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ENGLISH TRADERS AND THE SPANISH CANARY INQUISITION IN THE CANARIES DURING THE REIGN OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.

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I.¹

THERE is perhaps no historical subject less easy to treat dispassionately than the Inquisition. The tissue of exaggerations that has grown up around it is such that the sole hope of arriving at the truth is to turn to authentic sources, and to draw our own conclusions from them. Perhaps it was with this idea that the late Marquess of Bute, who had acquired a very valuable collection of the archives of the Canary Inquisition, had intended publishing *in extenso* the cases relating to English traders and others. The execution of this plan was unfortunately frustrated by death; but though a search through many volumes of MSS. is rendered necessary for a full study of the subject, the catalogue² prepared by Dr. de Gray Birch is probably sufficient to give an intelligent acquaintance with it.

It is a fact frequently overlooked, though pointed out by Sir J. K. Laughton some years ago, that a large number of Englishmen in Spanish prisons were probably not in the first instance detained on the score of religion. Spain during the sixteenth century was involved in war at various times with most of the Western European nations; the Canaries were in consequence the scene of numerous foreign invasions. From

¹ By Miss de Alberti.

² Published by Blackwood & Sons.

the date of the discovery of America the islands as lying on the route, and being the last port of call on the outward run, became of geographical importance. Privateers when disappointed of other prey might land to plunder a village, or merely to provision themselves. Drake, himself, made an attempt upon Las Palmas, the seat of the Holy Office, but was repulsed by the Spanish, an incident which has been immortalised by Lope de Vega in his *Dragontea*.

Whatever the reason of their detention in the first instance, whether as prisoners of war or unlicensed traders, the prison registers of the Inquisition during the latter half of the sixteenth century certainly contain a fair number of English names. Prisoners detained in the public gaol would, of course, if they gave offence to Catholic feelings, be transferred to the secret cells pending their trials.

As far as material comfort is concerned it comes as a surprise to discover that the change was usually greatly to the advantage of the prisoner. Even Dr. Lea allows that the secret prisons had the reputation of being less harsh than episcopal or royal gaols, and that the general policy respecting them was more humane and enlightened than that of other jurisdictions, whether in Spain or elsewhere. The same writer quotes instances of imprisoned men uttering heresy in order to be transferred to the secret cells, but he points out that there were ample resources for the use of special rigour when occasion called for its exercise.

The prison registers in Lord Bute's collection, recording as they do the treatment meted out to the prisoners, are among the most valuable of the seventy-six volumes. The cells were inspected every fortnight by the Inquisitors in order to satisfy the requests and hear the complaints of the prisoners. For the most part the entries concerning the English prisoners are to the effect that they are well treated and require nothing, occasionally they complain of a shortage of bread and water, or ask for some articles of clothing. One Englishman complains that the wine supplied him is occasionally too much diluted with water. Sometimes there

is a request for a change of companion or cell, and occasional complaints of the verminous state of some of the cells. When a request was considered reasonable, a marginal note is entered instructing the alcaide or governor to comply with it. In cases of sickness, also, the Inquisitors showed praiseworthy humanity ; in some instances the doctor was required to order a special diet, in more serious cases the prisoner was removed to the hospital, or to a private house for special care. Prisoners were sometimes allowed their liberty during the day to earn their living in the town, only returning to the cells at night ; at other times it was considered advisable to support them at the expense of the Holy Office if they were without means. In fact, the volumes show throughout a humane desire on the part of the Inquisitors that imprisonment in the secret cells, which were not intended to be punitive prisons, should be as lenient as possible. It must, however, be remembered that in the case of Spaniards the disgrace attaching to this form of imprisonment added very considerably to its terrors.

The chief grievance of the prisoners, and one which was peculiarly heavy in the case of traders, was the long delay in the settlement of their cases. The different stages through which a case had to pass before being received to 'proof,' and then on again to 'conclusion,' made a trial before the tribunal of the Holy Office a long and tedious business. The Inquisitors did not, as has been sometimes stated, hurry their victims to death, even though in some instances it might have been more merciful had they done so.

Supervision in the prisons does not appear to have been very strict, and, after bringing the rations, possibly the gaoler did not further trouble about the prisoners. This would appear to be a fact from evidence given by an English prisoner, Hugh Wingfield, of the ship *St. Gabriel*, 1592. This man gave an account of how, having found means of opening the doors, the witness and others would issue invitations for their fellow-prisoners to meet at meal times in each other's cells. This seems to have continued for some little

time, and on one occasion as many as fourteen prisoners, including a friar, supped together, until the noise of their carouse was heard by the alcaide and the friendly gatherings were put a stop to. There is no mention of punishment for this breach of prison rule, and when brought before the Inquisitors the chief anxiety of the authorities was to discover whether the prisoners had consulted with one another on the state of their respective cases, or had prepared a common ground of defence. The prisoner Hugh Wingfield, when questioned on this point, denied that any mention of their cases was made, but that the prisoners had merely expressed their belief and hope that they would be treated with the leniency for which the tribunal was famed in Spain.

It is practically impossible to give a decided opinion as to what extent Englishmen detained in the islands were left unmolested by the Holy Office provided they gave no offence to Catholic feelings. There are allusions to English prisoners in the public gaols described as pirates and Lutherans, so that it would seem, speaking broadly, that Protestantism alone did not suffice to ensure a transference from the royal gaol to the secret cells, but that some special offence and denunciation was necessary. A sailor before the Holy Office might easily, and sometimes did, implicate the whole crew of his ship, by a description of the Protestant services performed on board in which all had taken part; the Inquisitors by some singular process of reasoning then considered themselves justified in summoning the men to appear before them to account for their motives in taking part in such services, and also to discover whether they had assisted in attacking and seizing Catholic ships. It must be confessed that the Englishmen who came before them would have had no scruple whatever in attacking His Catholic Majesty's ships, or plundering his subjects, if occasion offered, though perhaps not primarily as Catholics. Some Protestants detained in the Islands seem to have considered it safer to profess conversion or to demand instruction in the Catholic Faith; but

it is doubtful whether this was the wisest course, as there was no lack of persons ready to denounce a convert on the appearance of backsliding, and apostasy was a far different offence from heresy. Witnesses in the case of John Huer 1586 (? Ware) stated that they were compelled to call the accused a 'Lutheran dog' before he could be induced to go to Mass; and as he had been instructed in the Catholic Faith at his own desire, this reluctance was neither discreet nor edifying. The average Spaniard of the day had a horror of heresy, a horror intensified by the Edicts of Faith, which called upon every individual under pain of excommunication to assist the Holy Office in the detection of any offence against faith, a term which was capable of a very wide interpretation. In those days of change the Inquisitors never lost sight of the fact that Englishmen appearing before them might have been at one time Catholics, or at least have had opportunities of instruction in the Catholic Faith, and the accused were subjected to a searching cross-examination on this head. They were eager to discover also the exact tenets of the new creed, and the precepts it imposed upon its adherents, an eagerness which was only equalled by the prisoners' reluctance to satisfy their legitimate curiosity. Some professed a profound ignorance of the services and prayers of the English Church, while laying stress upon the fact that the *Credo* and *Pater* were much used, in which they apparently felt on safe ground. Michael James stated that a clergyman in surplice and cassock would stand up in a high place and read something out of a book, but he could not say what. Others, who asserted that they were Catholics at heart, and only conformed outwardly to the new creed through stress of circumstances, gave a fairly accurate description of the English Church. Others spoke of a precept of yearly confession and communion, and one man stated that though he was told that his sins were forgiven, he did not believe it as the clergyman was a married man. A number of the men declared that the chief precepts of the new church were to attend prayers twice a day, and abstain

from meat on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays throughout the year, and during the whole of Lent. Michael James stated that during the latter season only bread and beer were allowed on the three days mentioned, and fish on the remaining days, including Sundays.

From many of their answers it is apparent that the Englishmen, as a general rule, were more concerned to make apparent the excellencies of the old faith than to give a true description of the new. John Huer (? Ware) when asked for a definition of Lutheranism replied that it consisted in non-attendance at Mass and in stealing. The same man, who was cook at the Dominican monastery, being questioned by a friar as to what was taught in England, answered : ' To eat, drink, and follow one's will.'

As might be anticipated, the cases terminated, with one exception, by the men professing conversion to Catholicism and demanding instruction. They would be then admitted to reconciliation, which, however, did not preclude punishment. The sentences varied according to the prisoner's guilt and his conduct during the trial. They usually included a term of years in the galleys, a certain number of lashes, confiscation of property, and appearance in an ' Auto ' wearing the insignia of reconciliation. This last punishment, to a Spaniard, at least, had lasting consequences, because of the disabilities and disgrace it entailed. According to Mr. Lea, in 1605 the Suprema warned all the tribunals that foreigners coming forward voluntarily and confessing their errors were not to be imprisoned, but were to be welcomed, their reconciliation was to be in the audience chamber, without *san benito* or confiscation, and with spiritual penances only. They could then receive sacramental absolution. In all cases a voluntary confession was considered to show true repentance and to be deserving of more lenient treatment.

Instances of torture are rare, as it was only used to extract a confession, or when the prisoner appeared to be lying. A frank confession of Protestantism would not meet with wanton torture, though it might on occasion meet with death.

Pending the execution of their sentence prisoners were frequently allowed their liberty within the city, after they had been duly sworn not to leave it, which, of course, did not prevent them from seizing the first opportunity of stealing a boat and escaping. Escapes from the islands were frequent, and in cases of recapture the trials were recommenced with a view to ascertaining whether the prisoner's motive in escaping had been a desire to leave the Church, or merely to evade punishment. John Ware and Edward Stride, when recaptured, brazenly asserted that they had merely wished to see their friends, and had no desire either to abandon the Church or escape punishment, and that they had, in fact, worn their *san benitos* until the heavy seas and rains washed them off. The Inquisitors seem, strangely enough, to have believed it. The prisoners, however, escaped again with success. If not recaptured, fugitives were burnt in effigy to mitigate the scandal caused by their apostasy, which was then taken for granted.

In the 'Auto' of July 1587, of which the Spanish historian, Millares, gives an account, thirteen English sailors were reconciled, and one burnt in person. The latter was George Gaspar, a tailor, twenty-four years of age. According to Millares, Gaspar, while confined in the public gaol, probably as an unlicensed trader, ostentatiously turned his back on a crucifix and image, and fixed his eyes on the moon in prayer. When asked his reasons for doing so he replied that images and crucifixes were made by the hands of sinners, and it was, therefore, futile to pray before them; that the Saints had been sinners while on earth, and sometimes greater sinners than their supplicants, and, therefore, they were useless as intercessors before God. With untimely zeal he further attacked the doctrine of the Real Presence and other Catholic dogmas. He refused to abjure when brought before the Inquisitors, and was ultimately delivered to the civil authorities to be burnt. He stabbed himself in prison the night before the 'Auto,' but was still living when sentence on him was executed.

The next public 'Auto' took place in May 1591, when twenty-three fugitives were burnt in effigy, having been successful in their escape; four of these were English sailors, Richard Newman, Edward Stevens, John Ware and Edward Stride. About this time Don Claudio de la Cueva was sent out as Visitador by the Suprema. He seems to have been over zealous in proceeding against foreign ships and sailors, and in October 1593 he received a sharp rebuke from headquarters. Orders were given to him not to take action against masters of ships or sailors, or other foreigners, nor to sequester their ships and property unless he received information that they had offended against the Catholic faith within Spanish dominions, or while their ships were at anchor in the ports of the islands. He was further ordered to expedite as much as possible the cases then pending. The Suprema pointed out that before his appointment commerce with foreigners had been tolerated, that the Governor, whose province it was, was competent to judge as to which nations were to be admitted to deal with the islands, that the matter was of the deepest importance, and that before making so many arrests he should have consulted the Suprema at Seville.

The question of dealing with English traders and residents was always a delicate one, even after the Treaty of London in 1604 had safeguarded English subjects against molestation on the score of religion, provided they gave no offence to Catholic feeling. From the number of English residents in the islands, and the flourishing commerce in malvesies, it is evident that there was an earnest desire on the part of the Inquisitors to avoid a breach with England, while at the same time they were still more in earnest in their determination to prevent Protestantism from obtaining a footing in the islands, and they showed no hesitation in arresting any Englishman suspected of violating the conditions of the Treaty. Thus as late as the year 1700 there is an interesting case against Edmund Smith, for ten years English Consul at Orotava, who was charged with ill-treating English converts to Catholicism, and of deterring others from the same course

by persuasion and threats, sending some out of the islands in his anxiety to prevent their conversion. The Consul pleaded in defence that his known kindness to Catholics, especially ecclesiastics, had brought on him the suspicion of his countrymen, some of whom had represented to the King the advisability of removing him from office on account of his tendencies to Catholicism. The evidence against him was, however, considered conclusive, and he was sentenced to banishment from the islands for the space of eight years, and to the payment of a fine of 200 ducats.

II.¹

The account given above of the vicissitudes of English traders in the Canary Islands and of their lenient treatment by the Holy Office suggests the question whether that leniency might not in part be due to the fact that these traders were old dwellers in the Canaries, and had connections among persons of Spanish descent inhabiting the Islands; it can at any rate be shown that the intercourse between England and the Canaries had been sufficiently close to make this possible.

It is certain that up to the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, the English trade with the Canaries formed part of the diplomatic relations between England and Spain. At first, that trade seems to have been conducted through Spain itself. As early as 1526 certain merchants of Bristol carried on a trade with the Canaries through St. Lucar. They sent thither coarse and fine, broad and narrow coloured cloths, and obtained in exchange dyes, drugs, sugar and skins of kids which they transported to the West Indies;² apparently, at this time, without objection on the part of the Spanish authorities. Hence it seems probable that the grant of Charles V. (1538) to the English merchants trading to Andalusia and St. Lucar may reasonably have comprised

¹ By Miss Wallis Chapman.

² Hakluyt's *Voyages*, Hakluyt Soc. ed. vol. vi. pp. 124.

trade to the Canaries, since it conferred a right to trade to all parts of the Spanish dominions.¹ There is no ground for supposing that the Canaries were included in the tacit exception of the Indies. On the contrary, the Spanish King showed himself willing to redress any wrongs suffered in the islands by the Englishmen. For instance, in 1552, Thomas Wyndham was taken for a pirate by the inhabitants of Lancerote and attacked by them. He retaliated in kind; but in spite of this the King of Spain made good his losses.²

There were English factors and agents in Grand Canary in 1553;³ and in 1562 Hawkins was said to be already well acquainted with the islands, and—which is more remarkable—to have made friends there ‘by his good and upright dealing.’⁴

The commodities in which these early traders dealt were, on the English side, much what they continued throughout the sixteenth century; coarse cloth of various kinds, and coarse thread seem to have been the staple of these exports. In 1558 the goods seized at the houses of two English factors included several pieces of linen and fustian, coloured cloth and satin.⁵ The Canaries, on the other hand, do not seem to have fully developed the trade in wine which subsequently made them famous. Palma was apparently the chief wine-producing island, as it continued to be till the end of the sixteenth century. Hawkins reports the wine as better than any in Spain, and declared the grapes to be as big as damsons.⁶

Besides wine, the account of Thomas Nicholas, who was a factor in the Canaries in 1560, mentions among the islands’ produce drugs (such as dragon’s blood), wheat, and orchel;⁷

¹ Harl. MSS. 36 pp. 25 *sqq.*

² Hakluyt’s *Voyages*, vi. 139, 40.

³ *Ib.* ix. 339–46.

⁴ Hakluyt Soc. : Hawkins’ *Voyages*, ed. Markham, pp. 5–6.

⁵ Eliz. St. P. For., 1561, vol. 29, No. 328.

⁶ Hakluyt Soc. Hawkins’ *Voyages*, ed. Markham, p. 12, and pp. 123–5.

⁷ *A Pleasant Description of the Fortunate Ilands, called the Ilands of the Canaries.* See also Hakluyt’s *Voyages*.

but the chief product of the Canaries at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign seems to have been sugar, which was chiefly grown in Teneriffe and Palma; there were twelve ingenios for sugar in the latter island,¹ and the use of sugar was so universal that an English factor, Edward Kingsmill, writing in 1561, declared that almost all payments in the islands were made in sugar; and that he himself, although he brought about 2,000 ducats to the Canaries, had never subsequently received as much as 500 ducats cash. As he was defending himself against a charge of exporting money, there may be some exaggeration in these statements; but the sum is striking in contrast with that of 30,000 ducats which he declared to be the value of one only of his transactions.²

This last amount is the largest mentioned in connection with English trade at this period. Kingsmill's contemporary, Thomas Nicholas, stated that his masters, Edward Castelyn and Anthony Hickman, well-known Londoners, lost 14,000 ducats by his imprisonment;³ and at a later date Charles Chester, another victim of the Inquisition, declared that he had lost 4,500 ducats from this cause.⁴

Whatever the importance of the trade, however, it seems to have been endangered immediately on Elizabeth's succession. Apparently the separation of the interests of England and Spain was speedily felt; for in 1559 the two factors mentioned above, Thomas Nicholas and Edward Kingsmill, were both arrested.

The accusation against Kingsmill was that of violating commercial regulations. Besides the charge of exporting money, he was denounced for keeping his books in English instead of in Spanish, as had been directed by a decree in 1554-5. He declared the English books to be simply a

¹ A. Anderson, *Historical Deduction*, ii. 48.

² Eliz. St. P. For. Cal. pp. 256-8, No. 412.

³ *Ib.* pp. 512, No. 407, and 1564, p. 137, No. 411.

⁴ *Cecil Papers*, iv. p. 222.

translation for his master's benefit, but he was fined 1,000 ducats.¹

So far the affair might have happened in any place where, as Kingsmill explained, the judge received two-thirds of the fine; nor does the action of the Colonial authorities in this case appear to have had the full support of the central Spanish Government, which remitted the sentence of banishment at first passed on the defendant, while in 1561 Philip II. wrote to the Canaries in favour of his countrymen.²

The religious difficulty, however, was of a more permanent character; it must have seriously hampered English trade in all Latin countries. According to Captain Carlisle, the servants and children of persons engaged in trades to Spain, Portugal, and Italy, 'are forced to denie their owne profession and made to acquaint themselves with that which the Parents and Masters doe utterly deny and refuse.'³

Possibly the accession of Elizabeth may have stimulated the English factors to give over their conformity. At any rate, Kingsmill himself was accused of desiring to set up a new religion, 'and every man to live as he would himself,'⁴ and his fellow factor, Nicholas, was accused of disrespect for religion, or, by his own account, 'of living according to English law.' He was imprisoned for about three years by the Holy Office, 'seeing neither sun nor moon,' and was sent to Seville before he was released.⁵

Again, in 1562 an English pinnace at the Canaries was seized and searched on the same pretext of religious offences.⁶ It is noteworthy that in these cases Philip declined to interfere even so far as to order the restoration of goods

¹ Eliz. Cal. St. P. For. 1561, pp. 256-8, No. 412, and St. P. For. MSS. Vol. 40, No. 340.

² Eliz. St. P. For. Cal. 1561, p. 213, No. 354.

³ Hakluyt's *Voyages*, Hakluyt Soc. ed. vol. viii. p. 137.

⁴ Eliz. For. St. P. Cal. pp. 256-8, No. 412.

⁵ He seems to have returned to England and apparently wrote the account of the Canary Islands which appears in Hakluyt's *Voyages*. Eliz. For. St. P. MSS. vol. 40, No. 340, and Eliz. St. P. For. Cal. 1564, p. 137, No. 411.

⁶ Eliz. St. P. For. Cal. p. 627, No. 1461.

belonging to other persons which had been in the hands of the prisoners at the time of their arrest, and had therefore been confiscated by the Inquisition.¹

As time went on, and the hostility of Spain and England increased, the English showed a strong disposition to take matters into their own hands. Thus, when in 1575 Charles Chester was imprisoned in the Canaries on the charge of heresy, his father, a merchant of Bristol, begged leave of Elizabeth to go to the Canaries and seize Spaniards to hold as hostages till his son was freed. He was informed in true Elizabethan fashion that he might do so, if he kept the prisoners in his own ship till 'a resolution was taken.'²

Eventually Charles Chester, who had professed himself a Catholic, escaped and came to England, thereby making it impossible that he should again trade to the Canaries.³

If religion formed one obstacle to that trade, colonial rivalry formed another. In this matter the English were the aggressors, aided and abetted apparently by the inhabitants of the Canaries themselves. Hawkins made the Canaries his victualling place during his slaving voyages to Africa and thence to the West Indies. Indeed, he was said to have obtained his first information as to the demand for negroes in the West Indies from his friends in the islands.⁴ Some of these friends, like Pedro Ponte of Teneriffe and his son Nicholas, were said to have an interest in his ventures and to have supplied him with a pilot on his first voyage to San Domingo.⁵ Against this unlawful connection the Spanish Ambassador in England remonstrated in vain; four of the Queen's ships joined in the raid of 1567, and the Queen assured the Ambassador that they would on no account go to the Indies—which he flatly disbelieved. In fact, English trade between the Canaries and the West Indies was becom-

¹ 1561 Eliz. St. P., For. Cal., p. 213, No. 354.

² *Sim. Trans.* 1575, p. 495.

³ *Cecil Papers* (Historical Com. ed.), vol. iv. p. 222.

⁴ Hakluyt Soc. *Hawkins' Voyages*, Markham ed., pp. 5-6.

⁵ *Sim. Trans.* 1567, vol. i. pp. 660-1.

ing habitual. In 1568 the Spanish Ambassador writes that there were many rich English ships at the Canaries.¹ In the same year John Chilton, an English merchant in Spain, took in lading at the Canaries and sailed for the West Indies.² In 1578 Richard Staper, an English merchant in Brazil, wrote to his London correspondent to load a ship at London with Devons and Hampshire 'Karsies,' and send her to the Canaries. There the cloths were to be sold and 15 tons of good wine and six dozen cordovan skins and a quantity of oil were to be taken on board.³ Possibly the nature of this trade, with few direct returns to England, may account for the fact that the Spanish Company in no way interfered with it.

If however, the enterprize of English residents in the Canaries stimulated international trade, the piratical customs of the Elizabethan adventurers must have injured it. In 1571, a period at which England and Spain were on the point of war, Winter actually attacked Teneriffe;⁴ and as time went on, the English fell into the habit of making the Canaries a place of rendezvous when they wished to intercept the Spanish plate fleets. In 1574 special precautions were taken at the Canaries in consequence of the report that Grenville and Champernowne were lying in wait for the treasure ships.⁵ Eventually the Spaniards sent men-of-war to escort their fleet from the Canaries, thereby presumably increasing the risks of the English trade with the West Indies.

Despite these difficulties, various Englishmen remained in the Canaries, and some were actually in the Spanish service. In 1577 Elizabeth wrote to the Queen of Spain on behalf of one Richard Grafton, who had lived twenty years in the island, and desired some employment there.⁶ Even after the war with Spain actually broke out the English

¹ *Sim. Trans.* 1568, ii. p. 94.

² Hakluyt's *Voyages*, Hakluyt Soc. ed. vol. ix. p. 367.

³ *Ibid.* vol. xi. pp. 27-8.

⁴ *Sim. Trans.* 1571, p. 339.

⁵ *Ibid.* 1574, p. 481.

⁶ *Eliz. For. St. P. Cal.* p. 51, No. 66.

factors continued to live in the islands, as is clearly shown by the Records of the Inquisition. In 1598 an Englishman was arrested, in consequence of Cumberland's seizure of Lancerote, on the charge of intending to betray Teneriffe to the English.¹ And in 1595, after Raleigh's attack on Teneriffe, there is a curious mention of the arrest of a youth who was accused of 'being of Plymouth'—which he apparently was—'but the Governor made all well again.'²

Still, despite the calm disregard which both Englishmen and Canary Islanders showed for the relations of their respective states, the trade must have diminished. There were, moreover, other reasons for its decadence. About this time the Canary Isles seem to have undergone a series of misfortunes. In 1585 there was a destructive earthquake at Palma. In the following year the Turks took Lancerote. In 1591 their poverty was so great that Philip II. permitted the islanders to send their produce in his ships to the West Indies.³ Moreover, what had been the staple trade of the islands was certainly decaying. The competition of Barbary, Brazil, and the West Indies was injuring the sugar trade of the Canaries, at least so far as England was concerned. We find the islands sometimes omitted from the lists of places whence sugar was obtained,⁴ and even had the trade continued, it would hardly have been profitable. The English now obtained their sugar by cheaper methods than fair trading; the quantity brought into England from Spanish prizes was so great that in 1591 the sugar was said absolutely to be cheaper in London than at Lisbon or the West Indies.⁵

As the sugar trade sank, however, the wine trade probably rose. Palma was already famous for wines, and in Hiero a certain Englishman, John Hill, of Taunton, had planted a vineyard among the rocks.⁶ Irrigation was making the

¹ *Cecil Papers*, vol. ix. p. 116.

² Eliz. St. P., Dom. Cal. 1595, p. 41, No. 18.

³ St. P. For. MSS. Spain, bundle 4.

⁴ Eliz. Dom. St. P. Cal. 1593, p. 361, No. 52.

⁵ Venetian S.P. Cal. 1591, No. 1020. ⁶ *A Pleasant Description, &c.*

cultivation of the vine more profitable, and in 1587 it was said that a large part of the sugar plantations in the island were being transformed into vineyards.¹ In 1596, 28,000 butts of sack were said to be produced yearly at Teneriffe.² There is no precise evidence of the amount of Canary wine consumed in England, but it was evidently a favourite drink. Shakespeare's numerous allusions to it would alone be sufficient proof on this point. In 1580 the quantity brought into Ireland was pleaded as one reason for a reconsideration of the duty on wine.³ In 1600 an order was given for eighty-four pipes of Canary wine, at £10 10s. the pipe, to be provided for Lancaster's East Indian voyage.⁴

How the wine got into England is not clear. Presumably some part of it arrived in the ordinary way of trade, to judge from a list of imports and exports in 1595, in which, with no allusion to difficulties arising from the war, the Canaries are described as supplying Canary wine, Madeira, and sugar, and receiving in return not only coarse cloth (with the exception of Manchester cottons), but lead, dried Newfoundland fish, pilchards, and red herrings.⁵ Possibly the eighteen or twenty hulks from the Canaries which arrived at Plymouth in 1599 may have been traders.⁶ As in the case of the sugar, a considerable amount of Canary wine was prize of war. In 1597 Cumberland sent home a ship containing among other lading 142 pipes of Canary wine.⁷ But a large quantity of goods both from the Canaries and from Spain probably came through St. Malo and Morlaix, and through Bordeaux and Rochelle, with which places the western ports of England—Lyme, Bristol, Plymouth—kept up an energetic trade all through the Spanish war. Their exports were usually cloth, and fish, and Cornish tin; and they received among other

¹ Venetian St. P. Cal. 1587, p. 223.

² Purchas *Pilgrimes* (1906 ed.), vol. xvi. pp. 45-9.

³ *Carew Papers*, 1580, p. 285.

⁴ Col. St. P. Cal. (East Indies), 1600, p. 114.

⁵ Eliz. Dom. St. P. MSS. 1595, vol. 255, No. 56.

⁶ *Ibid.* vol. 272, No. 80.

⁷ *Ibid.* vol. 263, No. 85.

goods, Seville oil, Madeira and Canary wines.¹ In one way and another, therefore, some degree of trade was probably maintained. In 1601, it is true, its decay was considered as one reason for urging peace with Spain.² Nevertheless, the most critical period for English traders and denizens in the Canaries probably ended in 1597, when, possibly as a consequence of the Dutch attack on the island, all Flemish and English prisoners in the 'Holy House' were released.³

There is no direct mention of the Canaries in the Treaty of 1604; but it may fairly be inferred that they were included in the articles pledging each country to admit the other to trade and commerce, as before the war. English traffic to the Canaries had long been a recognised fact, not a question to be fought out in distant waters, as was the case with the East and West Indian trade.

¹ K.R. Original Customs A/c 123/24, 46/46, 118/24 &c.

² S. P. For. MSS. Spain, Treaty Papers, No. 64.

³ S.P. For. MSS. Spain, bundle 6, Feb. 1, 1597.