

the invasion of England, though he delayed, for various reasons, to execute his purpose until eighteen years afterwards. Yet during the whole of that period the emissaries of the Pope and of Philip were, both in England and on the continent, sleeplessly vigilant in preparing the way for this final catastrophe. Thrice had plots been devised, and the instruments selected and sent into England under the sanction and promised rewards of the Pope, and countenance of Philip, to assassinate Queen Elizabeth.* Thrice were their wicked devices defeated by timely discoveries, and the daring instruments of them, together with their accomplices, among whom were always one or more priests, made to suffer the penalty of the gallows for their murderous enterprise. Among these the most conspicuous were Campion, Parsons, Creighton, Ballard (Jesuits), Parry, Savage, Tichborne, Don, and Babington. To one of these conspiracies, in 1586, to murder Queen Elizabeth, Mary Queen of Scots became a party, with Ballard, Babington, and Savage. Ballard and Babington had found means of corresponding with Mary, and Secretary Walsingham found means of intercepting the correspondence, taking copies of the letters, and then forwarding them as directed, until the conspiracy was matured, when the guilty parties were arrested, and the whole plot, with all its ramifications and accomplices, exposed by the production of the intercepted correspondence, the proofs of its authenticity, and the confession of several of the parties implicated, who, to the number of fourteen, were convicted and executed, September, 1586. In this criminal correspondence, and by the confession of the principal conspirators, ample proof was furnished that Mary Queen of Scots had "highly approved of the design; that the gentlemen might expect all the rewards which it should ever be in her power to confer; and that the death of Elizabeth was a necessary circumstance, before any attempts, either for her own deliverance or an insurrection"† The trial and conviction of Mary followed in October, and she was executed the following February, 1587,—a rare example of the combination of personal beauty with moral

* Southey's Book of the Church, Chap. XV.

† State Trials, Vol. I., p. 135. Camden, p. 515.