school'. The matter of the conspiracy included the intention 'to ruin the state of the commonwealth and to bring in strangers to invade it'; under the heading of the manner, he pointed out that the prisoners all believed 'that it was lawful and meritorious to kill and destroy the king and all heretics'; and his outline of the Plot was concluded with the remark 'that the treason being miraculously discovered, they put themselves, and procured others to enter into open rebellion; and gave out most untruly it was for that the Papists' throats were to be cut.' He then gave way to Sir Edward Coke.

(ii) Coke's Speech

Coke, rising to speak of 'the greatest treasons that ever were plotted in England and concern the greatest king that ever was of England', craved the indulgence of the court to 'be somewhat more copious and not so succinct as my usual manner hath been' since 'the eye of all Christendom is at this day bent' on 'this so great a cause'. Long and sometimes lacking form a little as his speech was to be, it was of consummate ability. Slowly, deliberately, unscrupulously; using every forensic trick; quoting Latin tags, Scriptural texts, classical allusions; simulating horror and incredulity; punning, bullying; alternating an appearance of fairness with a
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mounting appeal to prejudice, he built up his case, ostensibly against the prisoners, but actually against the Jesuits and the Catholics in general.

If he allowed that the conspirators were 'gentlemen of good houses, of excellent parts, of very competent fortunes and estates', it was only to emphasize that they were 'most perniciously seduced, abused, corrupted and Jesuited'. 'I never yet knew a treason without a Romish priest,' he remarked, as a prelude to a crescendo of abuse. 'The principal offenders are the seducing Jesuits, men that use the reverence of religion, yea, even the most sacred and blessed name of Jesus, as a mantle to cover their impiety, blasphemy, treason and rebellion and all manner of wickedness. . . . Their studies and practices principally consist in two D's, to wit, in deposing of Kings and disposing of Kingdoms.' The 'plots' of the past reign, in particular Squire's plot, were appealed to, reinforced by a mention of the assassination of Henri III by James Clement, a monk, and a reminder that 'gunpowder was the invention of a friar, one of that Romish rabble'. Even his laboured witticisms drove home his point—'S.P.Q.R. was sometime taken for these words—Senatus Populusque Romanus—the senate and people of Rome; but now they may truly be expressed thus—Siulius populus quaerit Romam—a foolish people that runneth to Rome.'

Using the discovery of A Treatise of Equivocation in Tresham's room as the text for a long and disingenuous lecture on 'this art of cozening', he underlined the academic argument with a sudden brilliant appeal to the memory of the Protestant sufferers in Queen Mary's reign: 'Never did Father Cranmer, Father Latimer or Father Ridley—those blessed martyrs—know these shifts, neither would they have used them to have saved their lives.'

In dealing with the conspirators themselves and the actual Plot, Coke suited his technique to the changing atmosphere. At one moment, he trembled and quoted Scripture: 'Miserable desolation! No king, no queen, no prince, no issue male, no councillors of state, no nobility, no bishops, no judges! Oh, barbarous and more than Scythian or Thracian cruelty! No mantle of holiness can cover it, no pretence of religion can excuse it, no shadow of good intention can extenuate it. God and Heaven condemn it, man and earth detest it, the
Coke's Speech

offenders themselves were ashamed of it, wicked people exclaim against it, and the souls of all true Christian subjects abhor it. . . . The king may say with the kingly prophet David, "O Lord the proud are risen against me, and the congregation, even Synagoga, the synagogue of naughty men, have sought after my soul, and have not set thee before their eyes"—Psalm lxxxvi. 14. And as it is, "the proud have laid a snare for me, and spread a net abroad, yea, and set traps in my way".—Psalm cxl. 5. "But let the ungodly fall into their own nets together, and let me ever escape them."
—Psalm cxli. 11. We may say "if the Lord Himself had not been on our side, yea, if the Lord Himself had not been on our side when men rose up against us, they had swallowed us up quick, when they were so wrathfully displeased at us. But praised be the Lord, which hath not given us over for a prey unto their teeth. Our soul is escaped even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken and we are delivered. Our help standeth in the name of the Lord, which hath made Heaven and earth."—Psalm cxxiv. 1.

But, at another moment, he drew his fancies from astrology. 'Note that it was at the entering of the sun into the tropic of Capricorn, when they began their mine; noting that by mining they should descend, and by hanging ascend.' And he reserved for his peroration his most telling effect. The story of the conspiracy, based on the confessions of Winter and Fawkes, had been told, set against the background of the Elizabethan 'plots', the scheming of the exiles and the danger of Spanish invasion. The Catholic Church had been indicted. The emotions of piety and patriotism, wonder—the King's miraculous interpretation of the Montagus letter 'like an angel of God'—and hatred had been aroused. Now, at the end, to terrify the prisoners and to whet the cruel anticipation of the crowd, the Attorney-General expatiated on the appositeness of the punishment for treason.

'First, after a traitor hath had his just trial, and is convicted and attainted, he shall have his judgment, to be drawn to the place of execution from his prison, as being not worthy any more to tread upon the face of the earth, whereof he was made. Also, that he hath been retrograde by nature, therefore he is drawn backwards at a horse's tail. And whereas God hath made the head of a man the highest
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and most supreme part, as being his chief grace and ornament, he must be drawn with his head declining downward, and lying so near the ground as may be, being thought unfit to take benefit of the common air. For which cause also he shall be strangled, being hanged up by the neck between heaven and earth, as deemed unworthy of both or either, as likewise that the eyes of men may behold and their hearts contemn him. Then he is to be cut down alive, and to have his privy parts cut off, and burnt before his face, as being unworthily begotten and unfit to leave any generation after him. His bowels and inlaid parts taken out and burnt, who inwardly had conceived and harboured in his heart such horrible treason; after to have his head cut off, which had imagined the mischief; and lastly, his body to be quartered, and the quarters set up in some high and eminent place, to the view and detestation of men, and to become a prey for the fowls of the air. And this is a reward due to traitors.’

When Coke had finished his speech, the prisoners were shown their confessions, with the signatures, which they duly acknowledged. To heighten the effect of the trial and to emphasize the point of it, the Attorney-General then moved that an extraordinary course should be taken.

‘For the further satisfaction to so great a presence and audience, and their better memory of the carriage of these treasons, the voluntary and free confessions of all the said several traitors in writing, subscribed with their own proper hands and acknowledged at the bar by themselves to be true, were openly and distinctly read; by which, amongst other things, it appeared that Bates was resolved for what he undertook concerning the Powder treason, and being therein warranted by the Jesuits. Also it appeared that Hammond the Jesuit* after that he knew the Powder treason was discovered, and that these traitors had been in actual rebellion, confessed them and gave them absolution; and this was on Thursday, the 7th of November.’

Even this, however, was not enough. Many of the statements included expressions of remorse for the conspiracy—Thomas Winter’s, for instance, had said that his ‘fault is greater than can be forgiven’—and it was important not to

* Hammond was the alias of Father Nicholas Hart, Robert Winter’s chaplain at Huddington.
Coke's Speech

lose sight of Coke's point that 'late repentance is seldom true' before the jury retired to consider their verdict. On the Friday before the trial, the Government had made preparation for just such an eventuality by contriving an easy way for Fawkes and Robert Winter to speak to each other without apparently being overheard. As a matter of fact, one of Cecil's private secretaries had been skilfully concealed in the room, with instructions to report the conversation; and on the next day both prisoners had been examined on what they had said.

Winter had told Fawkes that he had heard a priest had been captured in Staffordshire, but did not know who he was, except that he was a 'little man'. It seemed that the Catholic cause was lost. But, said Winter, 'I doubt not God will raise up seed to Abraham out of the very stones.' This unshaken faith, at their darkest hour, in the indestructibility of the Church was typical of them all and, when Winter was asked next day to explain what he meant by the sentence, he gave the obvious answer to what must have appeared an unnecessary question. He meant 'that, though they were gone, yet God would raise up others for the good of the Church' — a meaning emphasized in his next overheard remark to Fawkes: 'But if they stay awhile, there are two or three little fellows that will prove themselves as tall men.' What weighed most heavily on both men was the unrelieved hostility with which they were faced. 'Nothing grieves me', said Winter, 'but that there is not an apology made by some to justify our doings in this business; but our deaths will be a sufficient justification of it; and it is for God's cause.'

Such sentiments were admirably adapted, with a little editing, to convince the Commissioners, the jury, the audience in Westminster Hall and the greater audience up and down the country which would read of the proceedings, that the prisoners were impenitent. So Coke, 'related how, on Friday immediately before this arraignment, Robert Winter having found opportunity to have conference with Fawkes in the Tower, in regard to the nearness of their lodgings, should say to Fawkes (as Robert Winter and Fawkes confessed) that he and Catesby had sons, and that boys would be men, and that he hoped that they would revenge the cause: nay, that God would raise up children unto Abraham out of
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stones. Also that they were sorry that no body did set forth a defence or apology of their action; but yet they would maintain the cause at their deaths.

The Lord Chief Justice then made some remarks to the jury and directed them to consider their verdict, upon 'which they retired into a separate place'.

(iii) THE TRIAL OF DIGBY

Sir Everard Digby was now arraigned alone upon a separate indictment issued by Sir Christopher Yelverton and other special commissioners of Oyer and Terminer, on January 16th, at Wellingborough, in Northamptonshire, and delivered to the same commission in Middlesex that had tried the other prisoners. He was charged with high treason in conspiring the death of the king, of conferring with Catesby in Northamptonshire concerning the Gunpowder Plot, assenting to the design and 'taking the double oath of secrecy and constancy therein'. Digby, who was determined that, whatever the others might do, he at least would state something of the Catholic case against the Government, immediately began a protesting speech. He was interrupted and told that he must first plead 'Guilty' or 'Not Guilty' to the indictment. Since the terms of it made it possible to do so, he at once pleaded 'Guilty' and, having now obtained leave, continued his speech.

First, he spoke of his motives. 'The first motive which drew him into this action was not ambition or discontentment of his estate, neither malice to any Parliament, but the friendship and love he bore to Catesby, which prevailed so much and was so powerful with him, as that for his sake he was ever contented and ready to hazard himself and his estate.' The second motive was the cause of religion, which was the sole reason for the Plot. On behalf of the Faith 'he entered into resolution to neglect his estate, his life, his name, his memory, his posterity and all worldly and earthly felicity whatsoever'. His third motive was that the King's promises to the Catholics had been broken. And lastly, he feared the harder laws against Catholicism which they had reason to believe were already in preparation and would be

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The Trial of Digby

enacted by the new Parliament*—such as ‘that recusants’ wives, and women, should be liable to the mulct as well as their husbands and men’ and ‘that it should be made a Praemunire only to be a Catholic’.

Having stated his reasons, he concluded with certain petitions—that as he alone was guilty, he alone should suffer punishment, which should ‘not be transferred either to his wife, children, sisters or others’. He prayed that his wife’s jointure should be untouched, that his son should have ‘the benefit of an entail made long before any thought of this action; his sisters, their just and due portions, which were in his hands; his creditors, their rightful debts.’ Then he asked pardon of the King and the Lords for his guilt. ‘And lastly, he entreated to be beheaded; desiring all men to forgive him, and that his death might satisfy them for his trespass.’

Coke rose immediately and answered briefly (for it was by now getting dark) that Digby’s friendship with Catesby was ‘mere folly and wicked conspiracy’; that his religion was ‘error and heresy’; that his fears of anti-Catholic legislation were ‘idle and vain presumptions’. As for his petitions on behalf of his family—here Coke burst into a typical peroration. ‘Oh, how he doth now put on the bowels of nature and compassion in the peril of his private and domestical estate! But before, when the public state of his country, when the King, the Queen, the tender Princes, the nobles, the whole kingdom were designed to a perpetual destruction, where was then this piety, this religious affection, this care? All nature, all humanity, all respect of laws both divine and human were quite abandoned; then was there no conscience made to extirpate the whole nation—and all for a pretended zeal to the Catholic religion and the justification of so detestable and damnable a fact.’

Digby interrupted the flow of eloquence to point out that he was not justifying the fact of the Plot. He admitted that he deserved the vilest death and most severe punishment that might be. All he was doing was to petition humbly for mercy and for some moderation of justice.

Coke turned on him. He already had mercy, because the

* In this, of course, he was quite right and, from his position and connections at Court, must have heard details discussed.
King had decided that no new torture was to be invented and applied to the conspirators. As for his wife and children, he had admitted that, for the Catholic cause, he was willing to risk his estate, his name and his posterity. Well, he should have his desire. As it was said in the Psalm: ‘Let his wife be a widow and his children vagabonds; let his posterity be destroyed, and in the next generation let his name be quite put out.’

The savagery of the Attorney-General, effective as it was on one level, was no real answer to Digby; and the Government had taken steps to see that it was supplemented. For Digby was saying what, had they lived, Percy and Catesby might have said. Percy, indeed, would at this point have been disastrously dangerous to them, for he would have been, not a young man speaking from hearsay, but one who could have given first-hand evidence of his interviews with King James in Scotland and of the King’s promises of toleration. The matter was so dangerous that, to deal even with Digby, they had prepared a weighty defence. The Earl of Northampton had been entrusted with it. As an elder statesman, a diplomat and a Catholic (even though, at intervals—of which this was one—a conforming and renegade Catholic) he would carry the necessary weight. He now rose to deliver a long, carefully considered speech.

He spoke directly to Digby: ‘You must not hold it strange, Sir Everard Digby, though at this time being pressed in duty, conscience and truth, I do not suffer you to wander in the labyrinth of your own idle conceits, without opposition, to seduce others, as you yourself have been seduced, by false principles, or to convey yourself by charms to imputation, by clouds of error, and by shifts of lately-devised equivocation, out of that strait wherein your late secure and happy fortune hath been unluckily entangled.’ Elegantly, authoritatively, he made the point that no promises of toleration had ever been made. He himself had been in constant communication with the King during the closing days of Elizabeth’s reign. ‘No man can speak in this case more confidently than myself’, he said, ‘that received in the Queen’s time, for the space of many years, directions and warnings to take heed that neither any further comfort might be given to Catholics, concerning future favours, than he did intend—
The Trial of Digby

which was to bind all subjects in one kingdom to one law, concerning the religion established.'

There was no one in Westminster Hall to contradict him, yet, for a moment, it was almost as if Percy's ghost had entered to give him the lie. Northampton mentioned him by name and admitted that from Percy had come 'this scandalous report' that James had promised toleration, 'as an accursed ground whereon they might with some advantage, as it was conceived, build the castles of their conspiracy'.

'It hindered not the satisfaction which may be given to Percy's shadow (the most desperate boutefeu in the pack)', he continued, 'that as he died impenitent, for any thing we know, so likewise he died silent in the particulars. For first, it is not strange that such a traitor should devise so scandalous a slander out of the malice of his heart, intending to destroy the King by any means, and to advance all means that might remove obstructions and impediments to the plot of gunpowder. . . . But touching the truth of the matters, it will be witnessed by many that this traitor Percy, after both the first and the second return from the King, brought to the Catholics no spark of comfort, of encouragement, of hope;* whereof no stronger proof of argument doth need than that Fawkes and others were employed both into Spain and other parts for the reviving of a practice suspended and covered, after Percy's coming back, as in likelihood they should not have been in case he had returned with a branch of olive in his mouth or yielded any ground of comfort to resolve upon.'

Having thus spoken 'for the clearing of those scandals that were cast abroad by these forlorn hopes and graceless instruments', Northampton resumed his place among the Lords Commissioners.

The proceedings were almost at an end and their course would appear to have run smoothly enough. Yet Cecil, watching, was not completely satisfied. Two points still needed to be made. The first arose out of Northampton's speech. It was, perhaps, a little too long and the point of it might have become obscured. Cecil rose to reinforce it with his own testimony, shortly and authoritatively. 'He declared how His Majesty, as well before his coming to this crown, as at that very time, and always since, was so far from making

* This was untrue. See page 60.
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a promise or giving hope of toleration, that he ever professed he could not endure the very motion thereof from any.'

The second point was the praiseworthy action of Mont- eagle. This Coke had unaccountably forgotten, in spite of Cecil's categorical instructions: 'You must not omit, you must deliver in commendation of my Lord Monteagle words to show how sincerely he dealt and how fortunately it proved that he was the instrument of so great a blessing as this was. . . . You are . . . to give some good echo of that particular action in that day of public trial of these men.* So now at the end, and with unfortunate but inescapable irrelevance, Cecil remedied the omission. He 'did justly and greatly commend the Lord Monteagle for his loyal and honourable care of his Prince and country, in the speedy bringing forth of the letter sent unto him; wherein he said that he had shown both his discretion and fidelity.'

When Cecil had ended, Digby acknowledged that he had no first-hand knowledge of the King's broken promise to Catholics, but was relying on a trusted informant, Sir Thomas Tresham.†

(iv) The Prisoners Speak

The jury now returned and announced the verdict of 'Guilty' against the first seven conspirators. They were asked if they had anything to say why judgment of death should not be pronounced against them.

Thomas Winter asked only that he might be hanged both for his brother and himself; and Robert Winter and Bates craved mercy. Fawkes explained the grounds of his pleas of 'Not Guilty' and Grant 'was a good while mute; yet, after, submissively said that he was guilty of a conspiracy intended but never executed.' Keyes said that 'his estate and fortune were desperate. As for death, it was 'as good now as at another time, and for this cause rather than for another'. But Rookwood made a speech which was almost a repetition of the personal passages of Digby's. He 'first excused his denial of the indictment, for that he had rather lose his life

* See page 70.
† Was, possibly, Francis Tresham, had he lived, intending to take a similar line at the trial and produce evidence? If so, this may explain both his death and the confidence of the conspirators.
The Prisoners Speak

than give it. Then did he acknowledge his offence to be so heinous that he justly deserved the indignation of the King, and of the Lords and of the whole Commonwealth; yet he could not despair of mercy at the hands of a prince so abounding in grace and mercy; and the rather, because his offence, though it were incapable of any excuse, yet was not altogether incapable of some extenuation, in that he had been neither author nor actor, but only persuaded and drawn in by Catesby, whom he loved above any worldly man; and that he had concealed it not for any malice to the person of the King, or to the State, or for any ambitious respect of his own, but only drawn with the tender respect and the faithful and dear affection he bare to Mr. Catesby his friend, whom he esteemed dearer than anything else in the world. And this mercy he desired not for any fear of the image of death, but for grief that so shameful a death should leave so perpetual a blemish and blot unto all ages upon his name and blood. But howsoever that this was his first offence, yet he humbly submitted himself to the mercy of the King; and prayed that the King would herein imitate God, who doth sometimes punish corporaliter, non mortaliter—corporally, yet not mortally.’

The Serjeant-at-Law then craved judgment ‘against those seven upon their conviction and against Sir Everard Digby upon his own confession’.

The Lord Chief Justice then began to speak and for the last time the real issues of the trial ousted the apparent. His words may have sounded as unnecessary to some of his actual hearers as they have seemed ‘a little wide of the subject of the crime of the prisoners’ to a later writer; but in fact they were admirably to the point. He made ‘a grave and prudent relation and defence of the laws made by Queen Elizabeth against recusants, priests, and receivers of priests, together with several occasions, progresses and reasons of the same; and having plainly demonstrated and proved that they were all necessary, mild, equal, moderate and to be justified to all the world, pronounced judgment.’

Again the prisoners heard the punishment of treason, which had already been described to them in detail by Sir Edward Coke.

As the Court rose, Digby spoke once more. Bowing to the
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Commissioners he said: 'If I may but hear any of your Lordships say you forgive me, I shall go more cheerfully to the gallows.

They answered: 'God forgive you, and we do.'

The prisoners were conveyed by torchlight to their barge and rowed down the river to Traitors' Gate.
The Executions

(i) PREPARATIONS

The prisoners were allowed two days to prepare for death, though they were not permitted to see their relatives or, of course, to have the ministrations of their own priests. From that silence, only Digby's voice has reached posterity in the verses he made then:

Who's that which knocks? O, stay, my Lord, I come:
I know that call, since first it made me know
My self, which makes me now with joy to run,
Lest He be gone that can my duty show.
Jesu, my Lord, I know Thee by the Cross
Thou offer'st me, but not unto my loss?

and on the walls of his cell in Broad Arrow Tower can still be seen the name and motto he cut in the stone.

Outside London was busy with preparations. To make the spectacle as impressive as possible, the conspirators were to be killed in two batches, one in St. Paul's Churchyard on the Thursday, the other in the Palace Yard at Westminster on Friday. There was a certain propriety about the division. Digby, Robert Winter, Grant and Bates were to suffer first. They were less important and, in one sense, less actively implicated than the others. Their journey to the place of execution would be shorter.

The selection of St. Paul's Churchyard, however, was not universally approved. Sir Arthur Gorges, poet, translator, traveller, wrote to Cecil hurriedly on the Wednesday: 'I hearing that this present afternoon there was a scaffold setting up very near and right against the greatest and fairest gate of Paul's Church, whereupon to torture and quarter these
wicked and bloody conspirators: in my poor judgment I did not think it a fit place to be defiled with the blood of such wretches, nor to make a butchery in the churchyard and almost under the eaves of the most famous church of our kingdom. Much could I say for the unfitness thereof, but I know you can farther and better conceive it in a moment than I can express in a volume. Only this I know, traitors and papists will calumniate our too much neglect of those reverent places, growing indeed but too fast into contempt otherways. Besides it is an ill presage to have blood and execution approach so near the capital house of God’s divine service. Lastly, I well remember that that was the place of happy memory, even in the midst of that great gate, where our late dread and dear Sovereign offered up in all humility upon her knees her thanksgiving to God for the great victory upon the Spaniards and therefore too worthy now to be polluted with gibbets, hangmen, or the blood of traitors. But I willingly submit my opinion to your wisdom.²

Cecil’s wisdom overrode his opinion. The visible connection of the defeat of the Armada with the punishment of the Gunpowder Plot was, indeed, not without value as propaganda.

To prevent any demonstration, the Lord Mayor issued instructions to the alderman of each ward of the city to ‘cause one able and sufficient person, with a halberd in his hand, to stand at the door of every several dwelling-house in the open street in the way that the traitors were to be drawn towards the place of execution, from seven in the morning until the return of the Sheriff³ and a large number of soldiers also accompanied the procession, as the prisoners were dragged, each on his separate hurdle, from the Tower, along Cheapside, to St. Paul’s.

(ii) THE THIRTIETH OF JANUARY

Digby suffered first. His youth, his handsome presence, his dignity impressed the crowds no less now than it had at his trial when ‘some of the chiepest in the Court seeing him out of a window lamented him much and said he was the goodliest man in the whole Court’.⁴ He made a short speech, in which he admitted his offence against the law and again
The Thirtieth of January

begged forgiveness of the King, the Queen, the Prince and the Parliament. But he stubbornly reiterated what he had said at his trial and denounced the persecution of Catholics. His only motive had been the cause of religion 'in which regard he could not condemn himself of any offence to God.'

'The preachers standing by, as the fashion is, did move him to pray with them. He absolutely refused and desired the assistance and prayers of all good Catholics. Himself fell to his prayers with such devotion as much moved all the beholders. And when he had done, he stood up and saluted all the noblemen and gentlemen that stood upon the scaffold, every one according to his estate, to the noblemen with a lower congé, to others with a show of equality, but to all in so friendly and so cheerful a manner, as they afterwards said, he seemed so free from fear of death, as that he showed no feeling at all of any passion therein, but took his leave of them as he was wont to do when he went from Court or out of the city to his own house in the country.'

'And so', as a Protestant observer expressed it, 'with vain and superstitious crossing of himself, betook him to his Latin prayers, mumbling to himself, refusing to have any prayers of any but the Roman Catholics, went up the ladder.'

His temerity in his last speech and in his attack at the trial was to be punished in the conventional manner. The executioner—acting, it is impossible to doubt, upon official instructions—showed no mercy. Instead of allowing him to hang till he was dead, or even till he was partially stupefied by strangling, he cut him down immediately he turned him off the ladder, so that he was fully conscious for the castration and quartering. According to Antony a Wood: 'When the executioner pluck't out his heart (when his body was to be quartered) and according to the manner held it up saying, Here is the heart of a traitor, Sir Everard made answer, Thou liest. This a most famous author mentions, but tells not his name, in his Historia Vitae et Mortis.'

Robert Winter suffered next who 'without asking mercy either of God or the King for his offence, went up the ladder, and making a few prayers to himself, stayed not long for his execution'.

* Athenae Oxoniensis, ii, 354. The 'famous author' was Francis Bacon who would have been present at the execution.
The Executions

Grant, however, followed Digby's example in making a protest. He 'being abominably blinded with his idolatry, though he confessed his offence to be heinous, yet would fain have excused it by his conscience and religion. He, having used a few idle words to ill effect, was, as his fellows before him, led the way to the halter, and so, after his crossing of himself, to the last part of his tragedy.'

Casaubon elaborates the scene, by asserting that, when pressed by an Anglican clergyman on the subject, Grant replied: 'I am satisfied that our project was so far from being sinful that I rely entirely upon my merits in bearing a part of that noble action as an abundant satisfaction and expiation for all sins committed by me during the rest of my life.'

Last came Bates, who, alone of the four, confessed complete penitence. He protested again that he had been drawn into the plot only for love of his master, Catesby, which had caused him to forget his duty to God, the King and the country. 'His motives being but human respects', commented Father Gerard, 'no marvel that he had showed less store of grace and assistance thereof both before and at his death. But seeing he showed to die penitent for his fact, it is to be hoped he found mercy at God's hands. Thus ended the execution of this day. And many of the beholders returned full of pity and compassion towards so worthy-minded men as the first three were, especially Sir Everard Digby, whose fortitude of mind they did so much admire and had so great opinion of his devotion that for all that day and some time after they could talk almost of nothing else.'

(iii) THE THIRTY-FIRST OF JANUARY

On the long road from the Tower to Old Palace Yard, Westminster, along which, next day, the more important prisoners were drawn, only one incident is recorded—that,

* Isaac Casaubon did not come to England till 1610 and was employed by the Government as one of its anti-Catholic apologists. He became, however, the close friend of many who would be in a position to know of the events here narrated (in particular, Lancelot Andrews) and it cannot be definitely asserted that Grant did not utter sentiments such as this, though it sounds more like a Protestant travesty, for propaganda purposes. If he did say such a thing, one must assume he considered the affair as a crusade in the technical sense.
The Thirty-first of January

which has already been mentioned, of Rookwood’s wife. ‘As they were drawn upon the Strand, Mr. Rookwood had provided that he should be admonished when he came over against the lodging where his wife lay; and being come unto the place, he opened his eyes (which before he kept shut to attend better to his prayers) and seeing her stand in a window to see him pass by, he raised himself as well as he could up from the hurdle and said aloud unto her: “Pray for me, pray for me.” She answered him also aloud: “I will and be of good courage and offer thyself wholly to God. I, for my part, do as freely restore thee to God as He gave thee unto me.”’

Thomas Winter was the first to die, as was fitting for ‘the principal in the business, who was from the first acquainted therewith, and a chief actor therein’. Many of the bystanders who knew he was a scholar and diplomat expected him to make a long and careful speech, and, when they found that he was interested only in his prayers ‘and crossed himself as though those were sufficient wards against the Devil’, they urged him to do so. He answered ‘that this was no time to discourse; he was come to die, wherein he desired the prayers and assistance of all good Catholics.’ One thing only he did say—that all the Jesuits and Father Tesimond in particular were completely free from any participation in the treason. Then, protesting he died in the Catholic Faith, he went up the ladder ‘with a very pale and dead colour and after a swing or two with the halter was drawn to the quartering block and there quickly dispatched’.

Rookwood made a longer speech. He acknowledged his offence to the King and State; prayed for the King and Queen and their children, wishing them a long life and a happy reign, and asking them to be good to his wife and children. Then he uttered one more prayer which, according to the Protestant pamphleteer, was ‘a filthy weed which marred all the potage’. He asked God to make the King a Catholic.

Rookwood was dead before he reached the quartering block. Keyes who followed him was not so fortunate. His conduct on the scaffold matched his outburst at the trial—that ‘death was as good now as at another time and for this cause rather than for another’. He made no speech, showed no repentance now but rather seemed to rush to embrace
The Executions

his fate. He 'went up the ladder stoutly where, not staying the hangman’s turn, turned himself off' and leapt into space with such violence that the rope broke. He was immediately drawn to the block and, like Digby, castrated and quartered alive.*

Last of all, again as was fitting, died that conspirator who, in popular estimation, held the centre of the stage and has never relinquished it, Guy Fawkes. 'The Devil of the Vault' was so weak with torture and sickness that he could hardly climb the ladder; even with the hangman's help he found it difficult, yet he insisted on mounting as high as he could. It was, perhaps, the last instinct of his soldier's training and experience and by it he cheated the mob of its pleasure. His neck was broken in the fall.

* This leap seems entirely in character, but Father Gerard in his Narrative insists that 'he did not, as it is said, leap down of himself, but when he thought himself ready he showed his ready mind to go off the ladder without force, lest the hangman should take him on a sudden, when his mind was not actually upon it'. (Page 221)
The Fate of Father Garnet

(i) Surrender

On the day the first conspirators were executed in London, Sir Henry Bromley, still doggedly in possession of Hind-lip House, reaped the reward of his pertinacity. Father Garnet and Father Oldcorne came out of their hiding-place. They could endure their confinement no longer. The little room was not high enough for them to stand up and, as Garnet described it later ‘we had our legs so straitened that we could not sitting find place for them, so that we both were in continual pain of our legs, especially mine, which were much swollen, and mine continued so till I came to the Tower’. It was not food they lacked, for ‘marmalade and other sweetmeats were found lying by them; but their better maintenance had been by a quill or a reed, through a little hole in a chimney that backed another chimney into a gentlewoman’s chamber and by that passage, cauldle, broths and warm drinks had been conveyed to them.’ But ‘in regard the place was so close those customs of nature which must of necessity be done and in so long time of continuance was exceedingly offensive to the men themselves and did much annoy them that made entrance upon them, to whom they confessed that they had not been able to hold out one whole day longer, but either they must have squealed or perished in the place. The whole service endured the space of eleven nights and twelve days.’ And yet, Garnet thought, even this fetid, uncomfortable hole might have saved them had the watchers’ vigilance been momentarily relaxed: ‘If we had had but one half day’s liberty to come forth, we had so eased the place from the books and furniture that, having with us a close-stool, we could have abidden a quarter of a year.’

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The Fate of Father Garnet

They emerged looking like ghosts, though Garnet, for all his weakness, was the stronger. 'The fellow that found us ran away for fear, thinking we would have shot a pistol at him; but there came needless company to assist him, and we bad them be quiet and we would come forth.' Bromley, having identified them, wrote at once to Cecil with news of the capture and set out with them for Worcester.*

With so great a prize in his hands, he could afford to be generous, quite apart from the fact that Cecil had issued instructions that Garnet was to be well treated; and, as they spent day after day together, the character of the prisoners made this conventional courtesy give place to genuine liking. Bromley, indeed, 'affirmed to divers gentlemen of account, when he came to London, that he never in his life met the like man to Mr. Garnet either for modesty, wisdom or learning, and that he would kneel before the King to save his life if he were not found guilty of the Powder'.

He took them in his own coach to Worcester where he promised to allow them to lodge in comfort with one of the leading citizens there; but when he arrived he was informed that he must send them to the prison.

Garnet asked him at least to see that they were not placed in irons, 'for we are lame already and shall not be able to ride after to London'. Bromley promised to do what he could and eventually arranged that they should be guests in his own house, where they were treated with every consideration and 'dined and supped with him and his every day'.

On Candlemas—February 2nd—he gave a great dinner to mark the end of the Christmas season and, in the middle of it, sent for wine to drink the King's health. Accompanying the wine, there was brought in one of the candles which had been found at Hindlip—a white, wax candle, with 'Jesus' on one side and 'Mary' on the other. Garnet asked to see the candle and, after holding it for a moment, passed it to Oldcorne saying that 'he was glad that he had yet carried a holy candle on Candlemas Day'. Then, bareheaded, they all drank the King's health.⁵

Leaving Worcester, the journey south was made in easy

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* The party was composed of the two Jesuits, the two lay brothers, Abington (who was naturally placed under arrest for having harboured them) and two servants. Mrs. Abington and Anne Vaux followed about three weeks later.

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The Death of 'Little John'

stages. Garnet, still almost too weak to travel, was given always the best horse. But he was not spared 'a bickering of Ministers'. At one of the inns on the way, they met two of the Royal Chaplains, 'two very good scholars and courteous'. But two other would-be controversialists had manners and arguments which caused Garnet to complain to Bromley and they were accordingly dismissed.

The company reached London on February 12th and Garnet and Oldcorne were immediately imprisoned in the Gatehouse. 'When Father Garnet was carried into the prison, there stood a great number of prisoners at the gate expecting to see him as he passed, whom he seeing asked aloud: "Is there any of you that be in for the Catholic Faith?" And divers Catholics answering: "Yes, yes, we are Catholics and prisoners for our conscience." "Then", said he, "I am your fellow." So he was locked up in a chamber.

Next day, he was examined by the Council. As he was taken to Whitehall, the streets were crowded with people eager to catch sight of the head of the Jesuits in England. He heard one man shout: 'There goes a young Pope.' Another, more accurately, said 'that he was a provincial'. He was questioned for about three hours, chiefly on the matter of equivocation. It was the first of many appearances before the Council in which as Gardiner has epitomized it, 'it was found impossible to extract from him any confession of his complicity in the Plot. During the following days he was repeatedly examined with equal want of success. At one time he was threatened with torture. It was all alike. Nothing could be gained from him either by fear or by persuasion.'

(ii) THE DEATH OF 'LITTLE JOHN'

Nicholas Owen—'Little John'—who had for so long been Garnet's companion was separated from him when they arrived in London and sent to the Marshalsea. He too, in his way, was an important prisoner and one of the Councillors when he heard of his capture exclaimed: 'Is he taken that knows all the secret places? I am very glad of that. We will have a trick for him.' Consequently 'Little John' was soon removed to the Tower for torture, under which he died.

*See page 36.

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The Government gave out that it was suicide, saying that he had killed himself with the knife provided for him at meal times; and to ensure the wide acceptance of the story among the populace, 'they set forth a ballad with his picture, ripping out his own bowels with a knife, his keeper being also in the chamber busy about some other thing'. The fear of the renewal of torture—he had been hung up by his thumbs from a beam—so preyed on his mind that, so the Government apologists asserted, he had killed himself rather than face it.11

'But this false slander was so improbable that even his enemies did not believe it', as Father Gerard recorded when he gave the true account of the death. 'He hung in the torture seven hours together, and this divers times, though we cannot as yet learn the certain number, but day after day we heard of his being carried to torments. Now true it is and well known to many that the man had a rupture in his belly, taken with excessive pains in his former labours; and a man in that case is so unable to abide torments that the civil law doth forbid to torture any man that is broken. He therefore being not only tortured, but that with so much extremity and so long continuance, it could not be otherwise but that his bowels should come out; which, when they perceived, and minding yet to continue that course with him, they girded his belly with a plate of iron to keep in his bowels, but the extremity of pain (which is most in that kind of torment about the breast and belly) did force out his guts, and so the iron did serve but to cut and wound his body, which perhaps did afterwards put them in mind to give it out that he had ripped his belly with a knife.'

The falsity of the suicide story, Father Gerard insisted, was self-evident. In the first place, knives were only allowed to prisoners at meal-times under the supervision of the gaoler—and then only 'such as are broad at the point and will only cut towards the midst', which could not possibly be used as a dagger. In the second place, no one subjected to this form of torture, even in less a degree than Nicholas Owen had suffered it, was able to handle a knife for many days afterwards; his keeper would have to cut his meat for him. And in this particular case, when one of his relatives had asked him

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* Father Gerard is here speaking from his own experience.
The Trap
to write a list of things he would like to give him some comfort in prison, his gaoler said to her: 'What, would you have him write? He is not able to put on his own cap; no, not to feed himself, but I am forced to feed him.' 'This man,' says Father Gerard scornfully, 'was likely, then, belike, to do such a deed with a knife which he was not able to grasp!'

'No: the truth was this: the man had lived a saintly life, and his death was answerable, and he a glorious martyr of extraordinary merit. . . . In the meantime I desire my soul may have part with his, and myself may be assisted by his holy prayers.'

(iii) THE TRAP

In Garnet's case, the Government had no wish to resort to torture. From the beginning he was treated, at Cecil's instructions, with as much consideration as possible. He had a pleasant room in the Tower. With every meal he was allowed 'a good draught of excellent claret wine' with some sherry which he had purchased himself. His friends provided him with sheets, pillows, handkerchiefs and socks, though the spectacles they sent were useless, as they were reading-glasses and he required long-distance ones.

The Commissioners were scrupulously polite. The one and only discourtesy was from Cecil when, speaking of an intercepted letter from Anne Vaux, signed 'Your loving sister, A.G.', he called Garnet 'an old fornicator' and accused him of being secretly married to her. But next time they met he apologized, explaining that he was only joking and 'held his arm long on my shoulders'.

Between them, it was a battle of wits; and in the end Cecil won. Surrounded by the atmosphere of kindliness, Garnet was thrown off his guard. The gaoler who was in charge of him had been at pains to win his confidence by pretending a desire for conversion and had arranged for the delivery of his notes to his friends and for their replies. Garnet did not know that these notes were immediately taken to Waad, who had them copied by forgers (probably Phelippes who was in the Tower at the time), and kept the originals in his own possession. The incoming notes were similarly treated, though the forgeries were perfect enough for Garnet to believe that what he read was indeed his friend's own hand-
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writing. Even the portions written in orange-juice presented no secret to the 'cipherers' to whom this form of 'invisible writing' was mere child's play.

Then the authorities decided to set the trap which had been successful with Robert Winter and Guy Fawkes. Garnet and Oldcorne were put in adjoining rooms and were told by the gaoler that they could safely talk to each other, provided they did so quietly, by means of a secret opening. 'It seems extraordinary', as one historian remarks, 'that astute men like these hunted Jesuits who had for many years had to defend themselves against innumerable tricks and stratagems laid for them by their enemies, should have fallen into so simple a trap. But they did, and relying on their janitor's word and fidelity, opened up a series of conversations by removing the stone in the wall, utterly unsuspecting that this same hollow wall concealed the persons of two agents of the Privy Council who wrote down every word they heard of these conversations.'

On February 23rd, 25th and 27th and on March 2nd, the Jesuits discussed matters. They heard each other's confessions, though in this their voices were so low that the listeners complained that they 'could not hear well'. All, in fact, they overheard was Garnet's confession that on two occasions he had gone to bed early because he had drunk too much at supper—an admission of some importance to later Government propaganda, which continually insisted that Garnet was a drunkard. More to the point was their discussion of how much the Government knew, of what they themselves had said in examination; and of the news they had received of their friends. Garnet knew of Tesimond's escape to the Continent and believed that Gerard had by now managed to follow him.*

On March 5th—Ash Wednesday—they were brought before the Council and accused of these secret conversations. At first they denied them, but, seeing that this was useless, Garnet decided to make a full confession. There was no one left who could be hurt by it. All the conspirators were dead; Tesimond and Gerard were safe; and he knew that he him-

* Gerard in fact was still in hiding in London, but he had written a note to Garnet telling him that he intended to 'go over'. All the reports of the conversations are printed in Jardine, Appendix ii.
The Trial

self would have to die. The trap had closed. One thing only remained to do—'to set down as briefly as I can the whole state of my cause, thereby to satisfy my friends and take away all occasion of scandal'.

(iv) The Trial

In the circumstances, it was impossible to avoid scandal. The Government could now discredit Garnet without too much manipulation of the evidence. He could be proved, to the satisfaction of the people, a liar and an 'equivocator'—in which capacity, indeed, he was to win a literary immortality in Shakespeare's Macbeth from the lips of the drunken Porter. It would be shown that he did, in fact, know of the Plot, even though it was under the seal of confession—a fact which would not weigh at all with Protestants. But, in addition to this, they had means to extort more. The courteous atmosphere vanished. Cecil, menacing now, told Garnet that 'more than I had told should be brought out of my fingers' ends'. Waad wrote: 'I have half brought him to confess that the discourse he had with Greenwell (Tesimond) of these horrible treasons was not in confession, and I hope to use the means to make him acknowledge it.' And they further perplexed him by assuring him that they had in fact captured Tesimond and that Tesimond himself had asserted that his information was not given sub sigillo confessionis. But this 'third degree' trick which is said never to fail was without effect. Garnet answered: 'It may be that he meant not so, but I stand to it as the truth is that I took it so, both because he offered confession and after few days came to confession.' And to Tesimond, whom he imagined to be somewhere in the Tower, he wrote a letter, begging his pardon for ever having mentioned him at all: 'My most dear and loving Sir, I am sorrier for your taking than my own... I thought it better to tell the very truth, with less discredit to our Order, than to permit them to have harder conceits of us, as of contrivers and authors of all the conspiracy. And because I assured myself that you were beyond,* as I was told, I laid part of the blame upon you, you being already touched very deeply, for the which I heartily ask you forgiveness. I said

* I.e. on the Continent.

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that you, at the house in Essex, told me of the matter in confession, yet walking and after confessing, because it was too tedious to hear all kneeling. I said I thought you knew it in confession with leave to tell me, though I charged you not to be known to any that you had told me. Also that you gave me leave to reveal my knowledge, if ever I came in question here or beyond for it. . . . Almighty God send us plenty of his heavenly comforts; for your apprehension hath made my sorrows to be renewed."

The Government, however, was determined to force its point. 'After I had acknowledged all that was true, my Lord Chief Justice said that they must have more of me than so; for I must confess that I was the very original of all and the plotter; and besides I must confess such noblemen as Catesby and the rest did build upon, both in this action and also in the intended invasion from Spain; and for these two points I was to go to torture the second time upon Friday, which was Good Friday beyond sea.* But I pleaded that I was hardly dealt with, having told all I could, and bade them set down what they would have me confess, and so far as it concerned only my own credit I would acknowledge it without torture.' When they insisted that he must be tortured, in spite of his weariness after an exhausting day of examination, he merely said: 'Well, then, this is the day my Saviour died for me! I am contented and will appeal to a higher Judge' and so went to his room. The torture however was postponed, and the technique of kindness was tried once more. 'But I told them that verily I knew no more and that whencesoever I should be condemned and to die, they should perceive that upon never so great remorse and fear of God I could utter no more than I had done: and by this mean I caused them to hasten my arraignment.'

The trial took place in the Guildhall on March 28th and followed the same pattern as that of the conspirators. As Gardiner has put it: 'The scene at Guildhall was a political rather than a judicial spectacle. Neither those who were the principal actors, nor the multitude who thronged every approach to the Hall regarded as the sole or even the chief question whether the old man who stood hopeless but un-daunted at the bar and who, even by his own confession, had

* I.e. in the countries which had adopted the New Style calendar.

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been acquainted with the recent conspiracy, had looked upon it with favour or with abhorrence. It was to them an opportunity which had at last been gained of striking a blow against Catholicism.' Coke's opening speech was a long and venomous exposition of the familiar Government line against the Jesuits, citing past 'traitors' such as Edmund Campion and past 'plots' such as Squire's; waxing eloquent about the defeat of the Armada, recalling the details of the Gunpowder Plot itself; improving on his 'two D's' of the earlier trial by describing Garnet as 'by profession a Jesuit and a Superior, as indeed he is superior to all his predecessors in devilish treason; a doctor of Jesuits, that is a Doctor of five D's, as Dissimulation, Deposing of Princes, Disposing of kingdoms, Daunting and Deterring of subjects and Destruction'; emphasizing the wickedness of equivocation; and, to remedy his unfortunate omission in the earlier trial, twice praising Lord Monteagle 'whose memory shall be blessed'. Cecil again spoke; and Northampton; the two witnesses of the conversations between Garnet and Oldcorne gave their evidence; Garnet defended himself by the plea that what he knew he knew in confession and that he had never approved of the Plot; he explained the true doctrine of equivocation and asked the jury 'that they would allow of and believe those things he had denied and affirmed and not give credit unto those things whereof there was no direct proof against him, nor condemn him by circumstances and presumptions'.

The jury, after less than a quarter of an hour's absence, returned with the verdict 'Guilty', and the Lord Chief Justice 'making a pithy preamble of all the apparent proofs and presumptions of his guiltiness, gave judgment that he should be drawn, hanged and quartered'.

(v) WAITING FOR DEATH

Garnet, after his sentence, was taken back to the Tower where he was kept waiting for death for five weeks. Cecil, writing to the Ambassador in Brussels (who, in spite of every effort, could not induce the Archduke to allow the extradition of Hugh Owen) explained: 'For Garnet, the cause of the protraction of his execution hath partly grown by reason of the holy week, as they call it, before Easter, and

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the holy days following: and partly because of this delay there have many things been discovered by him which serve to very good use in His Majesty’s service.24

By Palm Sunday, Garnet knew of Oldcorne’s death. Oldcorne, after he had been racked in the Tower five times and once with the utmost severity for several hours25 without revealing anything, had been sent for trial to Worcester, together with his servant, Ralph Ashley, who had been captured with him at Hindlip. With them were sent Abington and John Winter, the young half-brother of Robert and Thomas, who had been reserved for death near his home. They were tried at the Lent Assizes at Worcester. Abington, though found guilty, was as brother-in-law of Monteagle eventually pardoned, but Oldcorne and Ashley, with John Winter and Humphrey Littleton (whose betrayal of the hiding-place had availed him nothing), were executed at Redhill, a mile outside Worcester, on Monday, April 7th.

Garnet, writing his account of things for his Superior on that Palm Sunday, noted: ‘Mr. Hall (Oldcorne) I hope is in glory.’ He remembered one of the dreams Oldcorne had had and was comforted by it. ‘He dreamed that he was to be removed to another College and Fr. Alfonso came smiling to him saying, Prepare yourself for you must go to another College which is very wholesome and will please you; but you must suffer much by the way for you must go a great way by sea and you will be very sick. That skillett not, he said. And so he is gone and God of His goodness send us all to meet in Heaven, whereof I have no small hope.’26

It was not that Garnet considered himself worthy of martyrdom. When he was asked whether he thought he would die a martyr, he said: ‘No, but a penitent sinner.’ And when Coke, who was interested to find that Garnet even in prison kept the saints’ days of the Kalendar, made the characteristic remark: ‘What! You have a saint for every day? But you shall have no place in the calendar!’ he said: ‘No, I look not for it; but I hope for a place in Heaven.’

During these weeks, the Government tried to get further information about the Jesuits from Garnet by pretending that some were prisoners in the Tower and assuming that he would try to communicate with them, as he had when he thought Tesimond was there. One of Waad’s letters to Cecil
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reveals admirably these conditions: 'Garnet's keeper told me that Garnet had been very earnest with him to go to Richard Fullwood from him (for you know Garnet conceives that Fullwood is in prison) and to will him in any case to take heed, if he were asked any question by the Commissioners concerning the Lords to confess nothing of them. This he twice very carefully prayed his keeper to say to Fullwood. His keeper, to draw him on, asked him, What Lords? It is no matter, said Garnet, if you tell him as I bid you, he will understand my meaning. He told him further, when he had delivered the message to him that he would write. This I set down verbatim, as the keeper tells it me, whom on my faith I never found untrue hitherto in one word. For daily if Garnet says any to him he reports it to me: if he had no speech of anything he says as much. This morning he might securely deal with his keeper, for I locked them both up myself and took away the key.'

And so, by trickery, by questioning and by the threat of torture, if not by torture itself, they continued the examination for thirty-five days after the death-sentence had been pronounced. They tried to get him to implicate Northumberland by asking who was to be named Protector had the Plot succeeded. They asked him who was the treasurer of the Jesuits. They asked him where he had lodged in London; of the meaning of the cipher in letters they had intercepted; how long he had known Hugh Owen; when he last saw the Spanish Ambassador; what he had written to Rome.

In the end he acknowledged that he had been at fault for not disclosing to the Government what, outside his knowledge in the confessional, he suspected of the Plot from Catesby's behaviour: 'I asked forgiveness of God and the King for that I had not disclosed the general knowledge I had of Mr. Catesby, which all proceeded from hope of prevention from the Pope and lothness to betray my friend.' He qualified it with: 'I persuaded Mr. Catesby, upon the Pope's last prohibition, to desist from all purposes in general, which he promised to do, except the Pope consented—I assuring myself that the Pope would never consent.' And at last a day was appointed for his death.
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(vi) ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD

The day they chose was Saturday, May 3rd, the Feast of the Finding of the Cross. The place was St. Paul's Churchyard. 'In that place there was a great scaffold made and a gibbet in the midst of the scaffold. And such multitudes of people, noble and ignoble, so many standings set up by carpenters to hire out for money that a mere place to stand on would cost twelvepence well.... All the windows were full, yea, the tops of houses full of people, so that it is not known the like hath been at any execution.'

When Garnet was released from the hurdle, the Deans of St. Paul's and Winchester, accompanied by other clergymen, met him and asked him 'that you, being in the last hour of your mortal life, will perform the duty of a true subject, to which you are obliged by the laws of God and nature, and to disclose such treasons as you know intended towards his Majesty's danger and the commonwealth.'

Garnet answered: 'Mr. Dean, it may please you to tell his Majesty that I have been arraigned, and what could be laid to my charge I have there answered, and said as much as I could; so that, in this place, I have no more to say.'

The ecclesiastics then tried to convert him to Protestantism, 'but in this he cut them off quickly, desiring them not to trouble themselves nor him'. He asked only whether there was some place in which he could pray, but the Recorder of London interposed to say that the scaffold was so crowded with witnesses by order from the King to hear him acknowledge his offence and beg pardon of his Majesty.

Garnet said: 'I confess I have offended the King and am sorry for it, so far as I was guilty.' But he denied that he was guilty of treason and reiterated that his knowledge of the Plot was under the seal. 'The treason intended against the King and state was bloody; myself should have detested it, had it taken effect. And I am heartily sorry that any Catholics ever had so cruel a design.'

The Recorder said: 'Do you hear, gentlemen? He asketh the King forgiveness for the Powder Treason.'

'You do me wrong,' said Garnet, 'for I have no cause to ask forgiveness of that whereof I was never guilty, nor was
St. Paul's Churchyard

privy to it in such sort that it may justly be imputed to me for concealing it.'

'What!' said the Recorder, 'will you deny your own hand? We have it by your own hand that you knew of it by other means than confession, that Greenway told you of it by way of consultation, and that Catesby and Greenway came together to be resolved of you.'

'No,' said Garnet, 'Mr. Catesby never told me of any particular. And for Mr. Greenway, I knew it only, as I have said, by confession, which therefore I could not lawfully open until now that I had leave to do so. What is under my hand I will not deny, but you shall never show my hand contrary to what I have spoken.'

The Recorder answered: 'You do but equivocate and, if you will deny it, after your death we will publish your own hand that the world may see your false dealing.'

'This is not time', said Garnet, 'to talk of equivocation, neither do I equivocate.'* But in truth, in truth, you shall not find my hand otherwise than I have said.'

It was obvious that those on the scaffold were impressed and the Recorder turned to one of his followers, saying: 'Let him see his own handwriting.'

Garnet interposed: 'You cannot show me any such writing in my hand.'

Nor could they. The person who was supposed to have the confession said it was not there. He had left it at home.

'No,' said Garnet, 'neither here nor at home have you any such thing.'

Then, though he did not think he would be heard by the crowds, for he was weak and his voice was low, he went to the side of the scaffold and addressed the people.

'Upon this day is recorded the Invention of the Cross of Christ; and upon this day I thank God I have found my cross, by which I hope to end all the crosses of my life, and to rest in the next by the grace and merits of my blessed Saviour. As for the treasons that are laid against me, I pro-

* Though, in the popularly understood use of the term, Garnet was so doing. He was telling the literal truth. What he had, and could have revealed, from Catesby outside confession was not the Plot at all, but only his own suspicion arising from Catesby's question about the death of innocent people in war.

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test now at my death that I am not guilty of them, neither had knowledge of the Powder but in confession and then I utterly disliked and earnestly dissuaded it. Yes, I protest upon my soul I should have abhorred it ever, if it had succeeded. And I am sorry with all my heart that any Catholics had ever any such intention, knowing that such attempts are not allowable and, to my own knowledge, contrary to the Pope’s mind. And therefore I wish all Catholics to be quiet and not to be moved by any difficulties to the raising of tumults, but to possess their souls in peace. And God will not be forgetful of them, or of His promise, but will send them help and comfort when it is most to His glory and their good.’

He knelt for some time at the foot of the ladder. On the ladder itself, he asked the hangman to give him warning when he was going to turn him off and continued his prayers, making the sign of the Cross and saying aloud in Latin: ‘We adore Thee, O Christ and we bless Thee, because by Thy Holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world’ and ‘By this sign of the Cross, may all that is wicked fly far away. Fix Thy Cross in my heart, O Lord.’ Then, ‘being desirous to carry the Cross with him out of the world imprinted in his heart, he crossed his arms over his heart upon his breast, and so was cast off the ladder, and his arms continued so across as he had placed them (not being bound, nor he making any struggle at all with death) until he had rendered his spirit to his Redeemer.’20 He was allowed to hang until he was dead.

(vii) Garnet’s Straw

Among the bystanders was a fervent young Catholic who, according to his own account, because he wished to preserve some relic of Garnet, placed himself very near the scaffold.31 After the quartering, when the head and limbs were placed in a basket, he got between the scaffold and the cart. Some straw was thrown from the scaffold into the basket, with the head and quarters, and a piece of the straw, spattered with Garnet’s blood, fell into the young man’s hand. He did not know whether it was from the cart or from the scaffold; he knew only that he caught it before it touched the ground. He gave it for safe custody to a fellow-Catholic, who covered it with a glass, so that the blood-spots should not be effaced.
The Escape of Father Gerard

Some time later a friend, looking at it carefully said: 'I can see nothing in it but a man's face.' Several of them examined it and were satisfied that there was in it the outline of a human face.

It was eagerly inspected by Catholics—including the Spanish Ambassador—and, in course of time, not one, but two faces were discovered, one within the other. The larger was that of Garnet, crowned with a martyr's crown and with the sign of the Cross on his forehead; the other was that of a cherub, on the lower part of Garnet's beard. The tiny portrait was surrounded by rays of glory.

The story of it, circulating abroad as well as in England, caused the Government so much embarrassment that a special inquiry had to be instituted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was ordered to punish the impostors, who, it was contended, had themselves drawn the face.* On the Continent, a print of the miraculous straw was made and sold extensively and was reproduced as the frontispiece to 'Eudaemon Johannes's' defence of Garnet, published in 1610.

(viii) THE ESCAPE OF FATHER GERARD

Whatever may be the truth of the 'miracle of the Straw', Father Gerard at least believed that the coincidence of the date of his escape from England with that of Father Garnet's execution was not fortuitous. He had made his way to the coast and was to cross with members of the Spanish embassy.

'When I had come to the port where, according to agreement, I was to embark with certain high personages, in order to pass unchallenged out of England,' he writes, 'they, out of fear, excused themselves performing their promise. And in this mind they continued, till the hour of the day fixed for embarking. Now just at that time Father Garnet's martyrdom was consummated at London and he, being received into Heaven, remembered me on earth; for the minds of those lords were so changed that the Ambassadors themselves came to fetch me, and with their own hands helped to dress me in Spanish costume, so that I might be taken for one of their suite and so pass free. All went well, and I do not doubt that I owed it to Father Garnet's prayers.'52

* 'As for the thing itself, 'twas only a few lines drawn like a face upon the outward husk of a grain of wheat.' (Foulis: Romish Treasons, p. 518.)
Epilogue

The success of the Plot, from Cecil’s point of view, was complete. The proposed anti-Catholic legislation could now be put into effect not merely without a protest, but with enthusiasm. Humanly speaking, nothing could prevent the extinction of Catholicism in England. Within three weeks of Garnet’s death, the Acts were passed.

Catholics were forbidden to appear at Court or to live within ten miles of London. They could not move five miles from their homes without the consent of the neighbouring magistrates. They were not allowed to become doctors, lawyers, clerks or members of corporations, or to act as trustees. Their houses might be broken open and searched, on the order of a single magistrate, at any time and on any pretext, and any Protestant who entertained a Catholic visitor or employed a Catholic servant was liable to a heavy fine. Married Catholics, unless their marriage had been before an Anglican clergyman, had no legal right to property accruing to either party by marriage; and every Catholic educated abroad became ipso facto an outlaw.

These were temporal penalties, such as might be inflicted on any political minority. The more deadly blows were aimed at the practice of the Faith itself. For the first time, the sacramental test was introduced. Hitherto, attendance at the parish church had been sufficient for conformity. Now every Catholic had to receive communion at the hands of the Protestant minister at least once a year. Failure to do so involved a fine of £20 (in the currency of the time) for the first year; £40 for the second and £60 thereafter. The fine of £20 a month for non-attendance at the ordinary Mattins and Evensong was continued, but the Crown was given the right immediately to seize two-thirds of the offenders’ property, as an alternative, if it wished. This clause was directed against the richer Catholics, to whom the alternative meant
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ruin. Against the poorer, a new clause was devised imposing a penalty of £10 a month upon everyone keeping servants who did not 'go to church'. 'By this means it was thought that the numerous servants in the houses of the Catholic gentry would be driven into conformity or deprived of their employment.'

That the law might be effectively observed, churchwardens and parish constables were to be fined twenty shillings whenever they neglected to present to the magistrates persons absenting themselves from church. On the other hand, they were to receive a reward of forty shillings for every conviction they managed to obtain.

Every Catholic, if he did not wish to incur the penalties of high treason, might be required to take the new oath of allegiance, in which he had to swear 'that the Pope, neither of himself nor by any authority of the Church or See of Rome... hath any power or authority to depose the King... or to discharge any of his subjects of their allegiance and obedience to his Majesty... and I do further swear that I do from my heart abhor, detest and abjure, as impious and heretical, this damnable doctrine and position that princes which be excommunicated or deprived by the Pope may be deposed... and I do believe and in my conscience am resolved that neither the Pope nor any person whatsoever hath power to absolve me of this oath.' Such an oath was obviously impossible for any Catholic to take, since it plainly meant what Cardinal Bellarmine, in the course of the long controversy which followed, said it meant—'that the authority of the head of the Church of England may be transferred from the successor of St. Peter to the successor of King Henry VIII'.

Among other provisions of the Acts was a clause, recommended by the committee over which the Archbishop of Canterbury presided, assisted by thirteen other bishops, including Barlow of Rochester, who had been the first to give the public the Government version of the Plot from St. Paul's Cross, and Lancelot Andrews of Chichester, who was to become the most famous apologist of the penal legislation. The clause enacted that if, in the searches of Catholic houses, any crucifix should be found, it was to be publicly defaced at the Quarter Sessions and, with the Figure thus mutilated, to be restored to its owner.
APPENDIX I

The Authenticity of Thomas Winter's Confession

The controversy, to which reference has already been made, between Father John Gerard, S.J., and Professor S. R. Gardiner on the nature of the Gunpowder Plot centred finally on the authenticity or otherwise of Thomas Winter's confession. If that could be proved a forgery, then the Government version of the Plot fell to the ground.

It can, I think, be proved a forgery by means of evidence which, though it was technically available, neither Gerard nor Gardiner noticed, nor should I have seen it had it not been for the calendaring of the Hatfield MSS. for 1605 in 1938. To place it correctly, it is necessary to recall the background.

On Friday, November 8th, Thomas Winter was captured at Holbeach House. He had been shot in the arm with an arrow from a cross-bow early in the fight and was thus unable to defend himself. He was, if the substance of this part of the 'Confession' may be believed, additionally wounded. 'Then the company entered upon me, hurt me in the belly with a pike and gave me other wounds, until one came behind and caught hold of both mine arms.'

The use of his right arm was lost temporarily and when he underwent his first examination on November 12th, before the Sheriff of Worcestershire who captured him, he did not sign it.1 During the following week there is no record of any examination, and the next certain knowledge is Waad's letter to Cecil dated November 21st (Thursday) in which he says: 'Thomas Winter finds his hand so strong as after dinner he will settle himself to write that he verbally declared to you, adding what he shall further remember.'2
Appendix I

So far, no trace has been found of this writing. If it ever comes to light, it will settle finally all debated questions. It must have been the basis of the ten-page 'Confession', dated 23rd November 1605, round which the controversy rages.

This 'Confession' is in handwriting which resembles the known hand of Winter before he was wounded, but his name is spelt 'Winter' whereas he himself never used any form but 'Wintour'. No one who is familiar with his signature, where the 'tour' is written in long, narrow letters, the 't' being carried on to the top of the 'o', could imagine this to be a slip of the pen, nor is it likely that he suddenly forgot how to spell his own surname. Other people, however, habitually spelt it 'Winter'. The objection may be raised that a forger would be careful to spell the name properly, but he is more likely to make a mistake than Winter himself, and the fact that his name was so misspelt might explain why this 'Confession' was seen by no one but Cecil, Coke and Waad, nor did it ever go out of Cecil's hands. What was put into public circulation and is now in the Public Record Office is a copy in the handwriting of Levinus Muncius, Cecil's secretary, dated 23rd November, 1605, in which certain passages are omitted or altered and which contains a marginal note in King James's handwriting objecting to an 'uncleare phrase' —which has been clarified in deference to the royal criticism.

There are thus three versions of the 'Confession'—the presumed original, which is lost; the 'Hatfield' version, which must rank as the 'original' and which may be a forgery; and the 'Record Office' version, which was eventually printed in the 'King's Book' and is the basis of the accepted history of the Plot.

Of the 'Hatfield' version there are these further points to be noticed. The date, the 23rd, has been altered by Coke to the 25th (though the official 'Record Office' copy remains the 23rd). Coke has squeezed in at the top in his small handwriting: 'The voluntarie declaration of Thomas Winter of Hoodington in the county of Worcester, gent., the 25 of Nov. 1605 at the Tower, acknowledged before the Lordes Commissioners.' At the foot appears: 'Delivered by Thomas Wynter all written with his owne hand 25 Nov: 1605. Edw. Coke.'

There is no sign that it was, in fact, witnessed by anyone
The first page of 'the Enclosure' in Winter's forged hand.
Dr. the message that was delivered me from my S. R. C. C. tary and Fysham, it was thought I was wii be to say that these three men of a gravity not common for it greater profession should have sent in the most desert of England and would have had fame in more suspicion, and Tho. WINSLOW.
The passage in 'the Enclosure' (Plate I) incorporating the information given by Winter in 'the Fragment' (Plate II).

**Transcript**

... as occasion served, but as then it was not fitt [because] [o ?] for disclosing (in margin) [secrecy] to impart it to more. beside C (in Coke's hand) that [they] the which sent were of a quality most convenient \(A\), for if greater [the acquainting it with greater] personages \(A\) have sent, it (from 'have' in margin) might sooner bring the matter into suspicion.
(a) The conclusion of the forged 'Enclosure' with Winter's genuine signature. (In the original, the signature appears to be written in different ink.)

(b) The conclusion of the forged 'Confession' with Winter's forged and mis-spelt signature.
The Authenticity of Thomas Winter's Confession

but Coke, though to the 'Record Office' copy the names of Nottingham, Suffolk, Worcester, Devonshire, Northampton, Salisbury, Marr, Dunbar, Popham, Coke and Waad are appended as witnesses, not by their own signatures, but in Cecil's handwriting.

Another piece of evidence supporting the conclusion of forgery is that in the margin of the 'Hatfield' confession are two additions, neither of any great importance. One, on the first page, runs: 'In the year of our Lord 1603, the first of the King's reign'; the second on the fourth page: 'about a month before Michaelmas'. These also appear, as marginal additions, in the 'Record Office' copy—that is to say in Levinus Munck's copy dated November 23rd. It is obvious, therefore, that they were added to the 'Hatfield' original after it had left the Tower and been in Munck's hands for copying. They are, in fact, additions made, like the King's comment, for the purpose of the printed edition. But these marginal notes are in the same hand as the rest of the 'Confession'. As Gerard says: 'Is it likely that the Confession would be sent back to the prisoner for the sake of these additions, neither being of the smallest practical value?'

On the other hand, assuming the 'Confession' is in a forged hand, the forger would obviously add them in the same writing as the rest of the document.

It so happens that we do possess a specimen of Winter's genuine handwriting of November 25th—an isolated, hitherto unexplained fragment. It runs:

'In the message that was delivered me from my L Montegue, Catesby and Tresham, I was wished to say that those three were of a quality most convenient, for if greater personages should have sent the state of England would have had them in more suspicion

'Tho. Wintour.'

Gardiner, who knew of this fragment, points out that it relates to the Spanish plot of 1602 and that 'it must refer, not to anything in the examination which is extant, but to a message in another which has been lost' and Gerard printed a facsimile of it in his Thomas Winter's Confession and the Gunpowder Plot (1898) as material evidence that the genuine
handwriting of Winter (including the signature) on November 25th differed from that of the ‘Confession’ also dated by Coke for the 25th.

Although the examination to which this note refers is still missing, there is at Hatfield a relevant document which Gardiner and Gerard also presumed lost. This is referred to by Waad in a letter to Cecil written the next day—Tuesday, November 26th—in which he said: ‘Thomas Winter hath set down in writing of his own hand, as he was directed, the whole course of his employment into Spain, which I send to you hereinclosed’ and with his letter is a two-page account of Winter’s activities in 1602, which served as the basis of Coke’s indictment at the trial—the enclosure Gardiner and Gerard presumed lost. This is signed by Winter in his own genuine hand with its proper spelling—Tho. Wintour. But the writing of the narrative itself is in the same forged hand as that of the ‘Confession’—which a comparison of the actual signature with the body of the manuscript makes clear.

More importantly, the genuine fragment which we possess in Winter’s handwriting on the 25th has been incorporated into the account written on the 26th. The former: ‘I was wished to say that those three were of a quality most convenient, for if greater personages should have sent the state of England would have had them in more suspicion’ has been edited to, in the latter: ‘Besides, that those which sent were of a quality most convenient, for if greater personages should have sent, it might sooner bring the matter into suspicion.’

This discovery seems to me to be decisive. A comparison of the same passage in the narrative of the 26th with the genuine fragment of the 25th shows how these words of Thomas Winter’s were utilized in the forgery—and the narrative of the 26th is in the same hand as the ‘Confession’ of the 23rd. We can now at last compare what Winter did write—even if it is only a sentence or two—with what he is supposed to have written; and, by seeing the forger at work on the 26th, understand the method of the earlier and more important forgery of the 23rd.
APPENDIX II

Gunpowder

One of the mysteries connected with the plot is the mystery of the gunpowder itself. 'From the moment of the "discovery", the discovered gunpowder disappears from history.' As has already been noted, the Ordnance accounts of the stores for this period are missing.

On November 27th, Lake wrote to Cecil that the King had commanded him 'to put you in mind of one thing in the examination whereof he does not remember that you are yet cleared. That is, that where at Lambeth at the house whither the powder was brought by the porters, there was a young man that received it, which His Majesty and you at first conceived to be Winter, but since, as His Highness judges, could not be so, because the examinations make mention that that young man had no hair on his face, which is otherwise in Winter. He would therefore know whether you have yet found who was the receiver of the powder, or if it have not been enquired of, by reason of the multitude of other things, that you would bestow labour to discover it.'

There is no other mention of the gunpowder, apart from a passing reference in the Politician's Catechism (1658) which states that 'the barrels wherein the powder was are kept as relics, and were often shown to the King and his posterity that they might not entertain the least thought of clemency toward the Catholic religion'.

About every other matter, there was considerable inquiry —about the conspirators' lodgings and associates, about the boatmen, carpenters, tradesmen and porters who worked for them. Inquiries were even made as to where the iron bars laid on top of the barrels were purchased. 'But concerning the gunpowder, no question appears ever to have been asked, whence it came or who furnished it. Yet this would appear to
be a point at least as important as the rest, and if it was left in absolute obscurity, the inference is undoubtedly suggested that it was not wished to have questions raised. It may be added that no mention is discoverable of the augmentation of the royal stores by so notable a contribution as this would have furnished.*

Though there is some discrepancy as to the amount of gunpowder which the plotters were alleged to have procured, the lowest estimate (which is accepted by Gardiner) is a last and a half.* This amounts to a quarter of the entire amount of gunpowder stored in Dublin Castle at the height of the Irish wars. Thus, on any showing, the conspirators' acquisition was considerable.

Gunpowder, which had been proclaimed a Government monopoly in 1601, was stored in the White Tower and was under the control of the Earl of Devonshire as Master-General of Ordnance, with Cecil's intimate friend, Carew of Clopton (he who had let his house to Rookwood) as Lieutenant-General. Devonshire and Carew had campaigned together in Ireland where Devonshire (then Lord Mountjoy) had subjugated the country of which he was appointed Lord Deputy in succession to Essex, while Carew was made President of Munster. Also associated with them in friendship and in their Irish career was Sir Henry Brouncker, who had married one of Monteagle's sisters, Ann. He was appointed President of Munster in succession to Carew in the summer of 1604.

Brouncker, a creature of Cecil's, had for many years farmed the customs of wine imported into Ireland and had learned, in that way, much of the underground communications with Spain. He was an energetic persecutor of Catholics and when he succeeded Carew to office proceeded with such severity that, however agreeable to Cecil, it caused the King to remark that 'his zeal was more than was required in a governor, however allowable in a private man'.

Brouncker died in 1607, leaving a son, William, aged 22, who had been at Oxford during the time of the Plot; and the subsequent activities of this young man in the matter of gunpowder are, considering his connections, of peculiar interest. One of Sir Henry's last letters to Cecil, four months

* A last contained twenty-four barrels. Each barrel held 100 lb.
Gunpowder

before his death, had vowed William to Cecil's service, and four years later, both William and his widowed mother, Monteagle's sister, were petitioning Cecil, she for money still due for her late husband's services, he for a warrant to investigate the disappearance of gunpowder from the Royal stores.

The demand has all the appearance of blackmail, since it was described as 'extravagant' by Lake, and when William thereupon threatened to take his suggestion to the courts, he was given the warrant—with the proviso that the years to be covered by the investigation were from 1578 to 1604.7

There is no need to emphasize the strangeness of this transaction—the nephew of Monteagle, son of the associate of the man in charge of the gunpowder in the Tower in 1604 and 1605, being allowed to investigate the leakage of gunpowder up to the exact point where that leakage became notorious. Taken in conjunction with the fact that the records have disappeared and with the character of William Brouncker—he eventually bought an Irish peerage for £1,200 and swore the same day that he had not a shilling left to pay for his dinner—\textsuperscript{8} it suggests, at least, that the Government were well enough aware how and where the conspirators procured their gunpowder.

Further than this, it is impossible to go, though the Brouncker episode proves that the gunpowder account could be checked with accuracy and thus makes the fact that they are 'missing' the more suspicious,
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INTRODUCTION

2. Goodman: Court of King James, i, p. 106.
3. P.R.O. Roman Transcripts (Bliss) No. 86. 10th December 1605. Italian.
5. Gerard’s Narrative had been known to earlier historians in manuscript, as also had another Narrative, written in Italian by Greenway, another Jesuit also implicated in the Plot. What was not realized by some writers was that Greenway had merely translated Gerard, supplementing it here and there with certain first-hand information of his own. The parts played in events by Gerard and Greenway (a Yorkshireman whose real name was Oswald Tesimond) will be found in their proper place in the story.
6. The reader who may consider this too sweeping a statement is referred to Gerard’s fifty-page analysis, Professor Gardiner’s Defence of the Traditional Story, which, originally printed in The Month of September, October and November, 1897, appears as the appendix to The Gunpowder Plot and the Gunpowder Plotters.

For those who find access to this difficult, I give three examples, each typical of an aspect of Gardiner’s method.

The first illustrates Gardiner’s general controversial attitude.

Thomas Winter’s ‘Confession’ was originally dated November 23rd. This date was altered by the Attorney-General, Sir Edward Coke, to November 25th. For reasons which will become apparent in the story, this small circumstance (small, because Coke added and suppressed many more weighty matters) considerably fortifies the suspicion that the ‘Confession’ is a Government forgery. Gardiner, supporting its authenticity, puts forward the following explanation as ‘a possible one’:

Winter, I suppose, writes it on the 23rd, and it is then witnessed, as Father Gerard says, by Coke alone. Though no copy of the autograph signatures of the Commissioners exists, it is reasonable to suppose that one was made, in which a passage about Montague—whom the Government did not wish to connect with the Plot except as a discoverer—was omitted, and that this, still bearing the date of the 23rd may have been brought before the Commissioners on the 25th. They would thus receive a statement from Winter
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that it was his own and the signatures of the Commissioners would then be appended to it, together with those of Coke and Waad. This then would be the document from which copies would be taken for the use of individual Commissioners and we can thus account for Salisbury's having appended to his own copy now in the Record Office, 'Taken before us, Notthingham, Suffolke, etc.' The recognition before the Commissioners would become the official date, and Coke, having access to the original, changes the date on which it was written to that on which it was signed by the Commissioners.

It will be seen from the italicized words that the 'explanation' is merely a very tentative hypothesis, yet Gardiner starts the next paragraph with the words: 'Winter's confession having been thus vindicated' and thenceforth assumes it as a proved fact.

The second example illustrates Gardiner's factual inaccuracy. Gerard had pointed out that a writer in the year 1673 alleged that Lord Cobham had testified to having heard James I himself 'when he had time to realize the truth of the matter' speak of November 5th as 'Cecil's Holiday'. Gardiner, anxious to dispose of all hostile contemporary evidence, replied that 'Lord Cobham (Richard Temple) was created a peer in 1669, so that the story is given on very second-hand evidence indeed'. This may seem to impugn Gerard's source effectually enough until it is realized that not only was Richard Temple not made a peer till 1714 (he was born in 1669), but that the Lord Cobham referred to was a man of quite different age and family—John Brooke, first cousin to Cecil's wife—who would have every opportunity of first-hand knowledge.

The third example illustrates Gardiner's omission of vital evidence, of which only a specialist is likely to know, thereby apparently scoring a controversial point.

Gerard, writing of Thomas Percy, had pointed out that he had 'one wife living in the capital and another in the provinces. When his name was published in connection with the Plot, the magistrates of London arrested the one and those of Warwickshire the other, alike reporting to the Secretary what they had done, as may be seen in the State Paper Office.'

Gardiner replied:

The papers in the Public Record Office here referred to prove nothing of the sort. On November 5th Justice Grange writes to Salisbury that Percy had a house in Holborne 'where his wife is at this instant. She saith her husband liveth not with her, but being attendant on the Right Honourable the Earl of Northumberland, liveth and lodgeth as she supposeth with him. She hath not seen him since Midsummer. She liveth very private and teacheth children. I have caused some to watch the house, as also to guard her until your Honour's pleasure be further known.' There is, however, nothing to show that Salisbury did not within a couple of hours direct that she should be set free, as she had evidently nothing to tell; nor is there anything here inconsistent with her
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having been arrested in Warwickshire on the 12th, especially as she was apprehended in the house of John Wright, her brother. What is more likely than that, when the terrible catastrophe befell the poor woman, she should have travelled down to seek refuge in her brother’s house, where she might perchance hear some tidings of her husband? It is adding a new terror to matrimony to suggest that a man is liable to be charged with bigamy because his wife is seen in London one day and in Warwickshire a week afterwards.

What Gardiner ‘strangely omitted to mention’ (as Gerard put it in his reply) was that there was arrested at the same time and in the same house as the London Mrs. Percy a Benedictine priest, Father John Roberts, who, when he was examined before the Bishop of London, stated, among other particulars about himself, that he ‘was taken in the upper end of Holborne in the house of Thomas Percy Esquire his first wife’. And the publication in 1938 of the Hatfield MSS. for 1605 has entirely vindicated Gerard as against Gardiner, for here we find Sir William Waad, the Governor of the Tower of London, writing to Salisbury on 12th December 1605: ‘There came this morning one unto me who desired me to learn of Thomas Winter if my Lord Monteagle paid £25 unto Winter for the interest of £500 that was in His Lordship’s hands appertaining to Percy’s wife. I asked him “Which of his wives?” He said “Wright’s sister.”’

Similar examples, as well as other methods of suggestio falsi and suppressio veri, could be multiplied and are to be found in profusion throughout the whole of What the Gunpowder Plot was.


BOOK ONE

The Background

1. THE SUPPRESSION OF CATHOLICISM


3. Most of the Statutes containing the anti-Catholic legislation of the reign are easily accessible in G. W. Prothero: Select Statutes and other Constitutional Documents illustrative of the reigns of Elizabeth and James I and pp. xlvii-liii of the Introduction (The Penal Laws and the Romanists) provides a good epitome.


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and Second Diaries of the English College, Douay (1878), p. lxxiii.
10. Persons to Agazzani, 17th November 1580, quoted in Hicks, op. cit., p. xxxi.
12. Persons to Ribadeneira, 10th September 1585, quoted in Hicks, op. cit., p. lxvii.
16. John Bruce: Correspondence of King James VI of Scotland with Sir Robert Cecil, p. xi (1861).
17. Pastor: History of the Popes, xxiv, 6 (1933).
18. A True and Perfect Relation . . . (1606) T1, Coke’s Arraignment of Garnet.
19. D.N.B. Article on Garnet by Thompson Cooper.
24. The Government announced that he committed suicide rather than face a renewal of the torture: but Gerard’s arguments (pp. 187-89) against this and his explanation of the real manner of his death are, in the circumstances, conclusive.

II. THE TECHNIQUE OF PLOTS

2. See for example S.P. Dom. Eliz. ccxxix, 68, in the P.R.O., on which R. B. Merriman in Some Notes on the Treatment of English Catholics in the Reign of Elizabeth (American Historical Review, xiii, 490-1 n.) comments: ‘The work of rounding up the recusants and valuing their lands was (in 1587) taken from the local authorities and given to minions of the Council who, entirely removed from local prejudices, went about their business in the most cold-blooded spirit. . . . Their activity, moreover, was usually stimulated by a promise of an “allowance out of the forfeitures” they should secure and also by the first chance to buy from the Queen the lease of the confiscated recusants’ lands.’ The full effects of the earlier pillage are impossible to assess properly since—one finds without surprise—the Privy Council Register is missing from 26th June 1582 to 19th February 1586.
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4. Martin Hume: Treason and Plot, p. 100.
5. Ibid., pp. 113, 114.
8. Alan Gordon Smith: The Babington Plot (1936), p. 246. This work, which takes into account the conclusions reached by Father J. H. Pollen, S.J., in his Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot (1922), should be read as a convenient summary by those interested in the details of the affair. It contains all necessary references.
10. Squire's examination in the Tower before Coke: 19th October 1598 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
13. Order of Prayer and Thanksgiving ... for the safety and preservation of Her Majesty and this realm (1598) printed in Liturgies and Occasional Forms of Prayer set forth in the reign of Queen Elizabeth (Parker Society, 1847), p. 688.
15. Ibid., p. 682.
16. A True and Perfect Relation ... Q.2.

III. SPAIN AND THE ENGLISH SUCCESSION

1. Cambridge Modern History, iii, 486.
3. Introduction to State Papers relating to the Armada.
4. Ibid.
5. Cambridge Modern History, iii, 301.
6. Ibid.
7. See Hume: Treason and Plot passim for details of the general situation, as summarized in Cambridge Modern History (iii, 521): "There was at that time no intention or possibility of a Spanish invasion in force of England; and Spain was much more alarmed and with better reason than Elizabeth or her ministers."
10. Cambridge Modern History, iii, 326.
14. Correspondence of King James VI of Scotland with Sir Robert Cecil and others in England (Camden Society, 1861), p. 56.

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15. Ibid., p. 75.
16. De Beaumont to Henri IV: 28th March 1603 (Dépêches de M. de Beaumont). In answer to interrogatories put to the Earl of Northumberland 23 November 1605, he replied specifically to Percy’s mission: ‘When Percy came out of Scotland (his Lordship having written to the King where his advice was to give good hopes to the Catholics that he might the more easily without impediment come to the Crown) he said that the King’s pleasure was that his Lordship should give the Catholics hopes that they should be well dealt withal.’ (Replies of Earl of Northumberland to Interrogatories: 23rd November 1605. G.P.B., 113).
17. The details of this are given in a letter from John Throckmorton, dated 5th March 1601, and printed in Hist. MSS. Com.: Report on MSS. in Various Collections, iii, 109, 110.
18. Gerard: Narrative, p. 56.
19. Manningham’s Diary, p. 147.
21. Fr. Persons to Fr. Antony Rivers (i.e. to Fr. Garnet, his companion): 6th July 1603: printed in Miscellanea II: Catholic Record Society, p. 213.

BOOK TWO

The People

I. AMONG THE CONSPIRATORS

(i) LORD MONTAGUE

2. A Discourse of the late intended Treason, F and F1.
5. Ibid., p. 23.
6. B.M. Add. MSS., 19402, f. 146: printed in full in Appendix H of Gerard: What was the Gunpowder Plot?
7. Hatfield MSS., vi, p. 62: Say and Seie to Cecil, 18th April 1604.
8. Hatfield MSS., vi, p. 444: Jones to Cranborne, 1604.
9. Ibid., p. 440, 1604; and xvii, pp. 32 and 166, 22nd January 1605 and April 1605.
11. Hatfield MSS., 110.30. Henry Garnet’s declaration of his relations with Catesby and other conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot, 8th March 1606. This important document endorsed by Cecil: ‘This was for-
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bydden by the K(ing) to be given in evidence’, is merely catalogued in the Hatfield Calendar (xviii, p. 73) but is printed in full in the English Historical Review, iii, 510–17.

12. Ibid.
13. The spelling is modernized. Printed in Jardine: Remarks . . . I see no reason, in spite of Jardine’s arguments, to assume it was not written at the date usually assigned—1605.
14. Thomas Winter’s Confession: Hatfield MSS. 113.54. The passage relating to Montesgile’s visit to Richmond is marked for omission and does not appear in Levinus Munck’s official copy in the Public Record Office.
15. C.S.P. Dom: James 1, xvix, 94.

(ii) Robert Catesby

18. Ibid: L2 and 3. Digby’s speech at trial.
22. Parish Register of Chasleeton, quoted in Spink, op. cit. p. 23
23. Jessopp: Article on Catesby in D.N.B.
25. Mrs. Katherine Catesby was buried on 15th November 1598, according to the burial register at Ashby.
27. Baker: History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton, i, 247 (1822).
28. At the sign of the Irish Boy over the shop of William Patrick, a tailor (G.P.B. 60).
29. Hatfield MSS., xviii, p. 511.
32. Gerard’s Narrative, pp. 56, 57.

(iii) The Winters

33. T. Nash: The History and Antiquities of Worcestershire (1781), p. 592. It appears from J. Nichols: The Progresses of Queen Elizabeth, ii, 423, that she made a progress this year, though the houses are not noticed individually. The existence of this date at Huddington and of a knife with the arms of St. Leger presented to her in the same year suggests that the progress was among the Catholic families in this district.
35. Ibid., p. 59.
37. Lansdowne MSS. 983, f. 83.
38. D.N.B. Article on Thomas Winter.
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41. For Catesby's and Winter's clothes see Exchequer Special Commissions Mss.: 7 James I, 4169, and C.S.P. Dom. xvi, 59.

42. Thomas Winter to John Grant: 22nd February 1605 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).


44. Thomas Winter to John Grant: January? 1605 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).

45. Greenway's Narrative, p. 86.

46. Gerard, p. 86.

47. Thomas Winter to John Grant: 22nd February 1605 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).

48. A True and Perfect Relation... K4. Coke's arraignment of the prisoners

(iv) THOMAS PERCY, THE WRIGHTS AND ROBERT KEYES


50. Chamberlain to Carleton: 7th November 1605 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).

51. Garnet's declaration 8th March 1606 (Hatfield MSS., 110.30) and Greenway's Narrative, pp. 31–2.

52. Sir James Sempill to Salisbury: 16th November 1605 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).

53. — to Bishop of London (name erased): 7th December 1605 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).

54. Ibid.

55. King's Proclamation: 5th November 1605 (Proclamation Book 114) and Greenway's Narrative, pp. 31–2.


57. Gerard, p. 58.


59. Tanner Transcript lxxv f. 167.

60. Goodman: Court of King James, i, 105.

61. Sir William Waad to Salisbury: 12th December 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 550).


63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid., p. 87.

66. Examination of Rookes, servant to Rookwood: 5th November 1605 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).


68. William Dale to Viscount Cranborne: 26th September 1604; Lord Mordaunt to the same: 2nd January 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvi, 318 and xvii, 1).

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69. Observations relating to priests and recusants who are associated with Lord Mordaunt: 1606 (Hatfield MSS., xviii, 421).
70. Letter written from Drayton: 10th August 1604 (Hatfield MSS., xvi, 219, 220).
71. Fuller’s Church History, x, 35.

II. IN EXILE AT BRUSSELS

1. The Estate of English Fugitives... G.3.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. xlii.
6. A long and detailed account of his symptoms and death will be found in Stow’s Annals, pp. 767, 768 of the 1631 edition.
7. Martin Hume: Treason and Plot, p. 102 n.
9. The Estate of English Fugitives... E.3.
10. Ibid.
13. Richard Colling to Guilio Piccioli, Venice: 23rd June 1599 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).
14. Edmondes to Salisbury: 25th November 1605 (original in P.R.O. State Papers, Foreign, Flanders 7; copy at Hatfield, calendared Hatfield MSS., xvii, p. 509).
15. D.N.B. Article on Guy Fawkes.
16. Fawkes’s parentage, birthplace and upbringing are exhaustively discussed by H. H. Spink: op. cit. pp. 239–49.
17. Greenway’s Narrative, quoted in Jardine’s Narrative, p. 38.
18. The deeds concerning this sale are printed in Spink, pp. 249–59 from Davies’s The Fawkes Family of York.
19. As 14.
23. This unknown spy, using the initials W.N. or N.W., corresponded with an apparently fictitious ‘M. du Pré’ at the English Embassy in Brussels. The Ambassador was instructed to send letters so addressed direct to Cecil (Hatfield MSS., xviii, 82) and many of them are calendared in this volume.
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24. A True and Perfect Relation... E 3 Coke's Speech.
26. These proceedings are narrated in Gerard: What was the Gunpowder Plot? pp. 184–94 and the correspondence may be read in Hatfield MSS. xvii and xviii passim.
27. Persons to Mary, Queen of Scots: P.R.O. Mary Queen of Scots, xiii, f. 57 (Contemporary decipher in Philippes's hand.)
28. As 22.
29. The Estate of English Fugitives... G 3.

III. SERVANTS OF THE GOVERNMENT

(i) Robert Cecil
Earl of Salisbury

1. There is some uncertainty about the date of his birth, but it was probably 1563. The best biography of Cecil is A Life of Robert Cecil, First Earl of Salisbury by Algernon Cecil (1915).
2. Cecil: op. cit. passim.
3. Sir Robert Naunton: Fragmenta Regalia, 37. (Ed. 1642.) Naunton, who was Cecil's exact contemporary and who became Secretary of State six years after Cecil's death, would be, both personally and professionally, in a position to have reliable knowledge.
4. See, for example, the Note of the Jesuits that lurk in England (C.S.P. Dom: James I, vii, 50). This is printed in Morris: The Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers, First Series, p. 191, as a specimen of the accuracy of the information Cecil received from his spies.
5. The activities of the spies can be traced in the C.S.P. and in the Hatfield MSS., for the years in question. They are so numerous that it is needless to give specific references here; but it may be worth remarking as an example that Cecil was receiving copies of secret correspondence, written partly in cipher, between Hugh Owen and his brother, Canon Owen of Mantes, at least two years before the Gunpowder Plot. (Hatfield MSS., xv, pp. 293–94.)
6. Again a list of references would take too much space, but it is worth comparing Cecil's treatment of Philippines (Hatfield MSS. and C.S.P. Dom. for 1605 passim, particularly Hatfield MSS., xvii, pp. 68 and 128) with his attitude to Garnet.
7. Gardiner, i, 216. On this score, Gardiner hardly attempts to justify Cecil.
11. Ibid., 25 June 1612 (No. 75).
Notes

13. The circumstances of this case—the priest was Father Henry Walpole—are epitomized and described in Jessopp: One Generation of a Norfolk House, pp. 208–10.
14. For some account of these conditions and their repercussions see Hume: Treason and Plot, p. 218 and passim.

(ii) Sir William Waad

15. Weldon: Court and Character of King James, p. 11.
17. Gerard’s Autobiography, lxxx. See also c and ci.
20. Ibid. And for Waad’s life in general see article in D.N.B.
21. Lansdowne MSS., 23, art. 75.
22. The previous Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir George Harvey, was during the summer contemplating retiring, presumably at Michaelmas 1605 (Nicholas Saundor to Salisbury: Hatfield MSS., xvii, p. 242, and Lady Harvey to Salisbury, pp. 257–8) but he died on August 10th (ibid., 364) ‘in poor estate, the reputation of his place requiring that which the allowances of the office would not countervail’. Waad was appointed immediately and on August 14th wrote to Cecil a letter of thanks, saying: ‘Being preferred by your Lo., in whose house I had long since my bringing up, and challenge hereditary observance [sic.] I have so many strong bonds to tie me, as I hope my painful endeavours shall show the true intent of my heart and thoughts.’ (Ibid., 368, Waad to Salisbury.)

(iii) Sir Edward Coke

26. As 23, p. 266.
27. Ibid., p. 252.

(iv) Henry Howard

29. D.N.B. Article on Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton,
Notes

(v) Thomas PHELIPPE

30. Phelippes is described in a letter from Mary, Queen of Scots to Morgan, Labanoff, vi, 423. For Phelippes's and Barnes's part in the Babington affair see Fr. J. H. Pollen, S.J.: Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot.

31. One of the draft letters to Owen corrected by Phelippes is in the P.R.O., S.P.Dom: 23rd June 1589, and is printed in extenso in the Calendar (Addenda xxxi, pp. 271–5).

32. Examinations of Phelippes; his brother Stephen; his servants, Ferkin and Pettar: 25th, 26th January 1605; letters from Phelippes to Cranborne, 29th January 1605 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).

33. Phelippes to Cranborne: 5th February 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, p. 47).

34. Ibid., 3rd April 1605 (p. 128).

35. Salisbury to Edmondes, 12th February 1606 (original Stowe MSS., 168: copy at Hatfield transcribed in full in Hatfield MSS., xviii, pp. 49–52). The letter (or a copy of it) is at the P.R.O. (S.P.Dom: December 1605) with Barnes's endorsement:

"Being demanded upon my allegiance to set down whose hand the within written is, I confess it to be mine, extracted out of a copy written by Mr. Thomas Phelippes' own hand, and was to be delivered by me to Mr. Hugh Owen.

"by me Tho: Barnes."

36. As 35.

37. Salisbury to Fane: 24th December 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, p. 559).

38. Fane to Salisbury: 23rd January 1606 (Hatfield MSS., xviii, p. 30).

39. Ibid.

40. Phelippes to Cranborne: 23rd February 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, p. 64).

41. As 35.

(vi) Richard Topcliffe

42. Quoted in Jessopp: One Generation of a Norfolk House, p. 98.

43. Ibid., p. 97.

44. Ibid., pp. 97–8.

45. Ibid., p. 98.

(vii) King James I


48. Anthony Weldon: The Court and Character of King James (1650).

49. His Majesty's Speech at this last Session of Parliament (1605).


51. Weldon: op. cit.


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BOOK THREE

The Plot

I. THE BIRTH OF THE PLOT

Note.—All quotations for which no reference is given from this point onwards are taken from Thomas Winter's Confession: 23rd November 1605 (Hatfield MSS., 113.54).

2. Burghley to Cecil: 19th October 1603 (Hatfield MSS., xv, 264).
5. Ibid., x, 141.
7. Evidence of Mrs. Wynnnaid: 7th November 1605 (G.P.B. 39). The agreement itself (G.P.B. 1) is endorsed by Cecil: "The bargain between Ferris and P'cy for ye bloody Sellar"—which it is not. The 'cellar' was not hired till the following year.
8. As 3.
9. Gardiner, i, 141.
12. G.P.B. 237: printed in full in Appendix G of Gerard: What was the Gunpowder Plot? Gardiner's attempt to discredit this evidence (What the Gunpowder Plot was, 173, 174) is completely unsuccessful. He thinks Wright merely a stray informer who 'made the most of his little services in spying upon Jesuits'. He takes Wright's 'for two years space almost' as meaning 'exactly two years' and remarks that 'if he had come upon Gunpowder Plot two years before the Montegue letter, that is to say, in October 1603, some five months before it was in existence, except, perhaps, in Catesby's brain, we may be certain that he would have been far more specific in making his claim'. He says that the endorsement on the letter, 'Mr. Secretary Conway', 'shows that it was not earlier than 1623' (the year Conway succeeded to the Secretaryship); whereas, even supposing a late date invalidates the contents, the address is more likely merely to denote it was one of the Gunpowder Plot documents which was passed on to Conway in his official capacity.
13. Pound's case is reported very fully in the Rushton Papers (Hist. MSS.
   Comm: Various Collections, iii, pp. 139-47).
14. Examination of Roger James, servant to Mrs. Wynnnaid: 7th November 1605 (G.P.B. 40).

II. THE MINE

2. Goodman: Court of King James, p. 103.

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3. Harleian Miscellany iii, 122.
4. Lords' Journals.
5. Greenway's Narrative reported in Jardine's Narrative, pp. 54-5.
7. Ibid., p. 65.
9. As 7.

III. THE SUMMER OF 1605

1. Salisbury to Sir Thomas Edomdes: 11th May 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 197).
2. Tanner Transcript lxxv, f. 142.
4. Abbot's Antologia.
6. Sir Thomas Shirley to Salisbury: 11th May 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 198).
10. Ibid., p. 86.
12. Carew to Salisbury: 1605? (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 578). The words are Cecil's own and are quoted in this letter to him by Carew.
15. Examinations of Christopher Story, Thomas Bates's man, and Martha, wife of Thomas Bates: 8th November 1605 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
18. Examination of Rookwood: 2 December 1605 (G.P.B. 136).
19. Gerard: Narrative, p. 67. The foregoing conversation is an epitome of that narrated by Gerard who, presumably, had it from Garnet.
21. Garnet's declaration: 8th March 1606 (Hatfield MSS., 110.30).
24. Garnet's declaration (Hatfield MSS., 110.30).
26. Ibid., ii, 77.
27. See Appendix O of Gerard: What was the Gunpowder Plot? for a comparative table of recusants' fines.
31. Ibid., p. 73.
32. Ibid., p. 75.
33. Gérard: Narrative, p. 76.

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34. Hatfield MSS. 110.30.
35. Gardiner: *What the Gunpowder Plot was*, p. 178.
38. Ibid., p. 181.
41. Description of Greenwell alias Tesimon: (January 15th) 1606 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
42. Hatfield MSS., 110.30.
43. Eudaemon Johannes: *Apologia pro Henrico Garneto*, p. 259. The author of *The Life of a Conspirator* is surely right in the comment that the reprimand was for discussing the matter and not refusing to listen to any defence of it, since 'a priest can hardly be blamed for "hearing" anything in confession'. (Op. cit., p. 137.)
44. Gerard: *Narraine*, p. 77.
45. Hatfield MSS., 110.30.
46. Transcripts of Montacute MSS., No. 6, f. 51.
50. The Earl of Worcester to Salisbury: 5th July 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 305).
51. Bishop of Hereford to Salisbury: 22nd June 1605 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
52. Same to same: 13th June 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 258).
53. Ibid., 320.
54. Ibid., 374.
56. Garnet's Confession: 6th March 1606 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).
57. List of relics, etc. belonging to Mrs. Brookesby and Mrs. Anne (Vaux): March? 1606 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
60. Ibid., p. 294.
61. Examination of Anne Vaux: 11th March 1606 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).
63. Father Oldcorne (who had studied medicine) had been told that there was no cure except to have parts of the roof of his mouth cut away. Before following his doctors' advice, he determined to visit St. Winifred's Well 'And in his journey coming to a Catholic house where he meant to celebrate, he found upon the altar divers relics, and amongst the rest a little stone of St. Winifred's Well with drops of blood upon it (as many of the stones have that are taken up in the well and in the
current that runs from it). This stone Father Oldcorne took and went aside into a place by himself, and fell earnestly to his prayers, desiring St. Winifred's help for his health, if so it were best for the service of God. Then he put the stone into his mouth and held it there some time and behold within half an hour his mouth was perfectly well. He went forward to St. Winifred's Well and there also recovered the strength of his whole body and returned home so strong and in such sort that all wondered exceedingly." (Gerard: Narrative, pp. 284, 285.)

64. Pollen: Father Garnet and the Gunpowder Plot, pp. 18, 19. The itinerary is given in G.P.B., 121 and 153.

65. They were there, judging by the evidence of witnesses cited above on September 12th–13th. Winter was at Goughwaite Hall on September 15th.

66. Transcripts of Montacute MSS., No. 6, f. 67 and 69.

67. Examination of Thomas Day (servant to Sir William Ingleby): 6th December 1605. (Transcripts of Montacute MSS., No. 6, f. 35.)

IV. THE LAST FIVE WEEKS

2. Ibid., p. 89.
5. The Life of a Conspirator, p. 115.
9. Advertisements concerning meetings about the powder treason: (November 1605) (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 522).
10. See Tresham Papers passim.
14. Examination of Matthew Young, keeper of the Bell Inn, Daventry: 12th November 1605 (G.P.B., 77).
15. Examination of Robert Keyes: 30th November 1605 (G.P.B., 126).
16. Ibid.
17. Examination of Sir Everard Digby: 2 December 1605 (G.P.B., 135).
19. As 15.
20. Declaration of Francis Tresham: 13th November 1605 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).
21. Ibid.
22. Salisbury to Sir Thomas Lake: 24th October 1605 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).
23. Gardiner: What the Gunpowder Plot was, p. 124.
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25. See Cecil’s letter to Edmondes: 2nd December 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 535).
27. Gerard: *What was the Gunpowder Plot?* pp. 128, 129.
30. Waad to Salisbury: 23rd December 1605 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
32. This seems to be, considering all the circumstances, the explanation of his ‘discourse’ which he deplored in writing to Anne Vaux on 4th March 1606 and for which Lingard blames him by saying that it was ‘plain that Garnet had acted very imprudently at Coughton, probably had suffered expressions to escape him which, though sufficiently obscure then, might now prove his acquaintance with the plot’. (Lingard: *History of England*, vii, Appendix HHH.)
33. Garnet’s Confession (Hatfield MSS., 110.30).
34. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
38. Morris: *Life of Fr. John Gerard*, p. cccxxvi, from which the remainder of the interview is taken. As Digby specifically exculpated Fr. Gerard from all knowledge or approval of the Plot, it may be assumed that Fr. Gerard’s account is substantially true and accurately remembered.
40. Examination of William Handy, servant to Sir Everard Digby: 27th November 1605 (G.P.B., 121).
42. Thomas Percy to John Walker: (November 2nd) 1605 (G.P.B., 223).
43. T. Fotherley to Earl of Northumberland: 7th November 1605 (G.P.B., 45).
44. Thomas Winter’s Confession.
47. Greenway’s *Narrative*, p. 66.
50. Examination of John Bates, son of Thomas Bates: 12th November 1605 (G.P.B. 77) and Examination of Richard Parker, servant to Catesby: 9th November 1605 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
51. Examination of Giles Greene: 13th November 1605 (G.P.B., 95).
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52. Examination of Keyes: 30th November 1605 (G.P.B., 126).
55. Examination of William Talbois, Percy’s servant: 18th December 1605 (G.P.B., 158).
56. Examination of William Grantham: 5th November 1605 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
57. Examination of Rookwood’s servant, Robert Rookes: 5th November 1605 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
58. Ibid. and Declaration of Elizabeth More: 5th November 1605 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
60. Waad to Salisbury: 26th November 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 511).

V. FAILURE
2. Winter’s Confession. According to Sir Edward Hoby’s letter printed in Birch: Court and Times . . . , i, 37, Worcester found Northumberland asleep.
3. Ibid.
5. Examination of William Talbois, Percy’s servant: 18th December 1605 (G.P.B., 158).
6. Prisoners sent to London by Sheriff of Warwickshire: (Nov. 1605) and Sir Richard Verney to Salisbury: 2nd December (1605) (Hatfield MSS., xvii, pp. 529 and 532).
7. Examination of Thomas Winter: 12th November 1605 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).
8. Examination of Rookwood: 2nd December 1605 (G.P.B., 136).
9. Examination of Rookwood: 10th December 1605 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).
10. Ibid.
11. Examination of John Story, servant to Percy: 8th November 1605 (C.S.P. Dom.).
12. Ibid.
16. Examination of Sir Everard Digby: 19th November 1605 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
17. Ibid.
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20. Examination of William Handy, servant to Sir Everard Digby: 27th November 1605 (G.P.B., 121).
21. As 15.
22. As 8.
23. Examination of Richard Hollis, cook to Sir Everard Digby: 2nd December 1605 (G.P.B. 133) and The Life of a Conspirator, p. 200.
25. Victorian County History of Warwickshire, iii, 76.
26. The authorities for this interview are Bates’s Examination: 13th January 1606 and Garnet’s Examination: 13th February 1606 (G.P.B., 166 and P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
27. Examination of William Handy, Digby’s man: 27th November 1605 (G.P.B. 121) and The Life of a Conspirator, p. 205.
28. As 15.
29. Examination of Gertrude Winter: 7th November 1605 (G.P.B., 43).
30. Examination of Bates: 13th January 1606 (G.P.B., 166), and Declaration of Morgan: 10th January 1606 (G.P.B., 165).
32. Ibid.
33. As 19.
34. Examination of William Handy: 27th November 1605 (G.P.B. 121) and examination of Richard Hollis, servant to Digby: 2nd December 1605 (G.P.B. 148).
35. Examination of Thomas Mauder, servant to Thomas Winter: 25th November 1605 (G.P.B., 119), and Examination of William Ellis, servant to Sir Everard Digby: 21st November 1605 (G.P.B., 108).
36. Examination of Digby: 2nd December 1605 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
37. The Life of a Conspirator, p. 216.
38. Sir Richard Walsh to the Council: 9th November 1605 (G.P.B., 55).
39. Gerard: What was the Gunpowder Plot? p. 155, quoting Greenway’s Narrative, p. 70 b. It will be remembered that Testimond (Greenway) was actually in the district at the time. There is other evidence that the Plot was known and that the Sheriff was not under the impression that he was merely quelling a riot. The Government’s pretence that news of the Plot had not managed to reach Worcestershire three and a half days after Fawkes’s capture—as stated in the King’s Book—was merely an account to allay suspicions about Percy’s death, and in fact confirms Goodman’s report that Cecil was credited with saying of Percy and Catesby ‘Let me never see them alive’. (Court of King James, i, 106.)
40. Examination of Talbot: 4th December 1605 (G.P.B., 143) and Examination of Thomas Winter: 5th December 1605 (G.P.B., 146).
43. Trial of the conspirators (1606), L. i.
45. Sir Richard Walsh to the Council: 9th November 1605 (G.P.B., 55).
47. Ibid., p. 110.
48. Winter’s Confession.

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49. As 45.
50. Thomas Lawley to Salisbury: 14th November 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 486).
51. Same to same: 25th November 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 510).

BOOK FOUR

Trial and Execution

I. PRELUDE TO THE TRIAL

2. His Majesties Speech in this last Session of Parliament ... together with a discourse of the manner of the discovery of this late intended treason (1605).
4. George Blackwell to the English Catholics: 28th November 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 518).
5. Waad to Salisbury: 7th November 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 479).
6. Ibid.
7. Proclamation of 7th November 1605 (C.S.P. Dom: James i, xvi, 20). Ashfield is obviously a mistake for Bates; Grant’s name is given as Edward instead of John, and Keyes, Digby and Tresham (who was in London) are omitted. The proclamation refers to the Warwickshire rising and to the stealing of the horses from Warwick on the previous day, November 6th.
9. See Gerard: What was the Gunpowder Plot? pp. 169 ff. and 268 ff. for a discussion and comparison of the drafts.
10. Walsh to the Council: 17th November 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 494).
12. Gerard: Narrative, p. 111. For list of prisoners see B.M. ADD. MS. 5847, f. 322 (printed in Spink: Appendix C) and Hatfield MSS., xvii, 529. According to Waad (ibid., 502), Digby on his capture, had £400 which was taken by Verney.
16. Ibid.
17. The Life of a Conspirator: p. 251. The quotation from Hepworth Dixon: Her Majesty’s Tower, ii, 193. Forsett, however, seems to have been ill with a ‘cold’ for a short time after 21st November (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 502: Waad to Salisbury).

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18. See C.S.P. Dom. James I, xxxiv, 1st June 1608, where Waad requests the reversion of warders’ places for certain servants of his who were employed to keep that wicked rable of traytors’ committed for the Gunpowder Treason.

19. Waad to Salisbury: 26th November 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 512).

20. Salisbury to Faunt: 4th December 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 541).

21. Ibid.


25. Declaration by Francis Tresham to the Lords Commissioners: 24th March 1606 (G.P.B., 210).

26. The intention of the scholastic doctrine of equivocation is to safeguard the truth more closely. ‘All rational men are agreed that there are circumstances in which words must be used that are prima facie contrary to truth—in war, in diplomacy, in the custody of certain professional secrets. In such instances the non-Catholic rule seems to be: Tell a lie and have done with it. The basis of such a principle is Utilitarian Morality, which estimates Right and Wrong merely by the consequences of an action. The peripatetic philosopher, on the other hand, who maintains the intrinsic moral character of certain actions, and who holds mordicus to the love of truth for its own sake, is not content to rest in a lie, however excusable, but endeavours, for the honour of humanity, to demonstrate that such apparent deviations from the truth are not such in reality. For he perceives in them two meanings—whence the name Equivocation—one of which may be true, while the other is false. The speaker utters the words in their true meaning, and that the hearer should construe them in the other sense is the latter’s own affair.’ (Fr. George Canning, S.J., in Supplementum VI of Spink: The Gunpowder Plot.) The area in which even equivocation is allowed is very rigidly limited, and the point of the treatise was to enforce this limitation—which makes Garnet’s change of title intelligible. The MSS. is now in the Bodleian.

27. Examination of George Vavasour: 10th December 1605 (G.P.B., 151).

28. Court of King James, i, 107.

29. Waad to Salisbury: 15th December 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 553). The two letters seem to me, from internal evidence, to be printed in the wrong order; the second seems to be written in the morning, the first in the afternoon or evening. Tresham’s ‘long letter’ to Cecil cannot be the later one to which reference has been made.

30. Waad to Salisbury: 23rd December 1605 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).

31. Criminal Trials, ii, 104.

32. Philippes to Owen: December 1605 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).

33. The poems, together with some of Digby’s letters, were discovered in 1675 by the executor of Sir Kenelm Digby—the ‘babe’ of one of the poems. They were printed by Barlow in his Gunpowder Treason in 1679.

34. Barlow: p. 205.


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38. Digby to Salisbury: December? 1605 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
40. Sir Everard Digby’s Letters: No. 4.
41. Digby to Salisbury: December? 1605 (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
42. Arrest of Robert Winter and Stephen Littleton: 9th January 1606 (Hatfield MSS. xviii, 12). The whole story is found in Harl. MSS., 360, pp. 103–8.
43. Ibid. This is obviously the enclosure which is spoken of in Walsh’s letter, wrongly calendared in xvii, 527, with November 1605 as a suggested date.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Sir Henry Bromley to Salisbury: 15th January 1606 (Hatfield MSS., xviii, 19).
47. Gerard: Narrative, p. 151.
48. Bromley to Salisbury: 23rd January 1606 (Harl. MSS., 360, f. 92;
   printed in Jardine, p. 185).
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
53. Salisbury to Edmondes: 1st January 1606 (Hatfield MSS., xviii, 2).
54. Same to same: 18th June 1606 (ibid., 170).
55. The Act of Parliament for the Observance of 5th November as a Day of
56. Lake to Salisbury: 27th November 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 516).

II. THE TRIALS

2. Commons’ Journals: 28th January 1606, and Jardine: Criminal Trials,
   ii, 115.
4. Gardiner: History, i, 124–5. Gardiner is, in fact, writing about the trial
   of Raleigh three years earlier, but the description applies with even
   greater force to that of the Gunpowder Plotters.
5. This and all following quotations concerning the trial are to be found in
   A True and Perfect Relation . . . (1606).

III. THE EXECUTIONS

1. Printed in Barlow (ed. 1850), p. 211.
2. Sir Arthur Gorges to Salisbury: 29th January 1606 (Hatfield MSS.,
   xviii, 36).
5. Ibid., p. 217.
6. Ibid.
7. Somers' Tracts, ii, 114.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 220.
12. Ibid.
13. As 7.
14. Ibid.

IV. THE FATE OF FATHER GARNET

1. Garnet to Anne Vaux: 4th March 1606 (dated Shrove Tuesday (March 2nd), but probably finished March 4th) (P.R.O., S.P.Dom.).
3. As 1.
5. As 1.
6. Sir Henry Bromley to Salisbury: 5th February 1606 (P.R.O., S.P. Dom.).
7. As 1.
8. As 6.
13. As 1.
14. Garnet to Thomas Sayer (alias Rookwood): 26th February 1606 (Hatfield MSS., xviii, 60).
15. Relation of Henry Garnet concerning the Gunpowder Plot: 13th April (1606) (Hatfield MSS., xviii, 111).
17. As 15, p. 107.
18. As 15, p. 108.
19. Waad to Salisbury: 4th April 1606 (Hatfield MSS., xviii, 97).
22. The Arraignment of Henry Garnet (A True and Perfect Relation ... Eee 4 1606).
23. Salisbury to Sir Thomas Edmondes: 26th April 1606 (Hatfield MSS., xviii., 124).
24. Butler's Memoirs of English Catholici, ii, 206. It is hardly possible that Gerard can be right in saying (Narrative, p. 181) that on each occasion he was five hours on the rack.
25. As 15.
26. Waad to Salisbury: 17th April 1606 (Hatfield MSS., xviii, 113).
27. Interrogatories addressed to (Henry Garnet): April 1606 (Hatfield MSS., xviii, 125, 126).
28. As 15, pp. 110, 111.
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29. Gerard: Narrative, p. 290. He had the description from an eye-witness who ‘was glad to give twelevepence only to stand upon a wall’.


Epilogue


Appendix I—The Authenticity of Thomas Winter’s Confession

2. 21st November 1605. Hatfield MSS., xvii, p. 592.
5. 26th November 1605. Hatfield MSS., xvii, p. 511.

Appendix II—Gunpowder

1. Gerard: What was the Gunpowder Plot? p. 137
2. Sir Thomas Lake to Salisbury: 27th November 1605 (Hatfield MSS., xvii, 516).
4. Lord Carew to Salisbury: 31st August 1606 (Hatfield MSS., xviii, 268).
5. R. Bagwell: Ireland under the Stuarts (1909), i, 23.
8. Pepys’ Diary: 29th January 1667.
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Stowe MSS.
Stonyhurst MSS. (for Greenway’s Narrative).
Yelverton MSS.

COLLECTIONS OF STATE PAPERS, ETC.:
Calendar of State Papers (Domestic). This includes the collection of MSS. called Gunpowder Plot Book.
Calendar of State Papers (Foreign—Flanders).
Calendar of State Papers (Venetian, etc.).
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