THE

HISTORY OF SCOTLAND.

THE EIGHTH BOOK.

1590. ON the first of May the king and queen arrived at Leith, and were received by their subjects with every possible expression of joy. The solemnity of the queen's coronation was conducted with great magnificence; but so low had the order of bishops fallen in the opinion of the public, that none of them were present on that occasion; and Mr. Robert Bruce, a presbyterian minister of great reputation, set the crown on her head, administered the sacred unction, and performed the other customary ceremonies.

The king and queen arrive in Scotland.

The zeal and success with which many of the clergy had contributed towards preserving peace and order in the kingdom, during his absence, reconciled James, in a great degree, to their persons, and even to the presbyterian form of government. In presence of an assembly which met this year, he made high encomiums on the discipline as well as the doctrine of the church, promised to adhere inviolably to both, and permitted the assembly to frame such acts as gradually abolished all the remains of episcopal jurisdiction, and paved the way for a full and legal establishment of the presbyterian model[a].

August 4.

1591. An event happened soon after, which afforded the clergy no small triumph. Archbishop Adamson, their ancient opponent, having fallen under the king's dis-

[a] Cald. iv. 204.

pleasure, having been deprived of the revenues of his see, in consequence of the act of annexation, and being oppressed with age, with poverty, and diseases, made the meanest submission to the clergy, and delivered to the assembly a formal recantation of all his opinions concerning church government, which had been matter of offence to the presbyterians. Such a confession, from the most learned person of the episcopal order, was considered as a testimony which the force of truth had extorted from an adversary [b]. 1591.

Disorders in the kingdom.

Meanwhile, the king's excessive clemency towards offenders multiplied crimes of all kinds, and encouraged such acts of violence, as brought his government under contempt, and proved fatal to many of his subjects. The history of several years, about this time, is filled with accounts of the deadly quarrels between the great families, and of murders and assassinations perpetrated in the most audacious manner, and with circumstances of the utmost barbarity. All the defects in the feudal aristocracy were now felt more sensibly, perhaps, than at any other period in the history of Scotland, and universal license and anarchy prevailed to a degree scarce consistent with the preservation of society: while the king, too gentle to punish, or too feeble to act with vigour, suffered all these enormities to pass with impunity.

An attempt of Bothwell's against the king.

But though James connived at real crimes, witchcraft, which is commonly an imaginary one, engrossed his attention, and those suspected of it felt the whole weight of his authority. Many persons, neither extremely old, nor wretchedly poor, which were usually held to be certain indications of this crime, but masters of families, and matrons of a decent rank, and in the middle age of life, were seized and tortured. Though their confessions contained the most absurd and incredible circumstances, the king's prejudices, those of the

[b] Spotsw. 385. Cald. iv. 214.

1591. clergy and of the people, conspired in believing their extravagancies without hesitation, and in punishing their persons without mercy. Some of these unhappy sufferers accused Bothwell of having consulted them, in order to know the time of the king's death, and of having employed their art to raise the storms which had endangered the queen's life, and had detained James so long in Denmark. Upon this evidence that nobleman was committed to prison. His turbulent and haughty spirit could neither submit to the restraint, nor brook such an indignity. Having gained his keepers, he made his escape; and imputing the accusation to the artifices of his enemy the chancellor, he assembled his followers, under pretence of driving him from the king's councils. Being favoured by some of the king's attendants, he was admitted by a secret passage, under cloud of night, into the court of the palace of Holyrood house. He advanced directly towards the royal apartment; but happily before he entered, the
Dec. 27. alarm was taken, and the doors shut. While he attempted to burst open some of them, and set fire to others, the citizens of Edinburgh had time to run to their arms, and he escaped with the utmost difficulty; owing his safety to the darkness of the night, and the precipitancy with which he fled[c].

1592. He retired towards the north; and the king having unadvisedly given a commission to the earl of Huntly to pursue him and his followers with fire and sword, he, under colour of executing that commission, gratified his private revenge, and surrounded the house of the earl of Murray, burnt it to the ground, and slew Mur-
Feb. 8. ray himself. The murder of a young nobleman of such promising virtues, and the heir of the regent Murray, the darling of the people, excited universal indignation. The citizens of Edinburgh rose in a tumultuous manner; and, though they were restrained, by the care of

[c] Melv. 388. Spotsw. 386.

the magistrates, from any act of violence, they threw aside all respect for the king and his ministers, and openly insulted and threatened both. While this mutinous spirit continued, James thought it prudent to withdraw from the city, and fixed his residence for some time at Glasgow. There Huntly surrendered himself to justice; and, notwithstanding the atrociousness of his crime, and the clamours of the people, the power of the chancellor, with whom he was now closely confederated, and the king's regard for the memory of the duke of Lennox, whose daughter he had married, not only protected him from the sentence which such an odious action merited, but exempted him even from the formality of a public trial[d]. 1592.

A step of much importance was taken soon after with regard to the government of the church. The clergy had long complained of the encroachments made upon their privileges and jurisdiction by the acts of the parliament one thousand five hundred and eighty-four; and though these laws had now lost much of their force, they resolved to petition the parliament, which was approaching, to repeal them in form. The juncture for pushing such a measure was well chosen. The king had lost much of the public favour by his lenity towards the popish faction, and still more by his remissness in pursuing the murderers of the earl of Murray. The chancellor had not only a powerful party of the courtiers combined against him, but was become odious to the people, who imputed to him every false step in the king's conduct. Bothwell still lurked in the kingdom, and, being secretly supported by all the enemies of Maitland's administration, was ready every moment to renew his audacious enterprises. James, for all these reasons, was extremely willing to indulge the clergy in their request, and not only consented to a law, whereby the acts of one thousand five hundred Presbyterian church government established by law.

[d] Spotsw. 387.

1592. and eighty-four were rescinded or explained, but he carried his complaisance still further, and permitted the parliament to establish the presbyterian government, in its general assemblies, provincial synods, presbyteries, and kirk sessions, with all the different branches of their discipline and jurisdiction, in the most ample manner. All the zeal and authority of the clergy, even under the administration of regents, from whom they might have expected the most partial favour, could not obtain the sanction of law, in confirmation of their mode of ecclesiastical government. No prince was ever less disposed than James to approve a system, the republican genius of which inspired a passion for liberty, extremely repugnant to his exalted notions of royal prerogative. Nor could any aversion be more inveterate than his, to the austere and uncomplying character of the presbyterian clergy in that age; who, more eminent for zeal than for policy, often contradicted his opinions, and censured his conduct, with a freedom equally offensive to his dogmatism as a theologian, and to his pride as a king. His situation, however, obliged him frequently to conceal, or to dissemble, his sentiments; and, as he often disgusted his subjects, by indulging the popish faction more than they approved, he endeavoured to atone for this by concessions to the presbyterian clergy, more liberal than he himself would otherwise have chosen to grant[e].

In this parliament, Bothwell and all his adherents were attainted. But he soon made a new attempt to seize the king at Falkland; and James, betrayed by some of his courtiers, and feebly defended by others, who wished well to Bothwell, as the chancellor's avowed enemy, owed his safety to the fidelity and vigilance of sir Robert Melvil, and to the irresolution of Bothwell's associates[f].

Scarcely was this danger over, when the nation was

[e] Cald. iv. 248. 252. Spotsw. 388. [f] Melv. 402.

alarmed with the discovery of a new and more formidable conspiracy. George Ker, the lord Newbattle's brother, being seized as he was ready to set sail for Spain, many suspicious papers were found in his custody, and, among these, several blanks, signed by the earls of Angus, Huntly, and Errol. By this extraordinary precaution they hoped to escape any danger of discovery. But Ker's resolution shrinking when torture was threatened, he confessed that he was employed by these noblemen to carry on a negotiation with the king of Spain; that the blanks subscribed with their names were to be filled up by Crichton and Tyrie; that they were instructed to offer the faithful service of the three earls to that monarch; and to solicit him to land a body of his troops, either in Galloway, or at the mouth of Clyde, with which they undertook, in the first place, to establish the Roman catholic religion in Scotland, and then to invade England with the whole forces of the kingdom. David Graham of Fintry, and Barclay of Ladyland, whom he accused of being privy to the conspiracy, were taken into custody, and confirmed all the circumstances of his confession[g].

1592. A new conspiracy of the popish lords.

The nation having been kept for some time in continual terrour and agitation by so many successive conspiracies, the discovery of this new danger completed the panic. All ranks of men, as if the enemy had already been at their gates, thought themselves called upon to stand forth in defence of their country. The ministers of Edinburgh, without waiting for any warrant from the king, who happened at that time to be absent from the capital, and without having received any legal commission, assembled a considerable number of peers and barons, in order to provide an instant security against the impending danger. They seized the earl of Angus, and committed him to the castle; they examined Ker; and prepared a remonstrance to

1593. Zeal of the people,

[g] Rymer, xvi. 190.

1593. be laid before the king, concerning the state of the nation, and the necessity of prosecuting the conspirators with becoming vigour. James, though jealous of every encroachment on his prerogative, and offended with his subjects, who, instead of petitioning, seemed to prescribe to him, found it necessary, during the violence of the ferment, not only to adopt their plan, but even to declare that no consideration should ever induce him to pardon such as had been guilty of so odious a treason. He summoned the earls of Huntly and Errol to surrender themselves to justice. Graham of Fintry, whom his peers pronounced to be guilty of treason, he commanded to be publicly beheaded; and marching into the north at the head of an army, the two earls, together with Angus, who had escaped out of prison, retired to the mountains. He placed garrisons in the castles which belonged to them; compelled their vassals, and the barons in the adjacent countries, to subscribe a bond containing professions of their loyalty towards him, and of their firm adherence to the protestant faith; and, the better to secure the tranquillity of that part of the kingdom, constituted the earls of Athol and marischal his lieutenants there [h].

and proceedings of the king against them.

Jan. 8.

March 18. Elizabeth solicits him to treat them with rigour.

Having finished this expedition, James returned to Edinburgh, where he found lord Borrough, an extraordinary ambassador from the court of England. Elizabeth, alarmed at the discovery of a conspiracy, which she considered as no less formidable to her own kingdom than to Scotland, reproached James with his former remissness, and urged him, as he regarded the preservation of the protestant religion, or the dignity of his own crown, to punish this repeated treason with rigour; and if he could not apprehend the persons, at least to confiscate the estates, of such audacious rebels. She weakened, however, the force of these requests, by interceding, at the same time, in behalf of Both-

[h] Spotsw. 301. Cald. iv. 291.

well, whom, according to her usual policy, in nourishing a factious spirit among the Scottish nobles, she had taken under her protection. James absolutely refused to listen to any intercession in favour of one who had so often, and with so much outrage, insulted both his government and his person. With regard to the popish conspirators, he declared his resolution to prosecute them with vigour; but that he might be the better able to do so, he demanded a small sum of money from Elizabeth, which she, distrustful perhaps of the manner in which he might apply it, showed no inclination to grant. The zeal, however, and importunity of his own subjects, obliged him to call a parliament, in order to pass an act of attainder against the three earls. But before it met, Ker made his escape out of prison, and, on pretence that legal evidence of their guilt could not be produced, nothing was concluded against them. The king himself was universally suspected of having contrived this artifice, on purpose to elude the requests of the queen of England, and to disappoint the wishes of his own people; and, therefore, in order to sooth the clergy, who exclaimed loudly against his conduct, he gave way to the passing of an act, which ordained such as obstinately contemned the censures of the church to be declared outlaws[1]. 1593.

Bothwell surprises the king.

While the terrour excited by the popish conspiracy possessed the nation, the court had been divided by two rival factions, which contended for the chief direction of affairs. At the head of one was the chancellor, in whom the king reposed entire confidence. For that very reason, perhaps, he had fallen early under the queen's displeasure. The duke of Lennox, the earl of Athol, lord Ochiltree, and all the name of Stewart, espoused her quarrel, and widened the breach. James, fond no less of domestic tranquillity than of public peace, advised his favourite to retire, for some

[1] Cald. iv. 343. Spotaw. 393. Parl. 13 Jac. VI. c. 164.

1593. time, in hopes that the queen's resentment would subside. But as he stood in need, in the present juncture, of the assistance of an able minister, he had recalled him to court. In order to prevent him from recovering his former power, the Stewarts had recourse
July 24. to an expedient no less illegal than desperate. Having combined with Bothwell, who was of the same name; they brought him back secretly into Scotland; and seizing the gates of the palace, introduced him into the royal apartment with a numerous train of armed followers. James, though deserted by all his courtiers, and incapable of resistance, discovered more indignation than fear, and, reproaching them for their treachery, called on the earl to finish his treasons by piercing his sovereign to the heart. But Bothwell fell on his knees, and implored pardon. The king was not in a condition to refuse his demands. A few days after he signed a capitulation with this successful traitor, to whom he was really a prisoner, whereby he bound himself to grant him a remission for all past offences, and to procure the ratification of it in parliament; and in the mean time to dismiss the chancellor, the master of Glamis, lord Home, and sir George Home, from his councils and presence. Bothwell, on his part, consented to remove from court, though he left there as many of his associates as he thought sufficient to prevent the return of the adverse faction.

He recovers his liberty. Sept. 7. But it was now no easy matter to keep the king under the same kind of bondage, to which he had been often subject during his minority. He discovered so much impatience to shake off his fetters, that those who had imposed, durst not continue the restraint. They permitted him to call a convention of the nobles at Stirling, and to repair thither himself. All Bothwell's enemies, and all who were desirous of gaining the king's favour by appearing to be so, obeyed the summons. They pronounced the insult offered to the king's person and authority to be high treason, and

declared him absolved from any obligation to observe conditions extorted by force, and which violated so essentially his royal prerogative. James, however, still proffered him a pardon, provided he would sue for it as an act of mercy, and promise to retire out of the kingdom. These conditions Bothwell rejected with disdain, and, betaking himself once more to arms, attempted to surprise the king; but finding him on his guard, fled to the borders [k]. 1593.

Suspected of favouring the popish lords.

The king's ardour against Bothwell, compared with his slow and evasive proceedings against the popish lords, occasioned a general disgust among his subjects; and was imputed either to an excessive attachment to the persons of those conspirators, or to a secret partiality towards their opinions; both which gave rise to no unreasonable fears. The clergy, as the immediate guardians of the protestant religion, thought themselves bound, in such a juncture, to take extraordinary steps for its preservation. The provincial synod of Fife happening to meet at that time, a motion was made to excommunicate all concerned in the late conspiracy, as obstinate and irreclaimable papists; and though none of the conspirators resided within the bounds of the synod, or were subject to its jurisdiction, such was the zeal of the members, that, overlooking this irregularity, they pronounced against them the sentence of excommunication, to which the act of last parliament added new terrours. Lest this should be imputed to a few men, and accounted the act of a small part of the church, deputies were appointed to attend the adjacent synods, and to desire their approbation and concurrence. Sept. 25.

His lenity towards them.

An event happened a few weeks after, which increased the people's suspicions of the king. As he was marching on an expedition against the borderers, the three popish earls coming suddenly into his pre- Oct. 17.

[k] Cald. iv. 326. Spotsw. 395.

1593. sence, offered to submit themselves to a legal trial; and James, without committing them to custody, appointed a day for that purpose. They prepared to appear with a formidable train of their friends and vassals. But in the mean time the clergy, together with many peers and barons, assembled at Edinburgh, remonstrated against the king's extreme indulgence with great boldness, and demanded of him, according to the regular course of justice, to commit to sure custody persons charged with the highest acts of treason, who could not be brought to a legal trial, until they were absolved from the censures of the church; and to call a convention of estates, to deliberate concerning the method of proceeding against them. At the same time they offered to accompany him in arms to the place of trial, lest such audacious and powerful criminals should overawe justice, and dictate to the judges, to whom they pretended to submit. James, though extremely offended, both with the irregularity of their proceedings, and the presumption of their demands, found it expedient to put off the day of trial, and to call a convention of estates, in order to quiet the fears and jealousies of the people. By being humoured in this point, their suspicions began gradually to abate, and the chancellor managed the convention so artfully, that he himself, together with a few other members, were empowered to pronounce a final sentence upon
Nov. 26. the conspirators. After much deliberation they ordained, that the three earls and their associates should be exempted from all further inquiry or prosecution, on account of their correspondence with Spain; that, before the first day of February, they should either submit to the church, and publicly renounce the errours of popery, or remove out of the kingdom; that, before the first of January, they should declare which of these alternatives they would embrace; that they should find surety for their peaceable demeanour for the future; and that, if they failed to signify their

choice in due time, they should lose the benefit of this act of 'abolition,' and remain exposed to all the pains of law[1]. 1593.

By this lenity towards the conspirators, James incurred much reproach, and gained no advantage. Devoted to the popish superstition, submissive to all the dictates of their priests, and buoyed up with hopes and promises of foreign aid, the three earls refused to accept of the conditions, and continued their treasonable correspondence with the court of Spain. A convention of estates pronounced them to have forfeited the benefit of the articles which were offered; and the king required them, by proclamation, to surrender themselves to justice. The presence of the English ambassador contributed, perhaps, to the vigour of these proceedings. Elizabeth, ever attentive to James's motions, and imputing his reluctance to punish the popish lords to a secret approbation of their designs, had sent lord Zouche, to represent, once more, the danger to which he exposed himself by this false moderation; and to require him to exercise that rigour which their crimes, as well as the posture of affairs, rendered necessary. Though the steps now taken by the king silenced all complaints on that head, yet Zouche, forgetful of his character as an ambassador, entered into private negotiations with such of the Scottish nobles as disapproved of the king's measures, and held almost an open correspondence with Bothwell, who, according to the usual artifice of malecontents, pretended much solicitude for reforming the disorders of the commonwealth, and covered his own ambition with the specious veil of zeal against those counsellors who restrained the king from pursuing the avowed enemies of the protestant faith. Zouche encouraged him, in the name of his mistress, to take arms against his sovereign. 1594. Jan. 18.

[1] Cald. iv. 330. Spotsw. 397.

1594. Meanwhile, the king and the clergy were filled with mutual distrust of each other. They were jealous, perhaps, to excess, that James's affections leaned too much towards the popish faction. He suspected them, without good reason, of prompting Bothwell to rebellion, and even of supplying him with money for that purpose. Little instigation, indeed, was wanting to rouse such a turbulent spirit as Bothwell's to any daring enterprise. He appeared suddenly within a mile of Edinburgh, at the head of four hundred horse. The pretences, by which he endeavoured to justify this insurrection, were extremely popular; zeal for religion, enmity to popery, concern for the king's honour, and for the liberties of the nation. James was totally unprovided for his own defence; he had no infantry, and was accompanied only with a few horsemen of lord Home's train. In this extremity, he implored the aid of the citizens of Edinburgh; and, in order to encourage them to act with zeal, he promised to proceed against the popish lords with the utmost rigour of law. Animated by their ministers, the citizens ran cheerfully to their arms, and advanced, with the king at their head, against Bothwell; but he, notwithstanding his success in putting to flight lord Home, who had rashly charged him with a far inferior number of cavalry, retired to Dalkeith without daring to attack the king. His followers abandoned him soon after, and, discouraged by so many successive disappointments, could never afterwards be brought to venture into the field. He betook himself to his usual lurking places in the north of England; but Elizabeth, in compliance with the king's remonstrances, obliged him to quit his retreat[m].

A new attempt of Bothwell's.

No sooner was the king delivered from one danger, than he was called to attend to another. The popish lords, in consequence of their negotiations with Spain,

Fresh dangers from the popish lords. April 3.

[m] Spotsw. 403. Cald. iv. 359.

received in the spring a supply of money from Philip. 1594.
What bold designs this might inspire, it was no easy matter to conjecture. From men under the dominion of bigotry, and whom indulgence could not reclaim, the most desperate actions were to be dreaded. The assembly of the church immediately took the alarm; remonstrated against them with more bitterness than ever; and unanimously ratified the sentence of excommunication pronounced by the synod of Fife. James himself, provoked by their obstinacy and ingratitude, and afraid that his long forbearance would not only be generally displeasing to his own subjects, but give rise to unfavourable suspicions among the English, exerted himself with unusual vigour. He called a parliament; June 8.
laid before it all the circumstances and aggravations of the conspiracy; and though there were but few members present, and several of these connected with the conspirators by blood or friendship, he prevailed on them, by his influence and importunity, to pronounce the most rigorous sentence which the law can inflict. They were declared to be guilty of high treason, and their estates and honours forfeited. At the same time, statutes, more severe than ever, were enacted against the professors of the popish religion.

How to put this sentence in execution, was a matter Battle of Glenlivat.
of great difficulty. Three powerful barons, cantoned in a part of the country of difficult access, surrounded with numerous vassals, and supported by aid from a foreign prince, were more than an overmatch for a Scottish monarch. No entreaty could prevail on Elizabeth to advance the money necessary for defraying the expenses of an expedition against them. To attack them in person, with his own forces alone, might have exposed James both to disgrace and to danger. He had recourse to the only expedient which remained in such a situation, for aiding the impotence of sovereign authority; he delegated his authority to the earl of Argyll and lord Forbes, the leaders of two clans at

1594. enmity with the conspirators; and gave them a commission to invade their lands, and to seize the castles which belonged to them. Bothwell, notwithstanding all his high pretensions of zeal for the protestant religion, having now entered into a close confederacy with them, the danger became every day more urging. Argyll, solicited by the king, and roused by the clergy, took the field at the head of seven thousand men. Huntly and Errol met him at Glenlivat, with an army far inferior in number, but composed chiefly of gentlemen of the low countries, mounted on horseback, and who brought along with them a train of field-pieces.

Oct. 3. They encountered each other with all the fury which hereditary enmity and ancient rivalship add to undisciplined courage. But the highlanders, disconcerted by the first discharge of the cannon, to which they were little accustomed, and unable to resist the impression of cavalry, were soon put to flight; and Argyll, a gallant young man of eighteen, was carried by his friends out of the field, weeping with indignation at their disgrace, and calling on them to stand, and to vindicate the honour of their name[n].

1595. On the first intelligence of this defeat, James, though obliged to pawn his jewels, in order to raise money[o], assembled a small body of troops, and marched towards the north. He was joined by the Irvines, Keiths, Leslys, Forbeses, and other clans at enmity with Huntly and Errol, who having lost several of their principal followers at Glenlivat, and others refusing to bear arms against the king in person, were obliged to retire to the mountains. James wasted their lands; put garrisons in some of their castles; burnt others; and left the duke of Lennox as his lieutenant in that part of the kingdom, with a body of men sufficient to restrain them from gathering to any head there, or from infesting the low country. Reduced at last to extreme dis-

[n] Cald. iv. 408. [o] Birch. Mem. i. 186.

tress by the rigour of the season, and the desertion of their followers, they obtained the king's permission to go beyond seas, and gave security that they should neither return without his license, nor engage in any new intrigues against the protestant religion, or the peace of the kingdom[P]. 1595. Popish lords driven out of the kingdom.

By their exile, tranquillity was reestablished in the north of Scotland; and the firmness and vigour which James had displayed in his last proceedings against them, regained him, in a great degree, the confidence of his protestant subjects. But he sunk, in the same proportion, and for the same reason, in the esteem of the Roman catholics. They had asserted his mother's right to the crown of England with so much warmth, that they could not, with any decency, reject his; and the indulgence, with which he affected to treat the professors of the popish religion, inspired them with such hopes, that they viewed his accession to the throne as no undesirable event. But the rigour with which the king had lately pursued the conspirators, and the severe statutes against popery to which he had given his consent, convinced them now that these hopes were visionary; and they began to look about in quest of some new successor, whose rights they might oppose to his. The papists who resided in England turned their eyes towards the earl of Essex, whose generous mind, though firmly established in the protestant faith, abhorred the severities inflicted in that age on account of religious opinions. Those of the same sect, who were in exile, formed a bolder scheme, and one more suitable to their situation. They advanced the claim of the infanta of Spain; and Parsons the jesuit published a book, in which, by false quotations from history, by fabulous genealogies, and absurd arguments, intermingled with bitter invectives against the king of Scots, he endeavoured to prove the infanta's title to The Roman catholics incensed against James.

[P] Spotsw. 404. Cald. 373, etc.

1595. the English crown to be preferable to his. Philip, though involved already in a war both with France and England, and scarce able to defend the remains of the Burgundian provinces against the Dutch commonwealth, eagerly grasped at this airy project. The dread of a Spanish pretender to the crown, and the opposition which the papists began to form against the king's succession, contributed not a little to remove the prejudices of the protestants, and to prepare the way for that event.

Bothwell forced to fly into Spain.

Bothwell, whose name has been so often mentioned as the disturber of the king's tranquillity, and of the peace of the kingdom, was now in a wretched condition. Abandoned by the queen of England, on account of his confederacy with the popish lords; excommunicated by the church for the same reason; and deserted in his distress by his own followers; he was obliged to fly for safety to France, and thence to Spain and Italy, where, after renouncing the protestant faith, he led, many years, an obscure and indigent life, remarkable only for a low and infamous debauchery. The king, though extremely ready to sacrifice the strongest resentment to the slightest acknowledgments, could never be softened by his submission, nor be induced to listen to any intercession in his behalf[q].

This year the king lost chancellor Maitland, an able minister, on whom he had long devolved the whole weight of public affairs. As James loved him while alive, he wrote, in honour of his memory, a copy of verses, which, when compared with the compositions of that age, are far from being inelegant[r].

A change in the administration.

Soon after his death, a considerable change was made in the administration. At that time, the annual charges of government far exceeded the king's revenues. The queen was fond of expensive amusements. James himself was a stranger to economy. It

[q] Winw. Mem. i. Spotsw. 410. [r] Spotsw. 411.

became necessary, for all these reasons, to levy the public revenues with greater order and rigour, and to husband them with more care. This important trust was committed to eight gentlemen of the law[a], who, from their number, were called 'octavians.' The powers vested in them were ample, and almost unlimited. The king bound himself neither to add to their number, nor to supply any vacancy that might happen, without their consent: and, knowing the facility of his own temper, agreed that no alienation of his revenue, no grant of a pension, or order on the treasury, should be held valid, unless it were ratified by the subscription of five of the commissioners: all their acts and decisions were declared to be of equal force with the sentence of judges in civil courts; and in consequence of them, and without any other warrant, any person might be arrested, or their goods seized. Such extensive jurisdiction, together with the absolute disposal of the public money, drew the whole executive part of government into their hands. United among themselves, they gradually undermined the rest of the king's ministers, and seized on every lucrative or honourable office. The ancient servants of the crown repined at being obliged to quit their stations to new men. The favourites and young courtiers murmured at seeing the king's liberality stinted by their prescriptions. And the clergy exclaimed against some of them as known apostates to popery, and suspected others of secretly favouring it. They retained their power, however, notwithstanding this general combination against them; and they owed it entirely to the order and economy which they introduced into the administration of the finances, by which the necessary 1595.

[a] Alexander Seaton president of the session, Walter Stewart commendator of Blantyre, lord privy seal, David Carnegy, John Lindsay, James Elphingstone, Thomas Hamilton, John Skene clerk register, and Peter Young eleemosynar.

1596. expenses of government were more easily defrayed than in any other period of the king's reign[t].

Violence of the nation against the popish lords.

The rumour of vast preparations, which Philip was said to be carrying on at this time, filled both England and Scotland with the dread of a new invasion. James took proper measures for the defence of his kingdom. But these did not satisfy the zeal of the clergy, whose suspicions of the king's sincerity began to revive; and as he had permitted the wives of the banished peers to levy the rents of their estates, and to live in their houses, they charged him with rendering the act of forfeiture ineffectual, by supporting the avowed ene-

March 24. mies of the protestant faith. The assembly of the church took under consideration the state of the kingdom, and having appointed a day of public fasting, they solemnly renewed the covenant, by which the nation was bound to adhere to the protestant faith, and to defend it against all aggressors. A committee, consisting of the most eminent clergymen, and of many barons and gentlemen of distinction, waited on the king, and laid before him a plan for the security of the kingdom, and the preservation of religion. They urged him to appropriate the estates of the banished lords as a fund for the maintenance of soldiers; to take the strictest precautions for preventing the return of such turbulent subjects into the country; and to pursue all who were suspected of being their adherents with the utmost rigour.

The king's remissness with regard to them.

Nothing could be more repugnant to the king's schemes, or more disagreeable to his inclination, than these propositions. Averse, through his whole life, to any course, where he expected opposition or danger; and fond of attaining his ends with the character of moderation, and by the arts of policy, he observed with concern the prejudices against him which were growing among the Roman catholics, and resolved to

[t] Spotsw. 413. 435.

make some atonement for that part of his conduct which had drawn upon him their indignation. Elizabeth was now well advanced in years; her life had lately been in danger; if any popish competitor should arise to dispute his right of succession, a faction so powerful as that of the banished lords might be extremely formidable; and any division among his own subjects might prove fatal, at a juncture which would require their united and most vigorous efforts. Instead, therefore, of the additional severities which the assembly proposed, James had thoughts of mitigating the punishment which they already suffered. And as they were surrounded, during their residence in foreign parts, by Philip's emissaries; as resentment might dispose them to listen more favourably than ever to their suggestions; as despair might drive them to still more atrocious actions; he resolved to recall them, under certain conditions, into their native country. Encouraged by these sentiments of the king in their favour, of which they did not want intelligence, and wearied already of the dependent and anxious life of exiles, they ventured to return secretly into Scotland. Soon after, they presented a petition to the king, begging his permission to reside at their own houses, and offering to give security for their peaceable and dutiful behaviour. James called a convention of estates to deliberate on a matter of such importance, and by their advice he granted the petition. 1596.

The rash proceedings of the clergy and people.

The members of a committee appointed by the last general assembly, as soon as they were informed of this, met at Edinburgh, and, with all the precipitancy of fear and of zeal, took such resolutions as they thought necessary for the safety of the kingdom. They wrote circular letters to all the presbyteries in Scotland; they warned them of the approaching danger; they exhorted them to stir up their people to the defence of their just rights; they commanded them to publish, in all their pulpits, the act excommunicating

1596. the popish lords; and enjoined them to lay all those who were suspected of favouring popery under the same censure by a summary sentence, and without observing the usual formalities of trial. As the danger seemed too pressing to wait for the stated meetings of the judicatories of the church, they made choice of the most eminent clergymen in different corners of the kingdom, appointed them to reside constantly at Edinburgh, and to meet every day with the ministers of that city, under the name of the 'standing council of the church,' and vested in this body the supreme authority, by enjoining it, in imitation of the ancient Roman form, to take care that the church should receive no detriment.

These proceedings, no less unconstitutional than unprecedented, were manifest encroachments on the royal prerogative, and bold steps towards open rebellion. The king's conduct, however, justified in some degree such excesses. His lenity towards the papists, so repugnant to the principles of that age; his pardoning the conspirators, notwithstanding repeated promises to the contrary; the respect he paid to lady Huntly, who was attached to the Romish religion no less than her husband; his committing the care of his daughter, the princess Elizabeth, to lady Levingston, who was infected with the same superstition; the contempt with which he talked on all occasions, both of the character of ministers, and of their function, were circumstances which might have filled minds, not prone by nature to jealousy, with some suspicions; and might have precipitated into rash councils those who were far removed from intemperate zeal. But, however powerful the motives might be, which influenced the clergy, or however laudable the end they had in view, they conducted their measures with no address, and even with little prudence. James discovered a strong inclination to avoid a rupture with the church, and, jealous as he was of his prerogative, would willingly have made

many concessions for the sake of peace. By his command, some of the privy counsellors had an interview with the more moderate among the clergy, and inquired whether Huntly and his associates might not, upon making proper acknowledgments, be again received into the bosom of the church, and be exempted from any further punishment on account of their past apostacy and treasons. They replied, that, though the gate of mercy stood always open for those who repented and returned, yet, as these noblemen had been guilty of idolatry, a crime deserving death, both by the law of God and of man, the civil magistrate could not legally grant them a pardon; and even though the church should absolve them, it was his duty to inflict punishment upon them. This inflexibility in those who were reckoned the most compliant of the order, filled the king with indignation, which the imprudence and obstinacy of a private clergyman heightened into rage. 1596.

Seditious doctrine taught by Black.

Mr. David Black, minister of St. Andrew's, discoursing in one of his sermons, according to custom, concerning the state of the nation, affirmed that the king had permitted the popish lords to return into Scotland, and, by that action, had discovered the treachery of his own heart; that all kings were the devil's children; that Satan had now the guidance of the court; that the queen of England was an atheist; that the judges were miscreants and bribers; the nobility godless and degenerate; the privy counsellors cormorants and men of no religion; and in his prayer for the queen he used these words: 'We must pray for her for fashion-sake, but we have no cause, she will never do us good.' James commanded him to be summoned before the privy council, to answer for such seditious expressions; and the clergy, instead of abandoning him to the punishment which such a petulant and criminal attack on his superiors deserved, were so imprudent as to espouse his cause, as if it had been the common one of the whole order. The controversy

Nov. 10. The clergy espouse his defence.

1596. concerning the immunities of the pulpit, and the rights of the clergy to testify against vices of every kind, which had been agitated in one thousand five hundred and eighty-four, was now revived. It was pretended that, with regard to their sacred function, ministers were subject to the church alone; that it belonged only to their ecclesiastical superiors to judge of the truth or falsehood of doctrines delivered in the pulpit; that if, upon any pretence whatever, the king usurped this jurisdiction, the church would, from that moment, sink under servitude to the civil magistrate; that, instead of reproving vice with that honest boldness which had often been of advantage to individuals, and salutary to the kingdom, the clergy would learn to flatter the passions of the prince, and to connive at the vices of others; that the king's eagerness to punish the indiscretion of a protestant minister, while he was so ready to pardon the crimes of popish conspirators, called on them to stand upon their guard, and that now was the time to contend for their privileges, and to prevent any encroachment on those rights, of which the church had been in possession ever since the reformation. Influenced by these considerations, the council of the church enjoined Black to decline the jurisdiction of the privy council. Proud of such an opportunity to display his zeal, he presented a paper to that purpose, and with the utmost firmness refused to plead, or to answer the questions which were put to him. In order to add greater weight to these proceedings, the council of the church transmitted the 'declinature' to all the presbyteries throughout the kingdom, and enjoined every minister to subscribe it in testimony of his approbation.

James defended his rights with no less vigour than they were attacked. Sensible of the contempt under which his authority must fall, if the clergy should be permitted publicly, and with impunity, to calumniate his ministers, and even to censure himself; and knowing, by former examples, what unequal reparation for

such offences he might expect from the judicatories of the church, he urged on the inquiry into Black's conduct, and issued a proclamation, commanding the members of the council of the church to leave Edinburgh, and to return to their own parishes. Black, instead of submitting, renewed his 'declinature;' and the members of the council, in defiance of the proclamation, declared, that as they met by the authority of the church, obedience to it was a duty still more sacred than that which they owed to the king himself. The privy council, notwithstanding Black's refusing to plead, proceeded in the trial; and, after a solemn inquiry, pronounced him guilty of the crimes of which he had been accused; but referred it to the king to appoint what punishment he should suffer. 1596.

Meanwhile, many endeavours were used to bring matters to accommodation. Almost every day produced some new scheme of reconcilement; but, through the king's fickleness, the obstinacy of the clergy, or the intrigues of the courtiers, they all proved ineffectual. Both parties appealed to the people, and by reciprocal and exaggerated accusations endeavoured to render each other odious. Insolence, sedition, treason, were the crimes with which James charged the clergy; while they made the pulpits resound with complaints of his excessive lenity towards papists, and of the no less excessive rigour with which he oppressed the established church. Exasperated by their bold invectives, he, at last, sentenced Black to retire beyond the river Spey, and to reside there during his pleasure; and once more commanding the members of the standing council to depart from Edinburgh, he required all the ministers of the kingdom to subscribe a bond, obliging themselves to submit, in the same manner as other subjects, to the jurisdiction of the civil courts in matters of a civil nature.

A tumult in Edinburgh.

This decisive measure excited all the violent passions which possess disappointed factions; and deeds no less

1596. violent immediately followed. These must be imputed in part to the artifices of some courtiers who expected to reap advantage from the calamities of their country, or who hoped to lessen the authority of the octavians, by engaging them in hostilities with the church. On one hand, they informed the king that the citizens of Edinburgh were under arms every night, and had planted a strong guard round the houses of their ministers. James, in order to put a stop to this imaginary insult on his government, issued a proclamation, commanding twenty-four of the principal citizens to leave the town within six hours. On the other hand, they wrote to the ministers, advising them to look to their own safety, as Huntly had been secretly admitted to an interview with the king, and had been the author of the severe proclamation against the citizens of Edinburgh[u]. They doubted no more of the truth of this intelligence, than the king had done of that which he received, and fell as blindly into the snare. The letter came to their hands just as one of their number was
Dec. 17. going to mount the pulpit. They resolved that he should acquaint the people of their danger; and he painted it with all the strong colours which men naturally employ in describing any dreadful and instant calamity. When the sermon was over, he desired the nobles and gentlemen to assemble in the 'little church.' The whole multitude, terrified at what they had heard, crowded thither; they promised and vowed to stand by the clergy; they drew up a petition to the king, craving the redress of those grievances of which the church complained, and beseeching him to deliver them from all future apprehensions of danger, by re-

[u] Though matters were industriously aggravated by persons who wished both parties to pursue violent measures, neither of these reports was altogether destitute of foundation. As their ministers were supposed to be in danger, some of the more zealous citizens had determined to defend them by force of arms. Birch. Mem. ii. 250. Huntly had been privately in Edinburgh, where he had an interview, if not with the king, at least with some of his ministers. Birch. ibid. 230.

moving such of his counsellors as were known to be enemies of the protestant religion. Two peers, two gentlemen, two burgesses, and two ministers, were appointed to present it. The king happened to be in the great hall of the Tolbooth, where the court of session was sitting. The manner in which the petition was delivered, as well as its contents, offended him. He gave an haughty reply; the petitioners insisted with warmth; and a promiscuous multitude pressing into the room, James retired abruptly into another apartment, and commanded the gates to be shut behind him. The deputies returned to the multitude, who were still assembled, and to whom a minister had been reading, in their absence, the story of Haman. When they reported that the king had refused to listen to their petitions, the church was filled in a moment with noise, threatenings, execrations, and all the outrage and confusion of a popular tumult. Some called for their arms, some to bring out the wicked Haman; others cried, 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon;' and rushing out with the most furious impetuosity, surrounded the Tolbooth, threatening the king himself, and demanding some of his counsellors, whom they named, that they might tear them in pieces. The magistrates of the city, partly by authority, partly by force, endeavoured to quell the tumult; the king attempted to sooth the malecontents, by promising to receive their petitions, when presented in a regular manner; the ministers, sensible of their own rashness in kindling such a flame, seconded both; and the rage of the populace subsiding as suddenly as it had risen, they all dispersed, and the king returned to the palace; happy in having escaped from an insurrection, which, though the instantaneous and unconcerted effect of popular fury, had exposed his life to imminent danger, and was considered by him as an unpardonable affront to his authority [x].

1596.

The king in danger.

[x] Spotsw. 417, etc. Cald. v. 64, etc. Birch. Mem. ii. 235.

1596. As soon as he retired, the leaders of the malecontents assembled, in order to prepare their petition. The punishment of the popish lords; the removal of those counsellors who were suspected of favouring their persons or opinions; the repeal of all the late acts of council, subversive of the authority of the church; together with an act approving the proceedings of the standing council; were the chief of their demands. But the king's indignation was still so high, that the deputies, chosen for this purpose, durst not venture that night to present requests which could not fail of kindling his rage anew. Before next morning, James, with all his attendants, withdrew to Linlithgow; the session, and other courts of justice, were required to leave a city where it was no longer consistent either with their safety or their dignity to remain; and the noblemen and barons were commanded to return to their own houses, and not to reassemble without the king's permission. The vigour with which the king acted, struck a damp upon the spirits of his adversaries. The citizens, sensible how much they would suffer by his absence, and the removal of the courts of justice, repented already of their conduct. The ministers alone resolved to maintain the contest. They endeavoured to prevent the nobles from dispersing; they inflamed the people by violent invectives against the king; they laboured to procure subscriptions to an association for their mutual defence; and, conscious what lustre and power the junction of some of the greater nobles would add to their cause, the ministers of Edinburgh wrote to lord Hamilton, that the people, moved by the word of God, and provoked by the injuries offered to the church, had taken arms; that many of the nobles had determined to protect the protestant religion, which owed its establishment to the piety and valour of their ancestors; that they wanted only a leader to unite them, and to inspire them with vigour; that his zeal for the good cause, no less than his noble

He leaves Edinburgh, and proceeds with severity against the citizens.

birth, entitled him to that honour: they conjured him, therefore, not to disappoint their hopes and wishes, nor to refuse the suffering church that aid which she so much needed. Lord Hamilton, instead of complying with their desire, carried the letter directly to the king, whom this new insult irritated to such a degree, that he commanded the magistrates of Edinburgh instantly to seize their ministers, as manifest incendiaries, and encouragers of rebellion. The magistrates, in order to regain the king's favour, were preparing to obey; and the ministers, who saw no other hope of safety, fled towards England[y]. 1596.

This unsuccessful insurrection, instead of overturning, established the king's authority. Those concerned in it were confounded and dispersed. The rest of James's subjects, in order to avoid suspicion, or to gain his favour, contended who should be most forward to execute his vengeance. A convention of estates being called, pronounced the late insurrection to be high treason; ordained every minister to subscribe a declaration of his submission to the king's jurisdiction, in all matters civil and criminal; empowered magistrates to commit, instantly, to prison, any minister, who, in his sermons, should utter any indecent reflections on the king's conduct; prohibited any ecclesiastical judicatory to meet without the king's license; commanded that no person should be elected a magistrate of Edinburgh, for the future, without the king's approbation; and that, in the mean time, the present magistrates should either discover and inflict condign punishment on the authors of the late tumult, or the city itself should be subjected to all the penalties of that treasonable action[z]. 1597. The king humbles the power of the church. Jan. 3.

Armed with the authority of these decrees, James resolved to crush entirely the mutinous spirit of his subjects. As the clergy had, hitherto, derived their Abridges the privileges of the citizens of Edinburgh.

[y] Spotsw. 451. Cald. v. 126.

[z] Cald. v. 147.

1597. chief credit and strength from the favour and zeal of the citizens of Edinburgh, his first care was to humble them. Though the magistrates submitted to him in the most abject terms; though they vindicated themselves, and their fellow-citizens, from the most distant intention of violating his royal person or authority; though, after the strictest scrutiny, no circumstances that could fix on them the suspicion of premeditated rebellion had been discovered; though many of the nobles, and such of the clergy as still retained any degree of favour, interceded in their behalf; neither acknowledgments, nor intercessions, were of the least
Feb. 28. avail[a]. The king continued inexorable; the city was declared to have forfeited its privileges as a corporation, and to be liable to all the penalties of treason. The capital of the kingdom, deprived of magistrates, deserted by its ministers, abandoned by the courts of justice, and proscribed by the king, remained in desolation and despair. The courtiers even threatened to raze the city to the foundation, and to erect a pillar where it stood, as an everlasting monument of the king's vengeance, and of the guilt of its inhabitants. At last, in compliance with Elizabeth, who interposed in their favour, and moved by the continual solicitations of the nobles, James absolved the citizens from the penalties of law, but at the same time he stripped them of their
March 21. most important privileges; they were neither allowed to elect their own magistrates nor their own ministers; many new burthens were imposed on them; and a considerable sum of money was exacted by way of peace-offering[b].

New regulations with regard to the church. James was, meanwhile, equally assiduous, and no less successful, in circumscribing the jurisdiction of the church. Experience had discovered that to attempt this, by acts of parliament, and sentences of privy council, was both ineffectual and odious. He had re-

[a] Cald. v. 149. [b] Spotsw. 434. 444.

course now to an expedient more artful, and better calculated for obtaining his end. The ecclesiastical judicatories were composed of many members; the majority of the clergy were extremely indigent, and unprovided of legal stipends; the ministers in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, notwithstanding the parity established by the presbyterian government, had assumed a leading in the church, which filled their brethren with envy; every numerous body of men is susceptible of sudden and strong impressions, and liable to be influenced, corrupted, or overawed. Induced by these considerations, James thought it possible to gain the clergy, whom he had in vain attempted to subdue. Proper agents were set to work all over the kingdom; promises, flattery, and threats were employed; the usurpations of the brethren near the capital were aggravated; the jealousy of their power, which was growing in the distant provinces, was augmented; and two different general assemblies were held, in both which, notwithstanding the zeal and boldness wherewith a few leading clergymen defended the privileges of the church, a majority declared in favour of those measures which were agreeable to the king. Many practices, which had continued since the reformation, were condemned; many points of discipline, which had hitherto been reckoned sacred and uncontroverted, were given up; the license, with which ministers discoursed of political matters, was restrained; the freedom, with which they inveighed against particular persons, was censured; sentences of summary excommunication were declared unlawful; the convoking a general assembly, without the king's permission, was prohibited; and the right of nominating ministers to the principal towns, was vested in the crown. Thus, the clergy themselves surrendered privileges which it would have been dangerous to invade, and voluntarily submitted to a yoke more intolerable than any James would have ventured to impose by

1597.

1597. force; while such as continued to oppose his measures, instead of their former popular topic of the king's violent encroachments on a jurisdiction which did not belong to him, were obliged to turn their outcries against the corruptions of their own order[c].

Popish lords pardoned. By the authority of these general assemblies, the popish earls were allowed to make a public recantation of their errours; were absolved from the sentence of excommunication; and received into the bosom of the church. But, not many years after, they relapsed into their former errours, were again reconciled to the church of Rome, and by their apostacy justified, in some degree, the fears and scruples of the clergy with regard to their absolution.

The ministers of Edinburgh owed to the intercession of these assemblies the liberty of returning to their charges in the city. But this liberty was clogged in such a manner as greatly abridged their power. The city was divided into distinct parishes; the number of ministers doubled; persons on whose fidelity the king could rely were fixed in the new parishes; and these circumstances, added to the authority of the late decrees of the church, contributed to confirm that absolute dominion in ecclesiastical affairs, which James possessed during the remainder of his reign.

The king was so intent on new modelling the church, that the other transactions of this period scarce deserve to be remembered. The octavians, envied by the other courtiers, and splitting into factions among themselves, resigned their commission; and, the administration of the revenue returning into its former channel, both the king and the nation were deprived of the benefit of their regular and frugal economy.

Dec. 19. Towards the end of the year, a parliament was held, in order to restore Huntly and his associates to their estates and honours, by repealing the act of forfeiture

[c] Spotsw. 433. Cald. v. 189. 233.

passed against them. The authority of this supreme court was likewise employed to introduce a farther innovation into the church; but, conformable to the system which the king had now adopted, the motion for this purpose took its rise from the clergy themselves. As the act of general annexation, and that establishing the presbyterian government, had reduced the few bishops, who still survived, to poverty and contempt; as those who possessed the abbeys and priories were mere laymen, and many of them temporal peers, few or none of the ecclesiastical order remained to vote in parliament, and, by means of that, the influence of the crown was considerably diminished there, and a proper balance to the power and number of the nobles was wanting. But the prejudices which the nation had conceived against the name and character of bishops were so violent, that James was obliged, with the utmost care, to avoid the appearance of a design to revive that order. He prevailed, therefore, on the commission appointed by the last general assembly to complain to the parliament, that the church was the only body in the kingdom destitute of its representatives in that supreme court, where it so nearly concerned every order to have some, who were bound to defend its rights; and to crave that a competent number of the clergy should be admitted, according to ancient custom, to a seat there. In compliance with this request, an act was passed, by which those ministers, on whom the king should confer the vacant bishoprics and abbeys, were entitled to a vote in parliament; and, that the clergy might conceive no jealousy of any encroachment upon their privileges, it was remitted to the general assembly, to determine what spiritual jurisdiction or authority in the government of the church these persons should possess [d].

1597.

Ecclesiastics restored to a seat in parliament.

The king, however, found it no easy matter to ob- 1598.

[d] Spotsw. 450. Parl. 15th Jac. VI. c. 235.

1598. tain the concurrence of the ecclesiastical judicatories, in which the act of parliament met with a fierce opposition. Though the clergy perceived how much lustre this new privilege would reflect upon their order; though they were not insensible of the great accession of personal power, and dignity, which many of them would acquire, by being admitted into the supreme council of the nation, their abhorrence of episcopacy was extreme; and to that they sacrificed every consideration of interest or ambition. All the king's professions of regard for the present constitution of the church did not convince them of his sincerity; all the devices that could be invented for restraining and circumscribing the jurisdiction of such as were to be raised to this new honour, did not diminish their jealousy and fear. Their own experience had taught them, with what insinuating progress the hierarchy advances, and though admitted at first with moderate authority, and under specious pretences, how rapidly it extends its dominion. "Varnish over this scheme," said one of the leading clergymen, "with what colours you please; deck the intruder with the utmost art; under all this disguise, I see the horns of his mitre." The same sentiments prevailed among many of his brethren, and induced them to reject power and honours, with as much zeal as ever those of their order courted them. Many, however, were allured by the hopes of preferment; the king himself and his ministers employed the same arts, which they had tried so successfully last year; and after long debates, and much opposition, the general assembly declared that it was
March 7. lawful for ministers to accept of a seat in parliament; that it would be highly beneficial to the church to have its representatives in that supreme court; and that fifty-one persons, a number nearly equal to that of the ecclesiastics who were anciently called to parliament, should be chosen from among the clergy for that purpose. The manner of their election, together with

the powers to be vested in them, were left undecided for the present, and furnished matter of future deliberation[e]. 1598.

As the prospect of succeeding to the crown of England drew nearer, James multiplied precautions in order to render it certain. As he was allied to many of the princes of Germany by his marriage, he sent ambassadors extraordinary to their several courts, in order to explain the justness of his title to the English throne, and to desire their assistance, if any competitor should arise to dispute his undoubted rights. These princes readily acknowledged the equity of his claim; but the aid which they could afford him was distant and feeble. At the same time, Edward Bruce, abbot of Kinloss, his ambassador at the English court, solicited Elizabeth, with the utmost warmth, to recognise his title by some public deed, and to deliver her own subjects from the calamities which are occasioned by an uncertain or disputed succession. But age had strengthened all the passions which had hitherto induced Elizabeth to keep this great question obscure and undecided; and a general and evasive answer was all that James could obtain. As no impression could be made on the queen, the ambassador was commanded to sound the disposition of her subjects, and to try what progress he could make in gaining them. Bruce possessed all the talents of secrecy, judgment, and address, requisite for conducting a negotiation no less delicate than important. A minister of this character was entitled to the confidence of the English. Many of the highest rank unbosomed themselves to him without reserve, and gave him repeated assurances of their resolution to assert his master's right, in opposition to every pretender[f]. As several pamphlets were dispersed, at this time, in England, containing objections to his title, James employed some learned men in 1599. James endeavours with success to gain a party in England.

[e] Spotsw. 450. Cald. v. 278.

[f] Johnst. 242.

1599. his kingdom to answer these cavillers, and to explain the advantages which would result to both kingdoms by the union of the crowns. These books were eagerly read, and contributed not a little to reconcile the English to that event. A book published this year by the king himself, produced an effect still more favourable. It was entitled 'Basilicon Doron,' and contained precepts concerning the art of government, addressed to prince Henry his son. Notwithstanding the great alterations and refinements in national taste since that time, we must allow this to be no contemptible performance, and not to be inferior to the works of most contemporary writers, either in purity of style or justness of composition. Even the vain parade of erudition with which it abounds, and which now disgusts us, raised the admiration of that age; and, as it was filled with those general rules which speculative authors deliver for rendering a nation happy, and of which James could discourse with great plausibility, though often incapable of putting them in practice, the English conceived an high opinion of his abilities, and expected an increase of national honour and prosperity, under a prince so profoundly skilled in politics, and who gave such a specimen both of his wisdom and of his love to his people [s].

The queen of England's sentiments concerning James, were very different from those of her subjects. His excessive indulgence towards the popish lords; the facility with which he pardoned their repeated treasons; his restoring Beaton, the popish archbishop of Glasgow, who had fled out of Scotland at the time of the reformation, to the possession of the temporalities of that benefice; the appointing him his ambassador at the court of France; the applause he bestowed, in the Basilicon Doron, on those who adhered to the queen his mother; Elizabeth considered as so many indica-

[s] Camd. Spotsw. 457.

tions of a mind alienated from the protestant religion; and suspected that he would soon revolt from the profession of it. These suspicions seemed to be fully confirmed by a discovery which came from the master of Gray, who resided at that time in Italy, and who, rather than suffer his intriguing spirit to be idle, demeaned himself so far as to act as a spy for the English court. He conveyed to Elizabeth the copy of a letter, written by James to pope Clement the eighth, in which the king, after many expressions of regard for that pontiff, and of gratitude for his favours, declared his firm resolution to treat the Roman catholics with indulgence; and, in order to render the intercourse between the court of Rome and Scotland more frequent and familiar, he solicited the pope to promote Drummond, bishop of Vaison, a Scotsman, to the dignity of a cardinal[h]. Elizabeth, who had received, by another channel[i], some imperfect intelligence of this correspondence, was filled with just surprise, and immediately despatched Bowes into Scotland, to inquire more fully into the truth of the matter, and to reproach James for an action so unbecoming a protestant prince. He was astonished at the accusation, and with a confidence, which nothing but the consciousness of innocence could inspire, affirmed the whole to be a mere calumny, and the letter itself to be forged by his enemies, on purpose to bring his sincerity in religion to be suspected. Elphingston, the secretary of state, denied the matter with equal solemnity. It came, however, to be known by a very singular accident, which happened some years after, that the information which Elizabeth had received was well founded, though, at the same time, the king's declarations of his own innocence were perfectly consistent with truth. Cardinal Bellarmine, in a reply which he published to a controversial treatise, of which the king was the author, accused him of having abandoned the favourable sentiments which he

1599.

Accuses him of corresponding with the pope.

[h] Cald. 333.

[i] Winw. Mem. vol. i. 37. 52.

1599. had once entertained of the Roman catholic religion, and, as a proof of this, quoted his letter to Clement the eighth. It was impossible, any longer, to believe this to be a fiction; and it was a matter too delicate to be passed over without strict inquiry. James immediately examined Elphingston, and his confession unravelled the whole mystery. He acknowledged that he had shuffled in this letter among other papers, which he laid before the king to be signed, who, suspecting no such deceit, subscribed it together with the rest, and without knowing what it contained; that he had no other motive, however, to this action, but zeal for his majesty's service; and, by flattering the Roman catholics with hopes of indulgence under the king's government, he imagined that he was paving the way for his more easy accession to the English throne. The privy council of England entertained very different sentiments of the secretary's conduct. In their opinion, not only the king's reputation had been exposed to reproach, but his life to danger, by this rash imposture; they even imputed the gunpowder treason to the rage and disappointment of the papists, upon finding that the hopes which this letter inspired were frustrated. The secretary was sent a prisoner into Scotland, to be tried for high treason. His peers found him guilty, but, by the queen's intercession, he obtained a pardon[k].

According to the account of other historians, James himself was no stranger to this correspondence with the pope; and, if we believe them, Elphingston, being intimidated by the threats of the English council, and deceived by the artifices of the earl of Dunbar, concealed some circumstances in his narrative of this transaction, and falsified others; and, at the expense of his own fame, and with the danger of his life, endeavoured to draw a veil over this part of his master's conduct[l].

[k] State Trials, vol. i. 429. Spotsw. 456. 507. Johnst. 448.
[l] Cald. vol. v. 322. vi. 147.

But, whether we impute the writing of this letter to the secretary's officious zeal, or to the king's command, it is certain that, about this time, James was at the utmost pains to gain the friendship of the Roman catholic princes, as a necessary precaution towards facilitating his accession to the English throne. Lord Home, who was himself a papist, was entrusted with a secret commission to the pope[m]; the archbishop of Glasgow was an active instrument with those of his own religion[n]. The pope expressed such favourable sentiments both of the king, and of his rights to the crown of England, that James thought himself bound, some years after, to acknowledge the obligation in a public manner[o]. Sir James Lindsay made great progress in gaining the English papists to acknowledge his majesty's title. Of all these intrigues Elizabeth received obscure hints from different quarters. The more imperfectly she knew, the more violently she suspected the king's designs; and, the natural jealousy of her temper increasing with age, she observed his conduct with greater solicitude than ever. 1599. James at great pains to gain the Roman catholics.

The questions with regard to the election and power of the representatives of the church, were finally decided this year by the general assembly, which met at Montrose. That place was chosen as most convenient for the ministers of the north, among whom the king's influence chiefly lay. Although great numbers resorted from the northern provinces, and the king employed his whole interest, and the authority of his own presence, to gain a majority, the following regulations were with difficulty agreed on. That the general assembly shall recommend six persons to every vacant benefice, which gave a title to a seat in parliament, out of whom the king shall nominate one; that the person so elected, after obtaining his seat in parliament, shall 1600. March 28. His regulations with regard to the church.

[m] Winw. Mem. vol. ii. 57.
[n] Cald. vol. vi. 147.
[o] Cald. vol. v. 604.

1600. neither propose nor consent to any thing there, that may affect the interest of the church, without special instructions to that purpose; that he shall be answerable for his conduct to every general assembly; and submit to its censure, without appeal, upon pain of infamy and excommunication; that he shall discharge the duties of a pastor in a particular congregation; that he shall not usurp any ecclesiastical jurisdiction, superior to that of his other brethren; that if the church inflict on him the censure of deprivation, he shall thereby forfeit his seat in parliament; that he shall annually resign his commission to the general assembly, which may be restored to him, or not, as the assembly, with the king's approbation, shall judge most expedient for the good of the church [p]. Nothing could be more repugnant to the idea of episcopal government, than these regulations. It was not in consequence of rights derived from their office, but of powers conferred by a commission, that the ecclesiastical persons were to be admitted to a seat in parliament; they were the representatives, not the superiors, of the clergy. Destitute of all spiritual authority, even their civil jurisdiction was temporary. James, however, flattered himself that they would soon be able to shake off these fetters, and gradually acquire all the privileges which belonged to the episcopal order. The clergy dreaded the same thing; and of course he contended for the nomination of these commissioners, and they opposed it, not so much on account of the powers then vested in them, as of those to which, it was believed, they would soon attain [q].

Gowrie's conspiracy.

During this summer, the kingdom enjoyed an unusual tranquillity. The clergy, after many struggles, were brought under great subjection; the popish earls were restored to their estates and honours, by the authority of parliament, and with the consent of the

[p] Spotsw. 453. 457. Cald. vol. v. 368.

[q] Spotsw. 454.

church; the rest of the nobles were at peace among themselves, and obedient to the royal authority; when, in the midst of this security, the king's life was exposed to the utmost danger, by a conspiracy altogether unexpected, and almost inexplicable. The authors of it were John Ruthven, earl of Gowrie, and his brother Alexander, the sons of that earl who was beheaded in the year one thousand five hundred and eighty-four. Nature had adorned both these young men, especially the elder brother, with many accomplishments, to which education had added its most elegant improvements. More learned than is usual among persons of their rank; more religious than is common at their age of life; generous, brave, popular; their countrymen, far from thinking them capable of any atrocious crime, conceived the most sanguine hopes of their early virtues. Notwithstanding all these noble qualities, some unknown motive engaged them in a conspiracy, which, if we adhere to the account commonly received, must be transmitted to posterity as one of the most wicked, as well as one of the worst-concerted, of which history makes any mention. 1600.

On the fifth of August, as the king, who resided during the hunting season in his palace of Falkland, was going out to his sport early in the morning, he was accosted by Mr. Alexander Ruthven, who, with an air of great importance, told the king, that the evening before he had met an unknown man, of a suspicious aspect, walking alone in a by-path, near his brother's house at Perth; and, on searching him, had found, under his cloak, a pot filled with a great quantity of foreign gold; that he had immediately seized both him and his treasure, and, without communicating the matter to any person, had kept him confined and bound in a solitary house; and that he thought it his duty to impart such a singular event first of all to his majesty. James immediately suspected this unknown person to be a seminary priest, supplied with foreign coin, in

1600. order to excite new commotions in the kingdom; and resolved to empower the magistrates of Perth to call the person before them, and inquire into all the circumstances of the story. Ruthven violently opposed this resolution, and with many arguments urged the king to ride directly to Perth, and to examine the matter in person. Meanwhile, the chase began; and James, notwithstanding his passion for that amusement, could not help ruminating upon the strangeness of the tale, and on Ruthven's importunity. At last he called him, and promised, when the sport was over, to set out for Perth. The chase, however, continued long; and Ruthven, who all the while kept close by the king, was still urging him to make haste. At the death of the buck he would not allow James to stay till a fresh horse was brought him; and observing the duke of Lennox and the earl of Mar preparing to accompany the king, he entreated him to countermand them. This James refused; and though Ruthven's impatience and anxiety, as well as the apparent perturbation in his whole behaviour, raised some suspicions in his mind; yet his own curiosity, and Ruthven's solicitations, prevailed on him to set out for Perth. When within a mile of the town, Ruthven rode forward to inform his brother of the king's arrival, though he had already despatched two messengers for that purpose. At a little distance from the town, the earl, attended by several of the citizens, met the king, who had only twenty persons in his train. No preparations were made for the king's entertainment; the earl appeared pensive and embarrassed, and was at no pains to atone, by his courtesy or hospitality, for the bad fare with which he treated his guests. When the king's repast was over, his attendants were led to dine in another room, and he being left almost alone, Ruthven whispered him, that now was the time to go to the chamber where the unknown person was kept. James commanded him to bring sir Thomas Erskine along with

them: but, instead of that, Ruthven ordered him not to follow; and, conducting the king up a staircase, and then through several apartments, the doors of which he locked behind him, led him at last into a small study, in which there stood a man clad in armour, with a sword and dagger by his side. The king, who expected to have found one disarmed and bound, started at the sight, and inquired if this was the person; but Ruthven, snatching the dagger from the girdle of the man in armour, and holding it to the king's breast, "Remember," said he, "how unjustly my father suffered by your command; you are now my prisoner; submit to my disposal without resistance or outcry; or this dagger shall instantly avenge his blood." James expostulated with Ruthven, entreated, and flattered him. The man whom he found in the study stood, all the while, trembling and dismayed, without courage either to aid the king, or to second his aggressor. Ruthven protested, that if the king raised no outcry, his life should be safe; and, moved by some unknown reason, retired in order to call his brother, leaving to the man in armour the care of the king, whom he bound by oath not to make any noise during his absence. 1600.

While the king was in this dangerous situation, his attendants growing impatient to know whither he had retired, one of Gowrie's domestics entered the room hastily, and told them that the king had just rode away towards Falkland. All of them rushed out into the street; and the earl, in the utmost hurry, called for their horses. But by this time his brother had returned to the king, and swearing that now there was no remedy, he must die, offered to bind his hands. Unarmed as James was, he scorned to submit to that indignity; and closing with the assassin, a fierce struggle ensued. The man in armour stood, as formerly, amazed and motionless; and the king, dragging Ruthven towards a window, which, during his absence, he

1600. had persuaded the person with whom he was left to open, cried, with a wild and affrighted voice, "Treason! Treason! Help! I am murdered!" His attendants heard, and knew the voice, and saw at the window, a hand which grasped the king's neck with violence. They flew with precipitation to his assistance. Lennox and Mar, with the greater number, ran up the principal staircase, where they found all the doors shut, which they battered with the utmost fury, endeavouring to burst them open. But sir John Ramsey, entering by a backstair, which led to the apartment where the king was, found the door open; and rushing upon Ruthven, who was still struggling with the king, struck him twice with his dagger, and thrust him towards the staircase, where sir Thomas Erskine, and sir Hugh Herries met, and killed him; he crying with his last breath, "Alas! I am not to blame for this action." During this scuffle, the man who had been concealed in the study, escaped unobserved. Together with Ramsey, Erskine, and Herries, one Wilson a footman, entered the room where the king was, and, before they had time to shut the door, Gowrie rushed in with a drawn sword in each hand, followed by seven of his attendants well armed, and with a loud voice threatened them all with instant death. They immediately thrust the king into the little study, and, shutting the door upon him, encountered the earl. Notwithstanding the inequality of numbers, sir John Ramsey pierced Gowrie through the heart, and he fell down dead, without uttering a word; his followers, having received several wounds, immediately fled. Three of the king's defenders were likewise hurt in the conflict. A dreadful noise continued still at the opposite door, where many persons laboured in vain to force a passage; and the king being assured that they were Lennox, Mar, and his other friends, it was opened on the inside. They ran to the king, whom they unexpectedly found safe, with transports of congratulation; and he, falling

on his knees, with all his attendants around him, offered solemn thanks to God for such a wonderful deliverance. The danger, however, was not yet over. The inhabitants of the town, whose provost Gowrie was, and by whom he was extremely beloved, hearing the fate of the two brothers, ran to their arms, and surrounded the house, threatening revenge, with many insolent and opprobrious speeches against the king. James endeavoured to pacify the enraged multitude, by speaking to them from the window; he admitted their magistrates into the house; related to them all the circumstances of the fact; and, their fury subsiding by degrees, they dispersed. On searching the earl's pockets for papers that might discover his designs and accomplices, nothing was found but a small parchment bag, full of magical characters and words of enchantment; and, if we may believe the account of the conspiracy published by the king, "while these were about him, the wound of which he died bled not; but as soon as they were taken away, the blood gushed out in great abundance." After all the dangerous adventures of this busy day, the king returned in the evening to Falkland, having committed the dead bodies of the two brothers to the custody of the magistrates of Perth. 1600.

Notwithstanding the minute detail which the king gave of all the circumstances of this conspiracy against his life, the motives which induced the two brothers to attempt an action so detestable, the end they had in view, and the accomplices on whose aid they depended, were altogether unknown. The words of Ruthven to the king gave some grounds to think that the desire of revenging their father's death had instigated them to this attempt. But, whatever injuries their father had suffered, it is scarcely probable that they could impute them to the king, whose youth, as well as his subjection at that time to the violence of a faction, exempted him from being the object of resentment, on account of actions which were not done by his command. James

The motives of the conspirators not easily explained.

1600. had even endeavoured to repair the wrongs which the father had suffered, by benefits to his children; and Gowrie himself, sensible of his favour, had acknowledged it with the warmest expressions of gratitude. Three of the earl's attendants, being convicted of assisting him in this assault on the king's servants, were executed at Perth; but they could give no light into the motives which had prompted their master to an action so repugnant to these acknowledgments. Diligent search was made for the person concealed in the study, and from him great discoveries were expected. But Andrew Henderson, the earl's steward, who, upon a promise of pardon, confessed himself to be the man, was as much a stranger to his master's design as the rest; and though placed in the study by Gowrie's command, he did not even know for what end that station had been assigned him. The whole transaction remained as impenetrably dark as ever; and the two brothers, it was concluded, had concerted their scheme without either confident or accomplice, with unexampled secrecy as well as wickedness.

Sprot's discoveries concerning it.

An accident no less strange than the other circumstances of the story, and which happened nine years after, discovered that this opinion, however plausible, was ill-founded; and that the two brothers had not carried on their machinations all alone. One Sprot, a notary, having whispered among several persons, that he knew some secrets relating to Gowrie's conspiracy, the privy council thought the matter worthy of their attention, and ordered him to be seized. His confession was partly voluntary, and partly forced from him by torture. According to his account, Logan of Restalrig, a gentleman of an opulent fortune, but of dissolute morals, was privy to all Gowrie's intentions, and an accomplice in his crimes. Mr. Ruthven, he said, had frequent interviews with Logan, in order to concert the plan of their operations; the earl had corresponded with him to the same purpose; and one

Bour, Logan's confident, was trusted with the secret, and carried the letters between them. Both Logan and Bour were now dead. But Sprot affirmed that he had read letters written both by Gowrie and Logan on that occasion; and, in confirmation of his testimony, several of Logan's letters, which a curiosity fatal to himself had prompted Sprot to steal from among Bour's papers, were produced[r]. These were compared, by the privy council, with papers of Logan's handwriting, and the resemblance was manifest. Persons of undoubted credit, and well qualified to judge of the matter, examined them, and swore to their authenticity. Death itself did not exempt Logan from prosecution; his bones were dug up and tried for high treason, and, by a sentence equally odious and illegal[s], his lands 1600.

[r] Logan's letters were five in number. One to Bour, another to Gowrie, and three of them without any direction; nor could Sprot discover the name of the person to whom they were written. Logan gives him the appellation of right honourable. It appears from this, however, and from other words in the letter, Crom. 95, that there were several persons privy to the conspiracy. The date of the first letter is July 18th. Mr. Ruthven had communicated the matter to Logan only five days before. Ibid. It appears from the original 'summons of forfaulture' against Logan's heirs, that Bour, though he had letters addressed to him with regard to a conspiracy equally dangerous and important, was so illiterate that he could not read. "Jacobus Bour, literarum prorsus ignarus, dicti Georgii opera, in legendis omnibus scriptis ad eum missis, vel pertinentibus, utebatur." This is altogether strange, and nothing but the capricious character of Logan can account for his choosing such a confident.

[s] By the Roman law, persons guilty of the crime of high treason might be tried even after death. This practice was adopted by the Scots without any limitation, Parl. 1540, c. 69. But the unlimited exercise of this power was soon conceived to be dangerous; and the crown was laid under proper restrictions, by an act a.d. 1542, which has never been printed. The words of it are, "And because the said lords (i. e. the lords of articles) think the said act (viz. in 1540) too general and prejudicial to the barons in the realm, therefore statutes and ordains that the said act shall have no place in time coming, but against the heirs of them that notoriously commit, or shall commit lese majesty against the king's person, against the realm for averting the same, and against them that shall happen to betray the king's army allenarly, and being notourly known in their time; and the heirs of these persons to be called and judged within five years after the decease of the said persons committers of the said crimes; and the said time being bypast, the

1600. were forfeited, and his posterity declared infamous. Sprot was condemned to be hanged for misprision of treason. He adhered to his confession to the last, and having promised, on the scaffold, to give the spectators a sign in confirmation of the truth of what he had deposed, he thrice clapped his hands after he was thrown off the ladder by the executioner [t].

said heirs never to be pursued for the same." The sentence against Logan violated this statute in two particulars. He was notourly known during his life to be an accomplice in the crime for which he was tried; and his heir was called in question more than five years after his death. It is remarkable that this statute seems not to have been attended to in the parliament which forfeited Logan. Another singular circumstance deserves notice. As it is a maxim of justice that no person can be tried in absence; and as lawyers are always tenacious of their forms, and often absurd in their devices for preserving them, they contrived that, in any process against a dead person, his corpse or bones shall be presented at the bar. Examples of this occur frequently in the Scottish history. After the battle of Corrichie, the dead body of the earl of Huntly was presented in parliament, before sentence of 'forfaulture' was pronounced against him. For the same reason the bodies of Gowrie and his brother were preserved, in order that they might be produced in parliament. Logan's bones, in compliance with the same rule, were dug up. Mackenz. Crim. Law, book i. tit. 6. § 22.

[t] It appears that archbishop Spotswood was present at the execution of Sprot, Crom. 115, and yet he seems to have given no credit to his discoveries. The manner in which he speaks of him is remarkable: "Whether or not I should mention the arraignment and execution of George Sprot, who suffered at Edinburgh, I am doubtful. His confession, though voluntary and constant, carrying small probability. The man deposed, etc. It seemed to be a very fiction, and a mere invention of the man's own brain, for neither did he show the letter, nor could any wise man think that Gowrie, who went about the treason so secretly, would have communicated the matter to such a man as Logan was known to be," p. 508. Spotswood could not be ignorant of the solemnity with which Logan had been tried, and of the proof brought of the authenticity of his letters. He himself was probably present in parliament at the trial. The earl of Dunbar, of whom he always speaks with the highest respect, was the person who directed the process against Logan. Such a peremptory declaration against the truth of Sprot's evidence, notwithstanding all these circumstances, is surprising. Sir Thomas Hamilton, the king's advocate at that time, and afterwards earl of Hadington, represents the proof produced at Logan's trial as extremely convincing; and in an original letter of his to the king, the 21st of June, 1609, (in Bibl. Facult. Jurid.) after mentioning the manner in which the trial had been conducted, he thus goes on:

"When the probation of the summons was referred to the lords of articles'

But though it be thus unexpectedly discovered that Gowrie did not act without associates, little additional light is thrown, by this discovery, on the motives and intention of his conduct. It appears almost incredible that two young men of such distinguished virtue should revolt all at once from their duty, and attempt a crime so atrocious, as the murder of their sovereign. It appears still more improbable, that they should have concerted their undertaking with so little foresight and prudence. If they intended that the deed should have remained concealed, they could not have chosen a more improper scene for executing it, than their own house. If they intended that Henderson should have struck the blow, they could not have pitched on a man more destitute of the courage that must direct the hand of an assassin; nor could they expect that he, unsolicited, and unacquainted with their purpose would venture on such a desperate action. If Ruthven meant to stab the king with his own hand, why did he withdraw the dagger, after it was pointed at his breast? How could he leave the king, after such a plain declaration of his intention? Was it not preposterous to commit him to the keeping of such a timid associate as Henderson? For what purpose did he waste time in binding the hands of an unarmed man, whom he might easily have despatched with his sword? Had providence permitted them to imbrue their hands in the blood of their sovereign, what advantage could have accrued to them by his death? And what claims or pretensions could they have opposed to the rights of his children[n]? 1600.

votes, they found uniformly, all in one voice, the said summons to be so clearly proved, that they seemed to contend who should be able most zealously to express the satisfaction of his heart, not only by the most pithy words, but by tears of joy; diverse of the best rank confessing that that whereof they doubted at their entry into the house was now so manifest, that they behoved to esteem them traitors who should any longer refuse to declare their assured resolution of the truth of that treason."

[n] It has been asserted, that, in consequence of the king's death, the earl of Gowrie might have pretended to the crown of England, as the son of

1600. Inevitable and instant vengeance, together with perpetual infamy, were the only consequences they could expect to follow such a crime.

On the other hand, it is impossible to believe that the king had formed any design against the life of the two brothers. They had not incurred his indignation by any crime; and were in no degree the objects of his jealousy or hatred[x]; nor was he of a spirit so sanguinary, or so noted for rash and desperate valour, as to have attempted to murder them in their own house, where they were surrounded with many domestics, he

Dorothea Stewart, daughter of lord Methven by Margaret of England, who, after her divorce from the earl of Angus, took that nobleman for her third husband. Burnet, Hist. of his own Times. But this assertion is ill-founded. It appears from undoubted evidence, that lord Methven had only one child by queen Margaret, which died in its infancy, and Dorothea lady Ruthven was not the daughter of queen Margaret, but of Janet Stewart, lord Methven's second wife, a daughter of John earl of Athol. Crawf. Peer. 329. And though Gowrie had really been descended from the blood royal of England, the king, at that time, had a son and a daughter; and besides them, lady Arabella Stewart, daughter of Charles, earl of Lennox, had a preferable title to the crown of England.

[x] Sir Henry Neville, in a letter to sir Ralph Winwood, imputes the death of the two brothers to a cause not mentioned by any of our historians. "Out of Scotland we hear that there is no good agreement, but rather an open diffidence, betwixt the king and his wife, and many are of opinion that the discovery of some affection between her and the earl of Gowrie's brother (who was killed with him) was the truest cause and motive of that tragedy." Winw. Mem. vol. i. 274. Whether the following passages in Nicholson's letter be any confirmation of that suspicion, is submitted to the reader. In his letter, Sept. 22, 1602, he mentions the return of Gowrie's two younger brothers into Scotland, and adds, "The coming in of these two, and the queen of Scots dealing with them, and sending away and furnishing Mrs. Beatrix [their sister] with such information as sir Thomas Erskine has given, hath bred great suspicion in the king of Scots that they come not in but upon some dangerous plot." In another letter, January 1, 1603, "The day of writing my last, Mrs. Beatrix Ruthven was brought by the lady Paisley, and Mrs. of Angus, as one of their gentlewomen, into the court in the evening, and stowed in a chamber, prepared for her by the queen's direction, where the queen had much time and conference with her. Of this the king got notice, and showed his dislike thereof to the queen, gently reproving her for it, and examining quietly of the queen's servants of the same, and of other matters thereunto belonging, with such discretion and secrecy as requires such a matter."

only with a slender and unarmed train; where they could call to their assistance the inhabitants of a city, at the devotion of their family, while he was at a distance from all aid; and least of all would he have chosen for his associates in such an enterprise, the earl of Mar and the duke of Lennox, the former connected in close friendship with the house of Gowrie, and the latter married to one of the earl's sisters. 1600.

Whichsoever of these opposite systems we embrace; whether we impute the intention of murder to Gowrie, or to the king; insuperable difficulties arise, and we are involved in darkness, mystery, and contradictions. Perhaps the source of the whole conspiracy ought to be searched for deeper, and by deriving it from a more remote cause we may discover it to be less criminal. A conjecture concerning the intention of the conspirators.

To keep the king of Scots in continual dependence, was one great object of Elizabeth's policy. In order to this, she sometimes soothed him, and sometimes bribed his ministers and favourites; and when she failed of attaining her end by these means, she encouraged the clergy to render any administration which she distrusted unpopular, by decrying it, or stirred up some faction of the nobles to oppose and to overturn it. In that fierce age, men little acquainted with the arts of undermining a ministry by intrigue, had recourse to the ruder practice of rendering themselves masters of the king's person, that they might thereby obtain the direction of his councils. Those nobles, who seized the king at the 'raid of Ruthven,' were instigated and supported by Elizabeth. Bothwell, in all his wild attempts, enjoyed her protection, and when they miscarried, he was secure of a retreat in her dominions. The connexions which James had been forming of late with the Roman catholic princes, his secret negotiations in England with her subjects, and the maxims by which he governed his own kingdom, all contributed to excite her jealousy. She dreaded some great revolution in Scotland to be approaching, and it was her interest to prevent it. The

1600. earl of Gowrie was one of the most powerful of the Scottish nobles, and descended from ancestors warmly attached to the English interest. He had adopted the same system, and believed the welfare of his country to be inseparably connected with the subsistence of the alliance between the two kingdoms. During his residence at Paris, he had contracted an intimate friendship with sir Henry Neville, the queen's ambassador there, and was recommended by him to his court, as a person of whom great use might be made[y]. Elizabeth received him, as he passed through England, with distinguished marks of respect and favour. From all these circumstances a suspicion may arise, that the plan of the conspiracy against the king was formed at that time in concert with her. Such a suspicion prevailed in that age, and from the letters of Nicholson, Elizabeth's agent in Scotland, it appears not to be destitute of foundation. An English ship was observed hovering, for some time, in the mouth of the frith of Forth. The earl's two younger brothers fled into England after the ill success of the conspiracy, and were protected by Elizabeth. James himself, though he prudently concealed it, took great umbrage at her behaviour. None, however, of Elizabeth's intrigues in Scotland tended to hurt the king's person, but only to circumscribe his authority, and to thwart his schemes. His life was the surest safeguard of her own, and restrained the popish pretenders to her crown, and their abettors, from desperate attempts, to which their impatience and bigotry might otherwise have urged them on. To have encouraged Gowrie to murder his sovereign, would, on her part, have been an act of the utmost imprudence. Nor does this seem to have been the intention of the two brothers. Mr. Ruthven, first of all, endeavoured to decoy the king to Perth, without any attendants. When these proved more numerous than was expected, the

[y] Winw. i. 156.

earl employed a stratagem, in order to separate them from the king, by pretending that he had rode away towards Falkland, and by calling hastily for their horses, that they might follow him. By their shutting James up, meanwhile, in a distant corner of the house, and by attempting to bind his hands, their design seems to have been rather to seize than to assassinate him. Though Gowrie had not collected his followers in such numbers as to have been able to detain him long a prisoner, in that part of the kingdom, by open force, he might soon have been conveyed aboard the English ship, which waited, perhaps, to receive him; and he might have been landed at Fastcastle, a house of Logan's, in which, according to many obscure hints in his letters, some rendezvous of the conspirators was to be held. Amidst the surprise and terrour, into which the king must have been thrown by the violence offered to him, it was extremely natural for him to conclude that his life was sought. It was the interest of all his followers to confirm him in this belief, and to magnify his danger, in order to add to the importance and merit of their own services. Thus his fear, and their vanity, aided by the credulity and wonder which the contemplation of any great and tragical event, when not fully understood, is apt to inspire, augmented the whole transaction. On the other hand, the extravagance and improbability of the circumstances which were added, detracted from the credit of those which really happened; and even furnished pretences for calling in question the truth of the whole conspiracy. 1600.

Many disbelieve the account published by the king.

The account of what had happened at Perth reached Edinburgh next morning. The privy council commanded the ministers of that city instantly to assemble their people; and, after relating to them the circumstances of the conspiracy formed against the king's life, to return public thanks to God, for the protection which he had so visibly afforded him. But as the first accounts transmitted to Edinburgh, written in a hurry, and while the circumstances of the conspiracy were but

1600. imperfectly known, and the passions which it excited strongly felt, were indistinct, exaggerated, and contradictory, the ministers laid hold of this; and though they offered to give public thanks to God for the king's safety, they refused to enter into any detail of particulars, or to utter from the chair of truth, what appeared to be still dubious and uncertain.

A few days after, the king returned to Edinburgh; and though Galloway, the minister of his own chapel, made an harangue to the people at the public cross, in which he recited all the circumstances of the conspiracy; though James himself, in their hearing, confirmed his account; though he commanded a narrative of the whole transaction to be published; the ministers of that city, as well as many of their brethren, still continued incredulous and unconvinced. Their high esteem of Gowrie, their jealousy of every part of the king's conduct, added to some false and many improbable circumstances in the narrative, not only led them to suspect the whole, but gave their suspicions an air of credibility. But at length the king, partly by arguments, partly by threats, prevailed on all of them, except Mr. Robert Bruce, to own that they were convinced of the truth of the conspiracy. He could be brought no further than to declare, that he reverenced the king's account of the transaction, but could not say that he himself was persuaded of the truth of it. The scruples or obstinacy of a single man would have been little regarded; but as the same spirit of incredulity began to spread among the people, the example of one in so high reputation for integrity and abilities, was extremely dangerous. The king was at the utmost pains to convince and to gain Bruce; but finding it impossible to remove his doubts, he deprived him of his benefice, and after repeated delays, and many attempts towards a reconcilement, banished him the kingdom[z].

The proceedings of parliament were not retarded by

[z] Spotsw. 461, etc. Cald. v. 389, etc.

any scruples of this sort. The dead bodies of the two brothers were produced there, according to law; an indictment for high treason was preferred against them; witnesses were examined; and, by an unanimous sentence, their estates and honours were forfeited; the punishment due to traitors was inflicted on their dead bodies; and, as if the punishment hitherto in use did not express sufficient detestation of their crimes, the parliament enacted that the surname of Ruthven should be abolished; and, in order to preserve the memory of the king's miraculous escape, and to declare the sense which the nation had of the divine goodness, to all future ages, appointed the fifth of August to be observed, annually, as a day of public thanksgiving[a].

1600. Proceedings of parliament against the conspirators.

[a] A few weeks after the death of the two brothers, the king published a 'Discourse of their vile and unnatural conspiracy against his life.' In the year 1713, George, earl of Cromartie published an 'Historical Account of the conspiracy by the earl of Gowrie and Robert Logan of Restalrig, against king James the sixth.' He seems not to have seen the account which the king himself had given of that matter, and borrows the whole historical part from Spotswood and other authors; but he has extracted from the public records the depositions of the witnesses produced by the king's council, in order to make good the charge against the two brothers, and Logan their associate. From these two treatises our knowledge of all the material circumstances of the conspiracy is derived. The evidence which they contain, one would expect to be authentic and decisive. An account of a fact still recent, published by royal authority, and the original depositions of persons examined in presence of the highest court in the nation, ought to convey a degree of evidence seldom attained in historical relations, and to exclude all remaining doubt and uncertainty. But as every thing with regard to this transaction is dark and problematical, the king's account and the depositions of the witnesses not only vary but contradict each other in so many circumstances, that much room is still left for hesitation and historical scepticism. The testimony of Henderson is the fullest and most important, but in several particulars the king's account and his are contradictory. I. According to the king's account, while Mr. Ruthven was holding the dagger at his breast, 'the fellow in the study stood quaking and trembling.' Disc. 17. But Henderson says that he himself wrested the dagger out of Mr. Ruthven's hands. Disc. 53. Crom. 50. Henderson likewise boasted to his wife, that he had that day twice saved the king from being stabbed. Disc. 54. Crom. 53. II. The king asserts that Henderson opened the window during Mr. Ruthven's absence. Disc. 23. Henderson deposes that he was only attempting

1601. Though Gowrie's conspiracy occasioned a sudden and a great alarm, it was followed by no consequences

to open it when Mr. Ruthven returned, and that during the struggle between the king and him, he opened it. Disc. 53, 54. Crom. 51, 52. III. If we may believe the king, the fellow in the study stood, during the struggle, behind the king's back, inactive and trembling all the time. Disc. 27. But Henderson affirms, that he snatched away the garter with which Mr. Ruthven attempted to bind the king; that he pulled back Mr. Ruthven's hand, while he was endeavouring to stop the king's mouth, and that he opened the window. Disc. 54. Crom. 52. IV. By the king's account, Mr. Ruthven left him in the study, and went away in order to meet with his brother, and the earl came up the stairs for the same purpose. Disc. 23. Henderson deposes, that when Mr. Ruthven left the king, "he believes that he did not pass from the door." Crom. 51. It is apparent both from the situation of the house, and from other circumstances, that there could not possibly have been any interview between the brothers at this time. Disc. 23.

Henderson was twice examined, first at Falkland before the privy council in August, and next at Edinburgh before the parliament in November. Not to mention some lesser variations between these depositions, we shall point out two which are remarkable. In his first deposition, Mr. Henderson relates the most material circumstance of the whole in these words: "Mr. Ruthven pulled out the deponent's dagger, and held the same to his majesty's breast, saying, 'Remember you of my father's murder; you shall now die for it:' and pointing to his highness's heart with the dagger, the deponent threw the same out of Mr. Ruthven's hands, and swore that as God should judge his soul, that if Mr. Ruthven had retained the dagger in his hand the space a man may go six steps, he would have stricken the king to the hilts with it." Disc. 52. But at his second examination he varied from this in two material circumstances. First, the words he at that time put in Mr. Ruthven's mouth while he held the dagger at the king's breast are, 'Sir, you must be my prisoner; remember on my father's death.' Secondly, when he threatened him with death, it was only to deter him from making any noise, 'Hold your tongue, or by Christ you shall die.' 2. In his first deposition, the words of Mr. Ruthven, when he returned to the chamber where he had left the king, are, 'There is no remedy, by God you must die.' But in his second deposition, 'By God there is no remedy, and offered to bind his majesty's hands.' Crom. 51. The material words 'you must die' are omitted. The first deposition seems plainly to intimate that it was Ruthven's intention to murder the king. The second would lead us to conclude that he had no other design than to detain him as a prisoner.

There are likewise some remarkable contradictions in the testimonies of the other witnesses. 1. In the discourse published by authority, it is insinuated that the tumult of the inhabitants was raised against the king, and that it required some art to pacify them. Disc. 32. The duke of Lennox

of importance; and having been concerted by the two brothers, either without any associates, or with such as were unknown and chose to remain so, the danger was over, as soon as discovered. But not long after, a conspiracy broke out in England against Elizabeth, which, though the first danger was instantly dispelled, produced tragical effects, that rendered the close of that queen's reign dismal and unhappy. As James was deeply interested in that event, it merits our particular notice. 1601. Essex's conspiracy against Elizabeth.

The court of England was at this time divided between two powerful factions, which contended for the supreme direction of affairs. The leader of the one was Robert d'Evreux, earl of Essex; sir Robert Cecil, the son of lord treasurer Burleigh, was at the head of the other. The former was the most accomplished and the most popular of all the English nobles; brave, generous, affable; though impetuous, yet willing to listen to the counsels of those whom he loved; an avowed, but not an implacable enemy; a friend no less constant than warm; incapable of disguising his own sentiments, or of misrepresenting those of others; better fitted for a camp than for a court; of a genius that qualified him for the first place in the administration, with a spirit which scorned the second as below his merit. He was

confirms this in his deposition. Crom. 44. An act of privy council summoning the magistrates of Perth to answer for that riot is still extant. And yet Andrew Roy, one of the baillies of the town, deposes, that he himself raised the people, and that they took arms in order to assist the king. Crom. 66. 2. Henderson deposes, that he gave an evasive answer to Mr. John Moncrief, who inquired where he had been that morning, because the earl had commanded him not to let any man know that he had been at Falkland. Disc. 54. Moncrief deposes to the same purpose. Crom. 64. And yet George Hay, afterwards lord Kinnoul, and the chancellor of Scotland, and Peter Hay, depose, that the earl, in their presence, asked Henderson, 'Whom he found with the king at Falkland?' Crom. 70, 71. Which question seems to prove that he did not aim at keeping that journey a secret. In the Collection of Criminal Trials, published by Mr. Arnot in 1785, the evidence against the two brothers has been considered with great attention. P. 20, etc.

1601. soon distinguished by the queen, who, with a profusion uncommon to her, conferred on him, even in his earliest youth, the highest honours. Nor did this diminish the esteem and affection of his countrymen; but, by a rare felicity, he was at once the favourite of his sovereign, and the darling of the people. Cecil, on the other hand, educated in a court, and trained under a father deeply skilled in all its arts, was crafty, insinuating, industrious; and though possessed of talents which fitted him for the highest offices, he did not rely upon his merit alone for attaining them, but availed himself of every advantage, which his own address, or the mistakes of others, afforded him. Two such men were formed to be rivals and enemies. Essex despised the arts of Cecil as low and base. To Cecil, the earl's magnanimity appeared to be presumption and folly. All the military men, except Raleigh, favoured Essex. Most of the courtiers adhered to Cecil, whose manners more nearly resembled their own.

His correspondence with the Scottish king.

As Elizabeth advanced in years, the struggle between these factions became more violent. Essex, in order to strengthen himself, had early courted the friendship of the king of Scots, for whose right of succession he was a zealous advocate, and held a close correspondence both with him and with his principal ministers. Cecil, devoted to the queen alone, rose daily to new honours, by the assiduity of his services, and the patience with which he expected the reward of them: while the earl's high spirit and impetuosity sometimes exposed him to checks from a mistress, who, though partial in her affection toward him, could not easily bear contradiction, and who conferred favours often unwillingly, and always slowly. His own solicitations, however, seconded maliciously by his enemies, who wished to remove him at a distance from court, advanced him to the command of the army employed in Ireland against Tyronne, and to the office of lord lieutenant of that kingdom, with a commission almost unlimited. His

success in that expedition did not equal either his own promises, or the expectations of Elizabeth. The queen, peevish from her disappointment, and exasperated against Essex by the artifices of his enemies, wrote him a harsh letter, full of accusations and reproaches. These his impatient spirit could not bear, and, in the first transports of his resentment, he proposed to carry over a part of his army into England, and, by driving his enemies from the queen's presence, to reinstate himself in favour and in power. But, upon more mature thoughts, he abandoned this rash design, and, setting sail with a few officers devoted to his person, landed in England, and posted directly to court. Elizabeth received him without any symptom either of affection or of displeasure. By proper compliances and acknowledgments, he might have regained his former ascendant over the queen. But he thought himself too deeply injured to submit to these. Elizabeth, on the other hand, determined to subdue his haughty temper; and though her severity drew from him the most humble letters, she confined him to the lord keeper's house, and appointed commissioners to try him, both for his conduct during his government of Ireland, and for leaving that kingdom without her permission. By their sentence, he was suspended from all his offices, except that of master of the horse, and continued a prisoner during the queen's pleasure. Satisfied with having mortified his pride thus far, Elizabeth did not suffer the sentence to be recorded, and soon after allowed him to retire to his own house. During these transactions, which occupied several months, Essex fluctuated between the allegiance he owed to his sovereign, and the desire of revenge; and sometimes leaned to the one, and sometimes to the other. In one of the intervals when the latter prevailed, he sent a messenger into Scotland, to encourage the king to assert his own right to the succession by force of arms, and to promise, that, besides the assistance of

1601.

1601. the earl and all his friends in England, lord Mountjoy, now lord lieutenant of Ireland, would join him with five thousand men from that kingdom. But James did not choose to hazard the losing of a kingdom, of which he was just about to obtain possession, by a premature attempt to seize it. Mountjoy, too, declined the enterprise, and Essex adopted more dutiful schemes; all thoughts of ambition appearing to be totally effaced out of his mind.

James's cautious conduct.

The wild attempts of Essex.

This moderation, which was merely the effect of disgust and disappointment, was not of long continuance; and the queen, having not only refused to renew a lucrative grant which she had formerly bestowed, but even to admit him into her presence, that new injury drove a temper, naturally impatient, and now much fretted, to absolute despair. His friends, instead of soothing his rage, or restraining his impetuosity, added to both by their imprudent and interested zeal. After many anxious consultations, he determined to attempt to redress his wrongs by violence. But being conscious how unpopular such an enterprise would be, if it appeared to proceed from motives of private revenge alone, he endeavoured to give it the semblance of public utility, by mingling the king of Scotland's interest with his own. He wrote to James, that the faction which now predominated in the English court, had resolved to support the pretensions of the infanta of Spain to the crown; that the places of the greatest importance in the kingdom were put into the hands of his avowed enemies; and that unless he sent ambassadors, without delay, to insist on the immediate declaration of his right of succession, their measures were so well concerted, that all his hopes would be desperate. James, who knew how disagreeable such a proposal would be to the queen of England, was not willing rashly to expose himself to her displeasure. Essex, nevertheless, blinded by resentment, and impatient for revenge, abandoned himself to these passions, and acted like a man guided by

phrensy or despair. With two or three hundred followers incompletely armed, he attempted to assault a throne the best established in Europe. Sallying at their head out of his own house, he called on the citizens of London, if they either valued his life, or wished to preserve the kingdom from the dominion of the Spaniards, to take arms, and to follow his standard. He advanced towards the palace with an intention to drive Cecil and his faction out of the queen's presence, and to obtain a declaration of the Scottish king's right of succession[b]. But, though almost adored by the citizens, not a man would join him in this wild enterprise. Dispirited by their indifference, deserted by some of his own attendants, and almost surrounded by the troops which marched against him under different leaders into the city, he retreated to his own house; and without any bold effort suitable to his present condition, or worthy of his former reputation for courage, he surrendered to his enemies. 1601.

As soon as James heard of Essex's ill success, he appointed the earl of Mar, and Bruce, abbot of Kinloss, to repair as his ambassadors to the court of England. The former of these was the person by whose means Essex had carried on his correspondence with the king. He was a passionate admirer of the earl's character, and disposed to attempt every thing that could contribute to his safety. Bruce, united in a close friendship with Mar, was ready to second him with equal zeal. Nor was the purpose of the embassy less friendly to Essex, than the choice of his ambassadors: they were commanded to solicit, in the warmest manner, for the earl's life; and if they found that the king, by avowing his friends, could either promote their designs, or contribute to their safety, they were empowered to lay aside all disguise, and to promise that he would put himself at their head, and claim what was due to him by force of arms[c]. But before the ambassadors could reach London, Essex had His death.

[b] Birch. Mem. ii. 477. [c] Johnst. 289. Birch. Mem. ii. 510.

1601. suffered the punishment which he merited by his treason. Perhaps, the fear of their interposing, in order to obtain his pardon, hastened his death. Elizabeth continued for some time irresolute concerning his fate, and could not bring herself to consign into the hands of the executioner, a man who had once possessed her favour so entirely, without a painful struggle between her resentment against his late misconduct, and her ancient affection towards him. The distress to which she was now reduced, tended naturally to soften the former, while it revived the latter with new tenderness; and the intercession of one faithful friend who had interest with the queen, might perhaps have saved his life, and have procured him a remission, which, of herself, she was ashamed to grant. But this generous nobleman had at that time no such friend. Elizabeth solicited incessantly by her ministers, and offended with the haughtiness of Essex, who, as she imagined, scorned to sue for pardon, at last commanded the sentence to be put in execution. No sooner was the blow struck, than she repented of her own rashness, and bewailed his death with the deepest sorrow. James always considered him as one who had fallen a martyr to his service, and, after his accession to the English throne, restored his son to his honours, as well as all his associates in the conspiracy, and distinguished them with his favour[d].

James continues his intrigues in England.

The Scottish ambassadors, finding that they had arrived too late to execute the chief business committed to their charge, not only concealed that part of their instructions with the utmost care; but congratulated the queen, in their master's name, on her happy escape from such an audacious conspiracy. Elizabeth, though no stranger to the king's correspondence with Essex, or to that nobleman's intentions of asserting James's right to the crown, was not willing that these should be

[d] Camd. Spotsw. 464.

known to the people, and, for that reason, received the congratulations of the Scottish ambassadors with all possible marks of credit and good-will; and, in order to sooth James, and to preserve the appearances of union between the two courts, increased the subsidy which she paid him annually. The ambassadors resided for some time in England, and were employed with great success in renewing and extending the intrigues which Bruce had formerly entered into with the English nobles. As Elizabeth advanced in years, the English turned their eyes more and more towards Scotland, and were eager to prevent each other in courting the favour of their future monarch. Assurances of attachment, professions of regard, and promises of support, were offered to James from every corner of the kingdom. Cecil himself, perceiving what hopes Essex had founded on the friendship of the Scottish king, and what advantages he might have derived from it, thought it prudent to stand no longer at a distance from a prince, who might so soon become his master. But being sensible at the same time how dangerous such an intercourse might prove, under a mistress naturally jealous, and whose jealousy grew stronger with old age; though he entered into a correspondence with him, he carried it on with all the secrecy and caution necessary in his situation, and peculiar to his character[e]. James, having gained the man whose opposition and influence he had hitherto chiefly dreaded, waited, in perfect security, till that event should happen, which would open his way to the throne of England[f]. It was with some difficulty that he restrained within proper bounds his adherents 1601.

[e] See Appendix, No. LIII.

[f] Dr. Birch, in his Life of Prince Henry, p. 232, has given some account of the mysterious mode in which this correspondence was carried on, and how the letters were conveyed from London to Dublin, and from thence to Scotland. Notwithstanding the solicitude which Cecil repeatedly discovers, that his letters should be destroyed as soon as the king had read them, a considerable number of them has been preserved, and published by sir David

1601. in that kingdom, who, labouring to distinguish themselves by that officious zeal, with which a prince, who has a near prospect of mounting the throne, is always served, urged him to allow a motion to be made in parliament for declaring his right of succession to the crown. James prudently discouraged that design; but it was with no small satisfaction that he observed the ascendant he was acquiring in a court, the dictates of which he had been so long obliged to obey; and which had either prescribed or thwarted every step he had taken during the whole course of his reign[s].

1602. Attempts to civilize the highlanders.

Notwithstanding the violent struggles of the political factions which divided the court, and the frequent revolutions which had happened there, since the king first took the reins of government into his own hands, Scotland had enjoyed unusual tranquillity, being undisturbed by any foreign enemy, and free from any intestine commotion of long continuance. During this period, James endeavoured to civilize the highlands and the isles, a part of his dominions too much neglected by former monarchs, though the reformation of it was an object highly worthy of their care. The long peace with England had afforded an opportunity of subduing the licentious spirit of the borderers, and of restraining their depredations, often no less ruinous to their countrymen than to their enemies. The inhabitants of the low country began, gradually, to forget the use of arms, and to become attentive to the arts of peace. But the highlanders, retaining their natural fierceness, averse from labour, and inured to rapine, infested their more industrious neighbours by their continual incursions. James, being solicitous not only to repress their inroads, but to render them useful sub-

Dalrymple, in the year 1766. They were written by lord Henry Howard, under the inspection of Cecil, in a style affectedly obscure. The whole correspondence is more curious than instructive.

[s] Spotsw. 467. 471. Birch. Mem. ii. 514.

jects[h], had, at different times, enacted many wise laws extremely conducive to these ends. All landlords, or chiefs of clans, were enjoined to permit no persons to reside in their estates, who could not find sufficient surety for their good behaviour; they were required to make a list of all suspicious persons under their jurisdiction, to bind themselves to deliver them to justice, and to indemnify those who should suffer by their robberies; and, in order to ascertain the faithful performance of these articles, the chiefs themselves were obliged to give hostages to the king, or to put pledges in his hands. Three towns, which might serve as a retreat for the industrious, and a nursery for arts and commerce, were appointed to be built in different parts of the highlands; one in Cantire, another in Lochaber, and a third in the isle of Lewis; and, in order to draw inhabitants thither, all the privileges of royal boroughs were to be conferred upon them. Finding it, however, to be no easy matter to inspire the natives of those countries with the love of industry, a resolution was taken to plant among them colonies of people from the more industrious counties. The first experiment was made on the isle of Lewis; and as it was advantageously situated for the fishing trade, a source from which Scotland ought naturally to derive great wealth, the colony transported thither was drawn out of Fife, the inhabitants of which were well skilled in that branch of commerce. But before they had remained there long enough to manifest the good effects of this institution, the islanders, enraged at seeing their country occupied by those intruders, took arms, and, surprising them in the night-time, murdered some of them, and compelled the rest to abandon the settlement. The king's attention being soon after turned to other subjects, we hear no more of this salutary project. Though James did not pursue the design with that steady application and 1602.

[h] Basil. Dor. 139.

1602. perseverance, without which it is impossible to change the manners of a whole people, he had the glory, however, not only of having first conceived the thought, but of having first pointed out the proper method of introducing the civil arts of life into that part of the island[i].

Elizabeth's last illness and death.

After having long enjoyed a good state of health, the effect of a sound constitution, and the reward of uncommon regularity and temperance, Elizabeth began this winter to feel her vigour decrease, and to be sensible of the infirmities of old age. Having removed on a very stormy day from Westminster to Richmond, whither she was impatient to retire, her complaints increased. 1603. Jan. 31. She had no formed fever; her pulse was good; but she eat little, and could not sleep. Her distemper seemed to proceed from a deep melancholy, which appeared both in her countenance and behaviour. She delighted in solitude; she sat constantly in the dark; and was often drowned in tears.

No sooner was the queen's indisposition known, than persons of all ranks, and of all different sects and parties, redoubled their applications to the king of Scots, and vied with each other in professions of attachment to his person, and in promises of submission to his government. Even some of Elizabeth's own servants, weary of the length of her reign, fond of novelty, impatient to get rid of the burthen of gratitude for past benefits, and expecting to share in the liberality of a new prince, began to desert her: and crowds of people hurried towards Scotland, eager to preoccupy the favour of the successor, or afraid of being too late in paying homage to him.

Meanwhile, the queen's disease increased, and her melancholy appeared to be settled and incurable. Various conjectures were formed concerning the causes of a disorder, from which she seemed to be exempted by

[i] Parl. 1587. 1594. 1597. Spotsw. 468.

the natural cheerfulness of her temper. Some imputed it to her being forced, contrary to her inclination, to pardon the earl of Tyronne, whose rebellion had for many years created her much trouble. Others imagined that it arose from observing the ingratitude of her courtiers, and the levity of her people, who beheld her health declining with most indecent indifference, and looked forward to the accession of the Scottish king, with an impatience which they could not conceal. The most common opinion, at that time, and perhaps the most probable, was, that it flowed from grief for the earl of Essex. She retained an extraordinary regard for the memory of that unfortunate nobleman; and, though she often complained of his obstinacy, seldom mentioned his name without tears[k]. An accident happened soon after her retiring to Richmond, which revived her affection with new tenderness, and embittered her sorrows. The countess of Nottingham, being on her death-bed, desired to see the queen, in order to reveal something to her, without discovering which, she could not die in peace. When the queen came into her chamber, she told her, that while Essex lay under sentence of death, he was desirous of imploring pardon in the manner which the queen herself had prescribed, by returning a ring, which during the height of his favour she had given him, with a promise that if, in any future distress, he sent that back to her as a token, it should entitle him to her protection; that lady Scrope was the person he intended to employ in order to present it; that, by a mistake, it was put into her hands instead of lady Scrope's; and, that she having communicated the matter to her husband, one of Essex's most implacable enemies, he had forbid her either to carry the ring to the queen, or to return it to the earl. The countess having thus disclosed her secret, begged the queen's forgiveness; but Elizabeth, 1603.

[k] Birch. Mem. ii. 505.

1603. who now saw both the malice of the earl's enemies, and how unjustly she had suspected him of inflexible obstinacy, replied, "God may forgive you, but I never can;" and left the room in great emotion[l]. From that moment, her spirit sunk entirely; she could scarce taste food; she refused all the medicines prescribed by her physicians; declaring that she wished to die, and would live no longer. No entreaty could prevail on her to go to bed; she sat on cushions, during ten days and nights, pensive and silent, holding her finger almost continually in her mouth, with her eyes open, and fixed on the ground. The only thing to which she seemed to give any attention, was the acts of devotion performed in her apartment by the archbishop of Canterbury; and in these she joined with great appearance of fervour. Wasted, at last, as well by anguish of mind, as by long abstinence, she expired, without a struggle, on Thursday the twenty-fourth day of March, in the seventieth year of her age, and in the forty-fifth of her reign[m].

Her character.

Foreigners often accuse the English of indifference

[l] This anecdote concerning Elizabeth was first published by Osborne, Mem. of Eliz. p. 23; is confirmed by the testimony of de Maurier, Mém. 260, and by the traditional evidence of lady Elizabeth Spelman, published by Dr. Birch, Negoc. 106. Camden mentions the queen's grief for Essex's death as one of the causes of her melancholy. Some original papers remain, which prove that this was commonly believed at the time. Birch. Mem. ii. 506. Essex, however, had been beheaded two years before her death, and there seems to have been no other reason, but that which we have assigned, why her sorrows should revive with so much violence at so great a distance of time. As the death of the countess of Nottingham happened about a fortnight before the queen's death, the coincidence of these events, together with the other evidence mentioned, adds so much probability to the story related by Osborne, as will entitle it to a place in history. The only objection to the account we have given of Elizabeth's attachment to Essex, arises from her great age. At the age of sixty-eight, the amorous passions are commonly abundantly cool, and the violence of all the passions, except one, is much abated. But the force of this objection is entirely removed by an author who has illustrated many passages in the English history, and adorned more. Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors, article Essex.

[m] Camd. Birch. Mem. ii. 506. Birch. Negoc. 266. Strype, iv. 373.

and disrespect towards their princes; but without reason. No people are more grateful than they to those monarchs who merit their gratitude. The names of Edward the third and Henry the fifth are mentioned by the English of this age with the same warmth as they were by those who shared in the blessings and splendour of their reigns. The memory of Elizabeth is still adored in England. The historians of that kingdom, after celebrating her love of her people; her sagacity in discerning their true interest; her steadiness in pursuing it; her wisdom in the choice of her ministers; the glory she acquired by arms; the tranquillity she secured to her subjects; and the increase of fame, of riches, and of commerce, which were the fruits of all these; justly rank her among the most illustrious princes. Even the defects in her character, they observe, were not of a kind pernicious to her people. Her excessive frugality was not accompanied with the love of hoarding; and though it prevented some great undertakings, and rendered the success of others incomplete, it introduced economy into her administration, and exempted the nation from many burthens, which a monarch more profuse or more enterprising must have imposed. Her slowness in rewarding her servants sometimes discouraged useful merit; but it prevented the undeserving from acquiring power and wealth, to which they had no title. Her extreme jealousy of those princes who pretended to dispute her right to the crown, led her to take such precautions, as tended no less to the publick safety than to her own; and to court the affections of her people, as the firmest support of her throne. Such is the picture which the English draw of this great queen. 1603.

Whoever undertakes to write the history of Scotland, finds himself obliged, frequently, to view her in a very different and in a less amiable light. Her authority in that kingdom, during the greater part of her reign, was little inferior to that which she possessed in her

1603. own. But this authority, acquired at first by a service of great importance to the nation, she exercised in a manner extremely pernicious to its happiness. By her industry in fomenting the rage of the two contending factions; by supplying the one with partial aid; by feeding the other with false hopes; by balancing their power so artfully, that each of them was able to distress, and neither of them to subdue the other; she rendered Scotland long the seat of discord, confusion, and bloodshed; and her craft and intrigues, effecting what the valour of her ancestors could not accomplish, reduced that kingdom to a state of dependence on England. The maxims of policy, often little consonant to those of morality, may, perhaps, justify this conduct. But no apology can be offered for her behaviour to queen Mary; a scene of dissimulation without necessity; and of severity beyond example. In almost all her other actions, Elizabeth is the object of our highest admiration; in this we must allow that she not only laid aside the magnanimity which became a queen, but the feelings natural to a woman.

James proclaimed king of England.

Though Elizabeth would never permit the question concerning the right of succession to the crown to be determined in parliament; nor declare her own sentiments concerning a point which she wished to remain an impenetrable mystery; she had, however, formed no design of excluding the Scottish king from an inheritance to which his title was undoubted. A short time before her death, she broke the silence which she had so long preserved on that subject, and told Cecil and the lord admiral, "That her throne was the throne of kings; that she would have no mean person to ascend it, and that her cousin, the king of Scots, should be her successor." This she confirmed on her death-bed. As soon as she breathed her last, the lords of the privy council proclaimed James king of England. All the intrigues carried on by foreigners in favour of the infanta, all the cabals formed within the kingdom to sup-

port the titles of lady Arabella and the earl of Hartford, disappeared in a moment; the nobles and people, forgetting their ancient hostilities with Scotland, and their aversion for the dominion of strangers, testified their satisfaction with louder acclamations than were usual at the accession of their native princes. Amidst this tumult of joy, a motion made by a few patriots, who proposed to prescribe some conditions to the successor, and to exact from him the redress of some grievances, before they called him to the throne, was scarcely heard; and Cecil, by stifling it, added to his stock of merit with his new master. Sir Charles Percy, brother of the earl of Northumberland, and Thomas Somerset, the earl of Worcester's son, were despatched to Scotland, with a letter to the king, signed by all the peers and privy counsellors then in London; informing him of the queen's death, of his accession to the throne, of their care to recognise his title, and of the universal applause with which the public proclamation of it had been attended. They made the utmost haste to deliver this welcome message; but were prevented by the zeal of sir Robert Carey, lord Hunsdon's youngest son, who, setting out a few hours after Elizabeth's death, arrived at Edinburgh on Saturday night, just as the king had gone to bed. He was immediately admitted into the royal apartment, and, kneeling by the king's bed, acquainted him with the death of Elizabeth, saluted him king of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland; and as a token of the truth of the intelligence which he brought, presented him a ring, which his sister, lady Scrope, had taken from the queen's finger after her death. James heard him with a decent composure. But as Carey was only a private messenger, the information which he brought was not made public, and the king kept his apartment till the arrival of Percy and Somerset. Then his titles were solemnly proclaimed; and his own subjects expressed no less joy than the English, at this increase of his dignity. As his pre- 1603.

1603. sence was absolutely necessary in England, where the people were extremely impatient to see their new sovereign, he prepared to set out for that kingdom without delay. He appointed his queen to follow him within a few weeks. He committed the government of Scotland to his privy council. He entrusted the care of his children to different noblemen. On the Sunday before his departure, he repaired to the church of St. Giles, and after hearing a sermon, in which the preacher displayed the greatness of the divine goodness in raising him to the throne of such a powerful kingdom without opposition or bloodshed, and exhorted him to express his gratitude, by promoting, to the utmost, the happiness and prosperity of his subjects; the king rose up, and, addressing himself to the people, made many professions of unalterable affection towards them; promised to visit Scotland frequently; assured them that his Scottish subjects, notwithstanding his absence, should feel that he was their native prince, no less than when he resided among them; and might still trust that his ears should be always open to their petitions, which he would answer with the alacrity and love of a parent. His words were often interrupted by the tears of the whole audience; who, though they exulted at the king's prosperity, were melted into sorrow by these tender declarations [n].

Takes possession of the throne.

On the fifth of April he began his journey, with a splendid, but not a numerous train; and next day he entered Berwick. Wherever he came, immense multitudes were assembled to welcome him; and the principal persons in the different counties through which he passed, displayed all their wealth and magnificence in entertainments prepared for him at their houses. Elizabeth had reigned so long in England, that most of her subjects remembered no other court but hers, and their notions of the manners and decorums suitable to

[n] Spotsw. 476.

a prince were formed upon what they had observed there. It was natural to apply this standard to the behaviour and actions of their new monarch, and to compare him, at first sight, with the queen, on whose throne he was to be placed. James, whose manners were extremely different from hers, suffered by the comparison. He had not that flowing affability, by which Elizabeth captivated the hearts of her people; and, though easy among a few whom he loved, his indolence could not bear the fatigue of rendering himself agreeable to a mixed multitude. He was no less a stranger to that dignity with which Elizabeth tempered her familiarity. And, instead of that well-judged frugality with which she conferred titles of honour, he bestowed them with an undistinguishing profusion, that rendered them no longer marks of distinction, or rewards of merit. But these were the reflections of the few alone; the multitude continued their acclamations; and, amidst these, James entered London on the seventh of May, and took peaceable possession of the throne of England. 1603.

Conclusion.

Thus were united two kingdoms, divided from the earliest accounts of time, but destined, by their situation, to form one great monarchy. By this junction of its whole native force, Great Britain hath risen to an eminence and authority in Europe, which England and Scotland, while separate, could never have attained.

A view of the revolutions in the constitution of Scotland since the accession of James the sixth.

The Scots had so long considered their monarchs as next heirs to the English throne, that they had full leisure to reflect on all the consequences of their being advanced to that dignity. But, dazzled with the glory of giving a sovereign to their powerful enemy, relying on the partiality of their native prince, and in full expectation of sharing liberally in the wealth and honours which he would now be able to bestow, they attended little to the most obvious consequences of that great event, and rejoiced at his accession to the throne of England, as if it had been no less beneficial to the

kingdom, than honourable to the king. They soon had reason, however, to adopt very different sentiments; and from that period we may date a total alteration in the political constitution of Scotland.

The feudal aristocracy, which had been subverted in most nations of Europe by the policy of their princes, or had been undermined by the progress of commerce, still subsisted with full force in Scotland. Many causes had contributed gradually to augment the power of the Scottish nobles; and even the reformation, which, in every other country where it prevailed, added to the authority of the monarch, had increased their wealth and influence. A king, possessed of a small revenue; with a prerogative extremely limited, and unsupported by a standing army, could not exercise much authority over such potent subjects. He was obliged to govern by expedients; and the laws derived their force not from his power to execute them, but from the voluntary submission of the nobles. But though this produced a species of government extremely feeble and irregular; though Scotland, under the name, and with all the outward ensigns of a monarchy, was really subject to an aristocracy, the people were not altogether unhappy; and, even in this wild form of a constitution, there were principles which tended to their security and advantage. The king, checked and overawed by the nobles, durst venture upon no act of arbitrary power. The nobles, jealous of the king, whose claims and pretensions were many, though his power was small, were afraid of irritating their dependents, by unreasonable exactions, and tempered the rigour of aristocratical tyranny, with a mildness and equality to which it is naturally a stranger. As long as the military genius of the feudal government remained in vigour, the vassals both of the crown and of the barons were generally not only free from oppression, but were courted by their superiors, whose power and importance were founded on their attachment and love.

But, by his accession to the throne of England, James acquired such an immense accession of wealth, of power, and of splendour, that the nobles, astonished and intimidated, thought it vain to struggle for privileges which they were now unable to defend. Nor was it from fear alone that they submitted to the yoke: James, partial to his countrymen, and willing that they should partake in his good fortune, loaded them with riches and honours; and the hope of his favour concurred with the dread of his power, in taming their fierce and independent spirits. The will of the prince became the supreme law in Scotland; and the nobles strove, with emulation, who should most implicitly obey commands, which they had formerly been accustomed to contemn. Satisfied with having subjected the nobles to the crown, the king left them in full possession of their ancient jurisdiction over their own vassals. The extensive rights, vested in a feudal chief, became in their hands dreadful instruments of oppression; and the military ideas, on which these rights were founded, being gradually lost or disregarded, nothing remained to correct or to mitigate the rigour with which they were exercised. The nobles, exhausting their fortunes by the expense of frequent attendance upon the English court, and by attempts to imitate the manners and luxury of their more wealthy neighbours, multiplied exactions upon the people, who durst hardly utter complaints which they knew would never reach the ear of their sovereign, nor move him to grant them any redress. From the union of the crowns to the revolution in one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight, Scotland was placed in a political situation, of all others the most singular and the most unhappy; subjected at once to the absolute will of a monarch, and to the oppressive jurisdiction of an aristocracy, it suffered all the miseries peculiar to both these forms of government. Its kings were despotic; its nobles were slaves and tyrants; and the people groaned under the rigorous domination of both.

During this period, the nobles, it is true, made one effort to shake off the yoke, and to regain their ancient independency. After the death of James, the Scottish nation was no longer viewed by our monarchs with any partial affection. Charles the first, educated among the English, discovered no peculiar attachment to the kingdom of which he was a native. The nobles, perceiving the sceptre to be now in hands less friendly, and swayed by a prince with whom they had little connexion, and over whose councils they had little influence, no longer submitted with the same implicit obedience. Provoked by some encroachments of the king on their order, and apprehensive of others, the remains of their ancient spirit began to appear. They complained and remonstrated. The people being, at the same time, violently disgusted at the innovations in religion, the nobles secretly heightened this disgust; and their artifices, together with the ill-conduct of the court, raised such a spirit, that the whole nation took arms against their sovereign, with an union and animosity of which there had formerly been no example. Charles brought against them the forces of England, and, notwithstanding their own union, and the zeal of the people, the nobles must have sunk in the struggle. But the disaffection which was growing among his English subjects, prevented the king from acting with vigour. A civil war broke out in both kingdoms; and after many battles and revolutions, which are well known, the Scottish nobles, who first began the war, were involved in the same ruin with the throne. At the restoration, Charles the second regained full possession of the royal prerogative in Scotland; and the nobles, whose estates were wasted, or their spirit broken, by the calamities to which they had been exposed, were less able and less willing than ever to resist the power of the crown. During his reign, and that of James the seventh, the dictates of the monarch were received in Scotland with most abject submis-

sion. The poverty to which many of the nobles were reduced, rendered them meaner slaves and more intolerable tyrants than ever. The people, always neglected, were now odious, and loaded with every injury, on account of their attachment to religious and political principles, extremely repugnant to those adopted by their princes.

The revolution introduced other maxims into the government of Scotland. To increase the authority of the prince, or to secure the privileges of the nobles, had hitherto been almost the sole object of our laws. The rights of the people were hardly ever mentioned, were disregarded, or unknown. Attention began, henceforward, to be paid to the welfare of the people. By the 'claim of right,' their liberties were secured; and, the number of their representatives being increased, they gradually acquired new weight and consideration in parliament. As they came to enjoy more security, and greater power, their minds began to open, and to form more extensive plans of commerce, of industry, and of police. But the aristocratical spirit, which still predominated, together with many other accidents, retarded the improvement and happiness of the nation.

Another great event completed what the revolution had begun. The political power of the nobles, already broken by the union of the two crowns, was almost annihilated by the union of the two kingdoms. Instead of making a part, as formerly, of the supreme assembly of the nation; instead of bearing the most considerable sway there, the peers of Scotland are admitted into the British parliament by their representatives only, and form but an inconsiderable part of one of those bodies in which the legislative authority is vested. They themselves are excluded absolutely from the house of commons, and even their eldest sons are not permitted to represent their countrymen in that august assembly.

Nor have their feudal privileges remained, to compensate for this extinction of their political authority. As commerce advanced in its progress, and government attained nearer to perfection, these were insensibly circumscribed, and at last, by laws no less salutary to the public, than fatal to the nobles, they have been almost totally abolished. As the nobles were deprived of power, the people acquired liberty. Exempted from burthens, to which they were formerly subject; screened from oppression, to which they had been long exposed, and adopted into a constitution whose genius and laws were more liberal than their own, they have extended their commerce, refined their manners, made improvements in the elegancies of life, and cultivated the arts and sciences.

This survey of the political state of Scotland, in which events and their causes have been mentioned rather than developed, enables us to point out three æras, from each of which we may date some great alteration in one or other of the three different members of which the supreme legislative assembly in our constitution is composed. At their 'accession' to the throne of England, the kings of Scotland, once the most limited, became, in an instant, the most absolute princes in Europe, and exercised a despotic authority, which their parliaments were unable to control, or their nobles to resist. At the 'union' of the two kingdoms, the feudal aristocracy which had subsisted so many ages, and with power so exorbitant, was overturned, and the Scottish nobles, having surrendered rights and preeminences peculiar to their order, reduced themselves to a condition which is no longer the terrour and envy of other subjects. 'Since the union,' the commons, anciently neglected by their kings, and seldom courted by the nobles, have emerged into dignity; and, being admitted to a participation of all the privileges which the English had purchased at the expense

of so much blood, must now be deemed a body not less considerable in the one kingdom, than they have long been in the other.

The church felt the effects of the absolute power which the king acquired by his accession; and its revolutions, too, are worthy of notice. James, during the latter years of his administration in Scotland, had revived the name and office of bishops. But they possessed no ecclesiastical jurisdiction or preeminence; their revenues were inconsiderable, and they were scarcely distinguished by any thing but by their seat in parliament, and by being the object of the clergy's jealousy, and the people's hatred. The king, delighted with the splendour and authority which the English bishops enjoyed, and eager to effect an union in the ecclesiastical policy, which he had in vain attempted in the civil government of the two kingdoms, resolved to bring both churches to an exact conformity with each other. Three Scotsmen were consecrated bishops at London. From them their brethren were commanded to receive orders. Ceremonies unknown in Scotland were imposed; and though the clergy, less obsequious than the nobles, boldly opposed these innovations, James, long-practised, and well-skilled in the arts of managing them, obtained at length their compliance. But Charles the first, a superstitious prince, unacquainted with the genius of the Scots, imprudent and precipitant in all the measures he pursued in that kingdom, pressing too eagerly the reception of the English liturgy, and indiscreetly attempting a resumption of church lands, kindled the flames of civil war; and the people being left at liberty to indulge their own wishes, the episcopal church was overturned, and the presbyterian government and discipline were re-established with new vigour. Together with monarchy, episcopacy was restored in Scotland. A form of government, so odious to the people, required force to uphold it; and though not only the whole rigour of

authority, but all the barbarity of persecution, were employed in its support, the aversion of the nation was insurmountable, and it subsisted with difficulty. At the revolution, the inclinations of the people were thought worthy the attention of the legislature, the presbyterian government was again established, and, being ratified by the union, is still maintained in the kingdom.

Nor did the influence of the accession extend to the civil and ecclesiastical constitutions alone; the genius of the nation, its taste and spirit, things of a nature still more delicate, were sensibly affected by that event. When learning revived in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, all the modern languages were in a state extremely barbarous, devoid of elegance, of vigour, and even of perspicuity. No author thought of writing in languages so ill adapted to express and embellish his sentiments, or of erecting a work for immortality with such rude and perishable materials. As the spirit, which prevailed at that time, did not owe its rise to any original effort of the human mind, but was excited chiefly by admiration of the ancients, which began then to be studied with attention in every part of Europe, their compositions were deemed not only the standards of taste and of sentiment, but of style; and even the languages in which they wrote were thought to be peculiar, and almost consecrated to learning and the muses. Not only the manner of the ancients was imitated, but their language was adopted; and, extravagant as the attempt may appear to write in a dead tongue, in which men were not accustomed to think, and which they could not speak, or even pronounce, the success of it was astonishing. As they formed their style upon the purest models: as they were uninfected with those barbarisms, which the inaccuracy of familiar conversation, the affectation of courts, intercourse with strangers, and a thousand other causes, introduce into living languages, many moderns have

attained to a degree of elegance in their Latin compositions, which the Romans themselves scarce possessed beyond the limits of the Augustan age. While this was almost the only species of composition, and all authors, by using one common language, could be brought to a nearer comparison, the Scottish writers were not inferior to those of any other nation. The happy genius of Buchanan, equally formed to excel in prose and in verse, more various, more original, and more elegant, than that of almost any other modern who writes in Latin, reflects, with regard to this particular, the greatest lustre on his country.

But the labour attending the study of a dead tongue was irksome; the unequal return for their industry which authors met with, who could be read and admired only within the narrow circle of the learned, was mortifying; and men, instead of wasting half their lives in learning the language of the Romans, began to refine and to polish their own. The modern tongues were found to be susceptible of beauties and graces, which, if not equal to those of the ancient ones, were at least more attainable. The Italians having first set the example, Latin was no longer used in works of taste; it was confined to books of science; and the politer nations have banished it even from these. The Scots, we may presume, would have had no cause to regret this change in the public taste, and would still have been able to maintain some equality with other nations, in their pursuit of literary honour. The English and Scottish languages, derived from the same sources, were, at the end of the sixteenth century, in a state nearly similar, differing from one another somewhat in orthography, though not only the words, but the idioms were much the same. The letters of several Scottish statesmen of that age are not inferior in elegance, or in purity, to those of the English ministers with whom they corresponded. James himself was

master of a style far from contemptible; and, by his example and encouragement, the Scottish language might have kept pace with the English in refinement. Scotland might have had a series of authors in its own, as well as in the Latin language, to boast of; and the improvements in taste, in the arts, and in the sciences, which spread over the other polished nations of Europe, would not have been unknown there.

But, at the very time when other nations were beginning to drop the use of Latin in works of taste, and to make trial of the strength and compass of their own languages, Scotland ceased to be a kingdom. The transports of joy, which the accession at first occasioned, were soon over: and the Scots, being at once deprived of all the objects that refine or animate a people; of the presence of their prince; of the concourse of nobles; of the splendour and elegance of a court, an universal dejection of spirit seems to have seized the nation. The court being withdrawn, no domestic standard of propriety and correctness of speech remained; the few compositions that Scotland produced were tried by the English standard, and every word or phrase that varied in the least from that, was condemned as barbarous; whereas, if the two nations had continued distinct, each might have retained idioms and forms of speech peculiar to itself; and these, rendered fashionable by the example of a court, and supported by the authority of writers of reputation, might have been viewed in the same light with the varieties occasioned by the different dialects in the Greek tongue; they even might have been considered as beauties; and in many cases might have been used promiscuously by the authors of both nations. But, by the accession, the English naturally became the sole judges and lawgivers in language, and rejected, as solecisms, every form of speech to which their ear was not accustomed. Nor did the Scots, while the intercourse between the two

nations was inconsiderable[o], and ancient prejudices were still so violent as to prevent imitation, possess the means of refining their own tongue according to the purity of the English standard. On the contrary, new corruptions flowed into it from every different source. The clergy of Scotland, in that age, were more eminent for piety than for learning; and though there did not arise many authors among them, yet being in possession of the privilege of discoursing publicly to the people, and their sermons being too long, and, perhaps, too frequent, such hasty productions could not be elegant, and many slovenly and incorrect modes of expression may be traced back to that original. The pleadings of lawyers were equally loose and inaccurate; and that profession having furnished more authors, and the matters of which they treat mingling daily in common discourse and business, many of those vitious forms of speech, which are denominated 'Scotticisms,' have been introduced by them into the language. Nor did either the language or public taste receive any improvement in parliament, where a more liberal and more correct eloquence might have been expected. All business was transacted there by the lords of articles; and they were so servilely devoted to the court, that few debates arose, and, prior to the revolution, none were conducted with the spirit and vigour natural to a popular assembly.

Thus, during the whole seventeenth century, the English were gradually refining their language and

[o] A remarkable proof of the little intercourse between the English and Scots before the union of the crowns, is to be found in two curious papers; one published by Haynes, the other by Strype. In the year 1567, Elizabeth commanded the bishop of London to take a survey of all the strangers within the cities of London and Westminster. By this report, which is very minute, it appears that the whole number of Scots at that time was fifty-eight. Haynes, 455. A survey of the same kind was made by sir Thomas Row, lord mayor, a. d. 1568. The number of Scots had then increased to eighty-eight. Strype, iv. Supplement, No. I. On the accession of James, a considerable number of Scots, especially of the higher rank, resorted to England; but it was not till the union that the intercourse between the two kingdoms became great.

their taste: in Scotland the former was much debased, and the latter almost entirely lost. In the beginning of that period, both nations were emerging out of barbarity; but the distance between them, which was then inconsiderable, became, before the end of it, immense. Even after science had once dawned upon them, the Scots seemed to be sinking back into ignorance and obscurity; and, active and intelligent as they naturally are, they continued, while other nations were eager in the pursuit of fame and knowledge, in a state of languor. This, however, must be imputed to the unhappiness of their political situation, not to any defect of genius; for no sooner was the one removed in any degree, than the other began to display itself. The act abolishing the power of the lords of articles, and other salutary laws passed at the revolution, having introduced freedom of debate into the Scottish parliament; eloquence, with all the arts that accompany or perfect it, became immediate objects of attention: and the example of Fletcher of Salton, alone, is sufficient to show that the Scots were still capable of generous sentiments, and, notwithstanding some peculiar idioms, were able to express themselves with energy, and with elegance.

At length, the union having incorporated the two nations, and rendered them one people, the distinctions which had subsisted for many ages gradually wear away; peculiarities disappear; the same manners prevail in both parts of the island; the same authors are read and admired; the same entertainments are frequented by the elegant and polite; and the same standard of taste, and of purity in language, is established. The Scots, after being placed, during a whole century, in a situation no less fatal to the liberty than to the taste and genius of the nation, were at once put in possession of privileges more valuable than those which their ancestors had formerly enjoyed; and every obstruction that had retarded their pursuit, or prevented their acquisition of literary fame, was totally removed.