The Neapolitan Stuarts.

AN article in the *Westminster Review* of last February, *The Eldest Son of Charles II*, drew attention again to the fact that there was one James Stuart, or de la Cloche du Bourg, who laid claim to that ambiguous distinction. The subject had already been treated by Father Boero in his *Istoria della Conversione alla Chiesa Cattolica di Carlo II*, on which this article is based, in Mr. (afterwards Sir) Thomas Duffus Hardy's report on Venetian Archives to the Master of the Rolls, and in the *Secret History of Charles II*, a communicated article in the *Home and Foreign Review* of 1862. All these studies are written from the same point of view, from which I venture to disagree, and though in telling the story of this pseudo-prince's life I cover some familiar ground it is necessary to do so to explain my reasons.

The chief documents relating to James de la Cloche du Bourg are in the Gesù in Rome, and if their authenticity can be trusted they are circumstantial enough. They tell us that when King Charles II—then prince of Wales—was in Jersey in 1646 he had, at a very early age, by a certain noble lady, *une jeune dame des plus qualifiées de nos royaumes, plustost par fragilité de nostre première jeunesse que par malice*, a son who was educated in France and other countries as a protestant under the name of James de la Cloche du Bourg. This son was, by a deed purporting to be 'given at Whitehall, 27 Sept. 1665,' and sealed and signed by Charles II, recognised by him as his natural son, with the strange proviso that the fact was not to be disclosed until after the king's death. Later, in February 1667, the king granted him 500*l.* a year in Holland, but only on condition that he resided in London and did not forsake the protestant church. Six months after this the wayward young man became a catholic at Hamburg, on 29 July, and received from Queen Christina of Sweden an unusual 'birth brief,' stating that 'his Britannic majesty' had privately acknowledged the story of his birth to her. Armed with this letter he entered at Rome the monastery of S. Andrea al Quirinale in April 1668, where the inventory of his meagre outfit still remains, with the intention of becoming a jesuit. From this period communications between England and the Jesuits relating to the novice are

frequent. A letter from the king to D'Oliva, the general of the Jesuits, expresses hopes that his public recognition will be possible in a few years, and sends for him to come to England, giving him means of being recognised by the queen mother in Paris; and in order to make his journey more secretly he applies in August for permission for the novice to come under the name of 'Henri de Rohan,' to which name I shall revert later, and for a dispensation for him to travel alone and as a cavalier. He had been in England scarcely a fortnight¹ when he was dispatched to Rome on a secret mission, and we hear no more of his name until in March 1669 a certain James Stuart, claiming to be the same, appears at Naples, no longer a jesuit but a cavalier possessed of 'many jewells of value, some quantity of pistolls, and some papers or letters directed to him with the title of highness,' and on the point of being married.

All previous writers on the subject have taken up in various degrees the—to me—strange position that the Neapolitan Pretender and James de la Cloche du Bourg were probably not one and the same person, apparently on the odd ground that having once been a jesuit novice he is not likely to have renounced his clerical career. The fact appears to me quite the contrary. It is perfectly true that Kent, the English minister at Rome, did not know of his existence, and that he wrote as a damning fact that 'hee could not speake a word of English;' but that might well be accounted for by his life abroad. Again, while at Naples King Charles II appears to have denied the truth of his claim, though we have no idea in what manner, and it is possible that he may have resented the abandonment of the cassock; but, as we have seen, according to the king's letters, if these are really genuine, such recognition was, though affectionate, always secret. There exists one of these letters expressing a particular affection for him—

non seulement à cause que vous nous este né dans nostre plus tendre jeunesse, lorsque nous n'avions guères plus de 16 ou 17 ans, que particulièrement à cause de l'excellent naturel que nous avons toujours remarqué en vous.

Then we have a letter from the king before the novice reached Paris, giving him as his eldest son hopes of precedence over the duke of Monmouth, *par toutes raisons et à cause de la qualité de une mère*, and even putting before him ultimate hopes of the throne and suggesting that 'it behoved him therefore to reflect maturely on his altered prospects before entering irrevocably into holy orders.' Perhaps he did so reflect and re-entered the world after his visit to England. If there was certainty in his claim it must have been galling to know that the king was writing in 1668 (the same year) of his other son, the duke of Monmouth, telling his sister, the duchess of Orleans, 'I believe you may easily guess that

¹ *The Secret History of Charles II*, already referred to.

I am something concerned for this bearer, James, and therefore I put him into your handes to be directed by you in all thinges ;' ² but then Monmouth had been publicly recognised in 1662.

But now we come to the life of the Neapolitan Pretender as bearing on the story. Don Jacopo Stuardo, as he is generally styled after this date, married at the chapel of S. Aspremo, in the cathedral of Naples, 19 Feb. 1669, a lady named Donna Theresa Corona. Kent, the English minister, calls her 'the hoasts daughter where hee laye' and an 'ordinary person ;' but she seems to have been of good blood, being daughter of Signor Francesco Corona, a gentleman of Sora, and the Lady Anuccia de Anicis, his wife, and she counted among her kindred Orsini and other noble families who must have possessed some influence at the viceregal court. Kent says that Don Jacopo 'was observed to live and talke so high of his great birth' that the viceroy of Naples was led 'by curiosity or suspition of his quality' to imprison him in the castle of S. Elmo, and transferred him to the castle of Gaetà. The English consul, for whom he had sent to assist him, reported that he could not 'give any account of the birth he pretends to,' and the viceroy, to keep the family secure, shut his wife also in a monastery. Kent writes later, 16 June, that on receipt of 'his majesties letters to that vice-king' Don Jacopo was immediately brought to Naples and cast into the grand prison of the Vicaria among the vilest criminals, and sentenced 'to bee whipt about the citty,' but that his wife's family had sufficient influence to petition the vice-queen, who obtained the remission of this part of the sentence 'in compassion to her and her kindred,' and to obtain the liberation of his wife.

Don Jacopo seems to have been released strangely soon from prison, and to have for a short time quitted Naples. 'He had beene absent from Naples some time, pretending to have made a journey into France to visit his mother, Dona Maria Stuart, of his majesty's royall family,' to whom the king allowed a pension of 80,000 ducats, but that she was dead 'before hee came to France.' He evidently had suffered from his imprisonment in the Vicaria, as he died at Naples in August 1669, in the catholic faith and in full belief of his own rights, and was buried in the venerable church of S. Francisco di Paolo fuori Porta Capuana, and, as Kent writes enigmatically, 'this is the end of that princely cheate or whatever he was.'

But Kent, it is evident, was careless, or else prejudiced, or badly informed about his claim. He speaks of it as if he could give no account of his birth except that he was 'born in Gersey,' yet in his will, dated 24 Aug. 1669, the claim is clear enough and tallies strangely with this story of James de la Cloche du Bourg.

² 'Madame : ' *Memoirs of Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans*, by Julia Cartwright (Mrs. Ady), p. 251.

The latter had, according to the alleged letter of Charles II, a mysterious mother of high birth, higher than Lucy Walter, the mother of Monmouth, and Don Jacopo names her as Lady Maria Stuart, a daughter of the baron of S. Mars or San Marzo, of so near kin to the royal house that the king could not acknowledge him publicly, and his son's papers further name her 'Maria Henrietta.' He left, in what Kent styled 'the same confidence and princely humour,' a prayer to the king of England to give his unborn child 'the usual principality either of Wales or Monmouth, or of such provinces which are wont to be conferred on the natural sonnes of the crowne to the value of 100^m crownes Revenue of rent,' and that he would 'restore to his heirs the 80^m crownes Rent that belonged to his most beloved mother, being her proper stock . . . and not suffer his blood to goe wandering about the world without entertainment.' He committed the care of his wife and child to the king of France, begging him to favour 'his poore kinsman.' So surely did he regard his claim as genuine that he further left 400 crowns for 'a marble tomb in the venerable chappell of mercy in the church of S^t Francisco di Paolo.' And this *lapide* was to have 'his name and quality engraven on it;' and he directs his father-in-law, 'in acknowledgement of what I have disposed of to his benefit and his house,³ to do fervent devotions of all the heart' for the pardon of the testator's sins. His claim was not allowed to become altogether dormant either, for his widow gave birth to a posthumous son, whose history was, in one part at least, to resemble strangely that of his father.

On 30 March 1726 this son, Prince Don Giacomo Stuardo, obtained a certificate from Cardinal Pignatelli acknowledging him to be the posthumous son of Don Jacopo Enrico di Bove Stuardo, *Filius Naturalis Caroli Secundi Regis Angliae* and Donna Theresa Corona of Naples. He, from the pedigree attached to the paper setting forth his pretensions, claimed to be cousin's son to 'Giacomo III' of Great Britain. That his father was 'Giacomo Errico Boveri Rovano (or Roano) Stuardo, son of the king of Great Britain, who, although *si accasò Carlo II con la casa Braganza, non ebbe prole, ma in gioventù ebbe con Maria Errichetta Stuardo uno maschio* who became his father, having turned catholic, *come apparisce dalla fede dell' abjura*. I confess I cannot even conjecture the origin of the title Bove, Bovera, or Boveri, but Rovano or Roano surely implies that he claimed to be the son of the same man who took for his *alias* the name 'de Rohan,' and if this is so it most nearly connects him with 'James de la Cloche du Bourg,' who so suddenly became 'Henri de Rohan,' and perhaps later for a political mission to England James Henri Rovano Stuardo.

The story of Don Giacomo Stuardo, the second Neapolitan

³ He assigned full and ample power to his land and marquisate de Dunignis, a name which may give a clue, to the value of 3000 crowns.

Pretender, is worthy of more investigation. The only sources for it I know of are a collection of printed papers bound up with a volume of legal manuscripts of Naples in the British Museum.⁴ These record the various steps of his life—how he was a posthumous son, born 11 Nov. 1669 and baptised in the parish church of St. Sofia, that he

è cresciuto nella città di Napoli sotto varie forme per la necessità di vivere incognito per lo spazio di anni 40 in circa, nel qual tempo sopraggiunte in Napoli le arme Cesaree, il detto principe fu forzato partire;

again that at Rome he *se ammogliò con Donna Lucia Minelli della Riccia* in 1711, and by such an alliance fell into trouble, as he was arrested on 4 Oct. and thrown into the Carcere Nuova, while inquiries were made about his status. He was released, travelled to Venice, Vienna, where his titles were recognised, and Genoa, and then retiring to Rome was again seized, with all his papers, and a second time imprisoned in the Carcere Nuova. Without examination, as he says, he was condemned, stripped, and reclothed in a penitent habit and surrounded by *slirri*, embarked in a felucca for Naples, and having been quarantined there at last was hospitably received by his relative, Orsino Galleotti (*sua cugina* Donna Lucrezia Orsino, contessa di Oppide, married a Signor Galleotti). He then brought his suit before the courts, *gratis come povero*, was granted probate of his father's will, and ordered *immitti in possessionem omnium bonorum dicti eius patris* on 15 Dec. 1715. These goods, according to the inventory, were *due palazzi siti uno a S. Giovanna a Carbonara e l' altro a Capua, dirimpetto alli Gesuiti*, and in the bank of Naples 5,000,000 ducats transmitted to his father from London.

Mr. Philip Sidney in the article referred to above⁵ gives an unvouched-for statement that this 'Don Giacomo Stuardo' died without legitimate issue at Genoa in 1742, but I cannot understand how he can reconcile this with a recommendation by the Bishop of Cajazza, vicar-general of Naples, on 10 April 1747, of Don Giacomo Stuardo on account of his great necessity, in which he styles him *nipote di Carlo Secundo re d' Inghilterra, di professione cattolica e zelantissimo della nostra santa religione per cui ha sofferto e sofferse tanti travagli*, which is the last document I have as yet traced that alludes to him directly, though it is most likely that he is *il principe Stuardo* who states, in a letter narrating his poverty,⁶ that he is '*erede universale del regio sangue Stuardo d' Inghilterra*,' in March 1752.

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⁴ Brit. Mus. Addit. MS. 20646.

⁵ 'The Eldest Son of Charles II,' *Westminster Review*, 6 February 1908.

⁶ Brit. Mus. Addit. MS. 20646, f. 56.