

at the tender mercies of the Pope of Rome and King of Spain. On the 14th of January, 1559, the day before Elizabeth was crowned at Westminster Abbey, she received Philip's proposal of marriage. As she owed her life to Philip, and was threatened by France and Scotland combined, with Philip as the only ally of England—he being the most powerful monarch of the day—it was thought that Elizabeth would not for a moment hesitate to accept so splendid an offer. But when De Feria opened the subject to her, she was prepared with her answer. "She was conscious of the honour which had been done her; she was aware of the nature of the King of Spain's alliance; but His Majesty's friendship was as sufficient for her protection as his love. She had no desire to marry, and she did not believe in the power of the Pope to allow her to marry her sister's husband." De Feria threatened her with the Queen of Scots. She declined to consider the Queen of Scots' chances to be as large as he described them. True to her nature, however, Elizabeth would not give a positive answer. If she was determined, she affected to be irresolute, and the Count could only conjecture that her final answer would be unfavourable.*

In the mean time Parliament met on the 25th of January; the Bills of Supremacy and of Uniformity were introduced, and every effort was made to defeat them by De Feria and the Romish bishops, who still held their sees, and their seats in the House of Lords. "Philip wrote to De Feria, bidding him to implore Elizabeth to consider what she was doing; if entreaties failed, he left it to the ambassador's discretion to menace her with the chance of losing him." De Feria and Alva, the Spanish commander and butcher of the Protestants in Flanders, consulted on the subject, and agreed, that "if Elizabeth would become Philip's wife the Catholics would resume their ground, with ease; if not, neither menace nor remonstrance would be of any avail." De Feria wrote to Philip on the 20th February, "I have ceased to speak to her about religion, although I see her rushing upon perdition. If the marriage can be brought about, the rest will provide for itself; if she refuse, nothing that I can say will move

* Froude, Vol. VII., chap. i., pp. 37, 38.