

will not go right, as I perceive her inclined to be governed by men who are held to be heretics; and they tell me that the ladies most about her are all so. Besides this, she shows herself highly indignant at the things done against her in the lifetime of the Queen. She is much attached to the people, and is very confident they are all on her side—which is indeed true—indeed, she gave me to understand that the people had placed her where she now is. On this point she will acknowledge no obligation, either to your Majesty or to her nobles, although she says they have one and all of them sent her their promise to remain faithful. Indeed, there is not a traitor or heretic in all the country who has not started, as if from the grave, to seek her with expressions of the greatest pleasure.” De Feria writes again, in less than a week afterwards, “that his worst fears were confirmed,” “that he was himself a cipher,” “that Philip’s voice had no more weight with the Council than if he had never married into the realm,”* and even recommends armed interference to maintain the Romish religion and arrest the Reformation. He wrote again, “that England was lost and Elizabeth was lost unless she was checked in the mad career on which she was entering,” “that nothing could save her, except her immediate marriage to some prince or nobleman in the Spanish interest.” “The more I reflect on this business,” he said, “the more clearly I see that all will turn on the husband which this woman will choose.”

In the meantime the Duke De Feria was instructed by Philip to ascertain the feelings of Elizabeth towards him, and to offer his hand in marriage to her. The life of Elizabeth would doubtless have been sacrificed to the jealousy of her sister Mary, and the intrigues of her Papal counsellors, had it not been for the interposition of Philip. But De Feria had imprudently allowed the letter of his royal master, on the subject of the proposed marriage with Elizabeth, to be seen by some of the ladies of the palace, whom he thought to interest in his cause. The contents of the letter thus became known to the Queen, and she read there that the sole object of the proposed marriage was to bring her into the Romish Church, and place the liberties and destinies of her people

* De Feria to Philip, November, 1558—quoted by Vaughan, Vol. II., p. 480; and by Froude, Vol. VII., pp. 13, 14.