

HISTORY
OF
SCOTLAND.

CHAP. I.

1573—1580.

REGENCY OF MORTON,
CONTINUED.

CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.

<i>England.</i> Elizabeth.	<i>France.</i> Charles IX. Henry III.	<i>Germany.</i> Maximilian II. Rudolph II.	<i>Spain.</i> Philip II.	<i>Portugal.</i> Sebastian.	<i>Pope.</i> Gregory XIII
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SCOTLAND was now at peace ; and the Regent, having nothing to fear from domestic enemies or foreign intrigue, addressed himself with great energy and success to reduce the country to order. The border districts, at all times impatient under the restraints of a firm government, had, during the late civil commotions, become the scene of the utmost violence and confusion ; but Morton, advancing from Peebles to Jedburgh with a force of four thousand men, soon compelled the principal chiefs to respect the law and give pledges for their obedience.¹ Sir James Hume

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. The Regent to Lord Burghley, Kelso, 30th August, 1573.

of Coldingknowes, was then appointed warden of the East, Lord Maxwell of the West, and Sir John Carmichael, of the Middle Marches;¹ and the Regent had leisure to renew his correspondence and confirm his ties with England.

Some time before this, when Killigrew, after his successful embassy, returned to the English court,² Morton had sent a memorial to Elizabeth,³ in which he pointed out the principles upon which he proposed to regulate his future government. He declared the grateful feelings entertained by himself and the people, for her late assistance in quieting their troubled country, and reducing it under the King's obedience.⁴ He urged the necessity of entering into a mutual league for the maintenance of the Protestant religion and its professors against the Council of Trent; and suggested the expediency of a contract or band for mutual defence from foreign invasion.⁵ In a letter written at the same time to Burghley, he pointed out the heavy charges which he had incurred, and requested pecuniary assistance, as it would still be necessary for him to provide against any renewed rebellion by keeping up a body of troops; and he, lastly, reminded her that Mary, the root of all the

¹ Diurnal of Occurrents in Scotland, p. 337. Spottiswood, p. 272.

² June 29.

³ Copy, St. P. Off. Memoirs of me, the Lord Regent of Scotland, to the Queen's Majesty of England's Ambassador, &c., 26th June, 1573.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

evil, was still in her power, and at her disposal. "The ground of the trouble," said he, "remains in her Majesty's hands and power; whereunto I doubt not her highness will put order when she thinks time, so as presently I will not be further curious there-
 anent, abiding the knowledge of her Majesty's mind, how she shall think convenient to proceed in that behalf."¹ It appears to me, from this sentence, that the Regent invited the English Queen to renew the negotiations for putting Mary to death in Scotland, which were so suddenly broken off by the decease of Mar; and indeed, some time before the surrender of the Castle of Edinburgh, Killigrew, the Ambassador, wrote to Burghley, that he had given Morton a strong hint upon the subject. He stated, that in a conversation which took place in the palace, the Regent had declared, that as long as the Scottish Queen lived, there would be treason, troubles, and mischief; to which, said Killigrew, "I answered he might help that; and he said, when all was done, he thought at the next parliament * * to prove the noblemen after this concord, to see what might be done."² We do not find, however, that Elizabeth at this moment gave any encouragement to the renewal of this nefarious negotiation.

All was now quiet in Scotland, and it is remark-

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Morton to Burghley, 25th June, 1573.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. The Regent to Lord Burghley, Holyrood, 26th June, 1573. Also MS. Letter St. P. Off. Killigrew to Burghley, 4th March, 1572-3.

able that, notwithstanding the miseries of the civil war, the general prosperity of the country had been progressive. Commerce and trade had increased; and whilst the power of the high feudal lords was visibly on the decay, the middle classes had risen in importance; and the great body of the people, instructed in their political duties by the sermons of the clergy, and acquiring from the institution of parish schools a larger share of education and intelligence, began to appreciate their rights, and to feel their own strength. There is a passage in a letter of Killigrew, which is worthy of notice upon this subject. "Methinks," said this acute observer, "I see the noblemen's great credit decay in this country, and the barons, burrows, and such like, take more upon them; the ministers and religion increase, and the desire in them to prevent the practices of the Papists; the number of able men for service very great, and well furnished both on horse and foot; their navy so augmented, as it is a thing almost incredible."¹ It is to be recollected, that Killigrew's last visit to Scotland had been in 1567, immediately after the murder of the King; and that the remarkable change which he now noticed, had taken place in the brief period of five years.

This flourishing state of things, however, did not long continue; for although the Regent was justly entitled to the praise of restoring security and order, and his vigour in the punishment of crime, and the

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Killigrew to Burghley, 11th November, 1572.

maintenance of the authority of the laws, was superior to that of any former governor, there was one vice which stained his character, and led to measures of an unpopular and oppressive kind. This was avarice: and he found the first field for its exercise in an attack upon the patrimony of the Kirk. He had the address to persuade the Presbyterian clergy, that it would be the best thing for their interests to resign at once into his hands the thirds of the benefices, which had been granted for their support by a former parliament. Their collectors, he said, were often in arrear; but his object would be, to make the stipend local, and payable in each parish where they served. This would be a better system; and if it failed, they should, upon application, be immediately reinstated in their right and possession.¹ The plan was agreed to, but was followed by immediate repentance on the part of the clergy; as the moment Morton became possessed of the thirds, his scheme of spoliation was unmasked. The course he followed was, to appoint two, three, or even four churches to one minister, who was bound to preach in them by turns; and at the same time he placed in every parish a reader, whose duty was to officiate in the minister's absence, and to whom a miserable pittance of twenty or forty pounds Scots was assigned. Having thus allotted to the Church the smallest possible sum, he seized the overplus for himself; and when the clergy, sensible of their error, petitioned to be re-

¹ Spottiswood, p. 273.

instated in their property, as had been promised, they were at first met with delays, and at last peremptorily told, that the appointment of the stipends ought properly to belong to the Regent and Council.

Nothing could be more distressing and degrading to this independent body of men than such a state of things. Before this, when their stipend was defective, they had an appeal to the superintendants, who, if not always able, were at least solicitous to relieve them. Now, they were compelled to become suitors at Court, where their importunate complaints met only with ridicule and neglect. All this misery was justly laid to the Regent's account; and although once their favourite, as a steady friend to the Reformation, he became highly unpopular with the clergy.

But, if the grasping avarice of Morton fell heavy on the ministers of the Kirk, their woes were little to the miseries of the lower classes, more especially the artisans, merchants, and burgesses of the capital. Many of these had remained in the city during the time of the late troubles. These were now treated as rebels, who had resisted the King's authority; and they found that they must either submit to a public trial, or purchase security by payment of a heavy fine. The sum thus collected, was intended at first to be divided between the state and the citizens whose houses and property had been destroyed; but it followed the fate of all monies paid into the coffers of this rapacious governor.

Another source of complaint arose out of those Itinerant Courts, denominated Justice Ayres, and

held in different parts of the kingdom; which, under his administration, became little else than parts of a system of legal machinery, invented to concuss and plunder all classes in the country. To supply them with victims, he kept in pay a numerous body of informers, whose business it was to discover offences. Nor was it difficult to bring forward accusations of almost every possible nature, after so many years of a divided government, in which men, at one time or another, had been compelled to acknowledge very opposite authorities: now that of the King and his Regent; now, of the Queen or her partisans. Ample ground was thus found for every species of prosecution: against merchants for transporting coin out of the realm, against Protestants for transgressing the statute by eating flesh in Lent, against the poorer artisans or labourers for the mere remaining in a town or city which was occupied by the Queen's forces. As to those whose only offence was to be rich, their case was the worst of all; for to have a full purse, and "thole"¹ a heavy fine to the Regent, were become synonymous terms.

These were not Morton's only resources. His petitions to Elizabeth for support were importunate and incessant; nor did he fail to remind her, that as it was by her "allowance and advice that he had entered upon the Regency, so he confidently expected her aid, especially in money, and pensions bestowed upon his friends." Although universally

¹ "Thole," undergo.

reputed rich, he dwelt pathetically on his limited revenue compared with his vast outlay; and in the letter to Burghley, which preferred these requests, he at the same time earnestly recommended Elizabeth to keep a watchful eye upon France, as the noted Adam Gordon, who had already done so much mischief in the North, was now received at the French court, and, he heard, had offered, if properly supported, to overthrow the King's government in Scotland.¹

This news seems to have alarmed the English Queen; for, not long after, she again despatched Killigrew into that country. Her open object was to learn the state of public feeling, and the disposition of the Regent; "whether he was constant in his affection towards England; how his government was liked by the people; whether the Scottish Queen had yet any party there; and, above all, to discover whether France was intriguing, as had been reported, to get possession of the young King." To the Regent's proposal for a defensive and religious league, he was instructed to reply, that she deemed such a measure at present unnecessary; although, in any emergency, he might look confidently to her support. As to his request for money, Killigrew was, as delicately as he could, to "waive" all discussion upon the subject.

Here, however, as in the former embassy, there was a mission within a mission; and the envoy's open instructions embraced not the whole, nor even the most material part of the object for which he

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. The Regent Morton to Burghley, Jan. 21, 1573-4, Haddington.

was sent. He was enjoined by Burghley and Leicester (doubtless, as before, with Elizabeth's knowledge and advice) to renew the negotiation for "the great matter;" the project for having Mary put to death in her own country, and by her own subjects. Unfortunately the written orders upon this point are now lost; but immediately upon his arrival in Edinburgh, the Ambassador communicated to Walsingham his fears that they had suffered the time for the accomplishment of so desirable a result to go by.¹

On examining the state of the country, Killigrew became convinced that his Sovereign and the English had lost popularity since his late residence in Scotland. The Regent, although professing his usual devotion, appeared more distant and reserved. The Queen's coldness on the subject of the proposed league, and her evasion of his request for pensions, had produced no good effect; and some piracies committed by English subjects upon Scottish merchantmen, had occasioned great popular discontent.

Not long after the Ambassador's arrival, he repaired to Stirling, where he was introduced to the young King, then only seven years old; and, after the interview, he sent this interesting portrait of him to Walsingham:—"Since my last unto you," said he, "I have been at Stirling to visit the King in her Majesty's name, and met by the way the Countess

¹ MS. St. P. Off. "Instructions given to Henry Killigrew, Esq., &c." May 22, 1574, Signed by Walsingham. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Killigrew to Walsingham, June 8, 1574, Berwick.

of Mar coming to Edinburgh, to whom I did her Majesty's commendations.

“The King seemed to be very glad to hear from her Majesty, and could use pretty speeches: as, how much he was bound unto her Majesty, yea, more than to his own mother. And at my departure, he prayed me to thank her Majesty for the good remembrance she had of him; and further desired me to make his hearty commendations unto her Majesty. His Grace is well grown, both in body and spirit, since I was last here. He speaketh the French tongue marvellous well; and that which seems strange to me, he was able *extempore* (which he did before me) to read a chapter of the Bible out of Latin into French, and out of French after into English, so well, as few men could have added anything to his translation. His schoolmasters, Mr George Buchanan and Mr Peter Young, rare men, caused me to appoint the King what chapter I would; and so did I, whereby I perceived it was not studied for. They also made his Highness dance before me, which he likewise did with a very good grace; a Prince sure of great hope, if God send him life.”¹

The English Ambassador remained in Scotland for more than two months, during which time he had ample opportunities to make himself acquainted with the state of the country. He found the Regent firm in his government, universally obeyed, somewhat

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Killigrew to Walsingham, 31st June, 1574.

more feared than loved ; but bold, decisive, and clear-headed in the adoption and execution of such measures as he deemed necessary to establish quiet and good order in the realm.

The general prosperity of all classes of the people surprised him. He had, to use his own expression, left the country "in a consumption," distracted and impoverished by a long continuance of civil war.¹ He had expected, on his return, to meet with the same melancholy state of things ; but to his astonishment, the nation, as he described it to Burghley and Walsingham, had recovered itself with a rapidity of which he found it difficult to assign the cause. Its commerce and manufactures were in a flourishing condition, the people seemed to have forgotten their miseries, the nobles were reconciled to each other, and universally acknowledged the King's authority. Although French intrigue was still busy, and the captive Queen attempted to keep up a party, the uncommon vigilance of Morton detected and put down all her practices. Formerly, the people broken, bankrupt, and dispirited, were glad to sue for the protection of England, and the nobles were eager in their offers to Elizabeth. Now, to use Killigrew's phrase, they were "lusty and independent;" they talked as those who would be sued to ; their alliance, they said, had been courted by "great monarchies;" and they complained loudly of the attack and plunder of their merchantmen by the English pirates. On

¹ This must allude to his last visit but one, *i. e.* in 1567 ; for in 1572 he described it as rapidly improving. *Supra*, p. 4.

this subject the Regent expressed himself keenly, and was greatly moved. He dwelt, too, on other causes of dissatisfaction. The rejection of the proposed league by Elizabeth; her silence as to sending him any aid, or granting any pensions; the delay in giving back the ordnance which had been taken by the English, and other lighter subjects of complaint, were all recapitulated; and it was evident to Killigrew that there was an alteration in the relative position of the two countries, which he assured Walsingham would not be removed by mere words of compliment.¹

The Ambassador anxiously impressed upon Elizabeth and her ministers, that the Scots were no longer dependent upon England; and as to attempting to make any impression upon the Regent in "the great matter,"² which Leicester and Burghley were solicitous should be again secretly discussed, it seemed to him a vain idea at present. If Morton were to consent to put Mary to death on her delivery into his hands, it would only be, as he soon perceived, by the offer of a far higher bribe than Elizabeth was disposed to give; and by the settlement of large annuities on such of the nobles as were confidants to his cruel design. Killigrew was so assured of the backwardness of his royal mistress upon this point, and the determination of the Regent not to move without

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Killigrew to Walsingham, June 23, 1574. Ibid. Same to the same, 24th June, 1574. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Killigrew to Walsingham, 18th June, 1574.

² The having Mary put to death in Scotland.

such inducement, that he begged to be allowed to return. "I see no cause," said he to Walsingham, "why I should remain here any longer; * * * especially if you resolve not upon the league, nor upon pensions, which is the surest ground I do see to build 'the great matter' upon, without which small assurance can be made. I pray God we prove not herein like those who refused the three volumes of Sibylla's prophecies, with the price which afterwards they were glad to give for one that was lost; for sure I left the market here better cheap than now I find it."¹

The Queen of England, however, was not to be so easily diverted from any object upon which she considered the safety of herself and her kingdom to depend, and she insisted that her Ambassador should remain and accompany the Regent in his Northern progress, upon which he was about to enter.² "I think it not convenient," said Walsingham to him, in a letter of the 18th July, "that you be recalled till such time as you have advertised how you find the Regent affected touching 'the great matter' you had in commission to deal in; and therefore I think fit you accompany the Regent till you be revoked."³

In the mean time, Elizabeth held a secret confer-

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Edin. Killigrew to Walsingham, July 12, 1574. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Killigrew to Walsingham, 23d June, 1574.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Killigrew to Walsingham, June 23, 1574.

³ MS. Letter, Draft, St. P. Off. Walsingham to Killigrew, July 18, 1574.

ence with Leicester, Burghley, and Walsingham, and appears to have herself suggested a new scheme for getting rid of Mary. It is unfortunately involved in much obscurity, owing to the letter in which it is alluded to being written partly in cipher; but it was disapproved of by Walsingham, apparently on the ground that it would be dangerous to send the Scottish Queen into Scotland, without an absolute certainty that she should be put to death.¹

The English Queen was evidently distracted between the fear of two dangers—one, the retaining Mary within her dominions, which experience had taught her was the cause of constant plots and practices against her; the other, the delivering her to the Scots, an expedient which, unless it were carried through in the way proposed by Burghley and Leicester, in 1572²—that is, under a positive agreement that she should be put to death, was, as they justly thought, full of peril. Morton, however, although

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Walsingham to Killigrew, Woodstock, July 30, 1574. Killigrew accordingly accompanied the Regent in his Northern progress; and, on their arrival at Aberdeen, held a secret consultation on *the great matter*; but unfortunately, the letters in which we might have looked for a particular account of what took place have disappeared. All that we know with certainty is, that the Ambassador returned soon after to the English court, (Aug. 16;) and that in a brief memorandum of such things as the Regent desired him to remember in his conferences with the Queen of England, is this slight note:—"What further is to be looked for in that which past betwixt us at Aberdeen, touching *the matter of greatest moment*."—MS. Mem. St. P. Off. Aug. 16, 1574.

² Vol. Seventh of this History, pp. 388, 389.

he had shown himself perfectly willing to receive Mary under this atrocious condition, continued firm in his resolution not to sell his services for mere words. He, too, insisted on certain terms; especially an advance in money, and pensions to his friends. But the Queen deemed his demands exorbitant; and, as was not unfrequent with her when pressed by a difficulty from which she saw no immediate escape, she dismissed the subject from her mind, and unwisely took refuge in delay. In this manner "the great matter" for the present was allowed to sleep; and Mary owed her life to the parsimony of Elizabeth, and the avarice of the Scottish Regent.¹

Killigrew not long after left Scotland, and on parting with him, Morton assured Leicester, in a letter which this Ambassador carried with him, "that no stranger had ever departed from that country with greater liking and contentment of the people."² He requested him at the same time, on his return to the English Court, to communicate with the Queen and Council, upon some subjects of import, which required a speedy answer. These embraced the dangers to which the Protestant interest in Scotland was exposed from continental intrigue; but to the Regent's mortification, many months elapsed before any answer was received. At last, Walsingham, alarmed by the apathy of Elizabeth, and the continued practices of her enemies, endeavoured, in a letter of

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Aberdeen. The Regent to Leicester, Aug. 16, 1574.

² MS. St. P. Off. Morton to Leicester, 16th August, 1574.

free remonstrance, to rouse his mistress to a sense of her peril. He told her, that he had recently received a despatch from the Scottish Regent, and with it some intercepted papers of the Bishop of Ross, which required instant consideration. They would convince her, he trusted, how utterly hollow were the promises of France and Spain, and to what imminent danger she was exposed from "unsound subjects at home." He besought her deeply to weigh the matter, and "set to" her hand for the protection of her realm: observed that, "Though the Cardinal of Lorrain were dead, he had left successors enough to execute his plots;" and conjured her to use expedition, before the hidden sparks of treason, now smouldering within the realm, should break out into an unquenchable fire. "For the love of God, madam," said he, "let not the case of your diseased estate hang longer in deliberation. Diseased estates are no more cured by consultation without execution, than unsound bodies by mere conference with the physician; and you will perceive by his letters, how much the Regent is aggrieved."¹

For a moment, these strong representations alarmed Elizabeth, and she talked of sending Killigrew or Randolph immediately into Scotland;² but her rela-

¹ MS. Letter, Draft, St. P. Off. Walsingham to Elizabeth, January 15, 1574-5.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Edward Cary to Walsingham, 17th January, 1574-5. Also Orig. Draft, St. P. Off. Walsingham to the Queen, 20th March, 1574-5. In the midst of these anticipated troubles, died, at his palace of Hamilton, the Duke of Chastelherault, better known by the name of the Regent Arran, on the 22d January, 1574-5.

tions with France occasioned new delays. She had entered into an amicable correspondence with Catherine de Medicis. The Duke D'Alençon still warmly prosecuted his marriage suit; and although the English Queen had not the slightest intentions of granting it, she, as usual, dallied and coquetted with the proposal. In the midst of all, Charles the Ninth died; the Queen became engrossed with the speculations and uncertainties which follow a new succession; and Morton, irritated by neglect, was driven by resentment and necessity to cultivate the friendship of that party in Scotland which was devoted to France.

This alienation was soon detected by Walsingham, who wrote in alarm to Burghley, and on the succeeding day to Elizabeth, adjuring her, "for the love of God, to arrest the impending mischief, and secure the Scottish amity, which of all others stood them at that moment in greatest stead. Already," he said, "the Regent was conferring favours on the Hamiltons, who were entirely French; already he was plotting to get the young King of Scots out of the hands of his Governor, Alexander Erskine; Henry the Third, the new King of France, was well-known to be devoted to the house of Guise; and with such feelings, what was to be expected, but that the moment he had quieted the disturbances in his own realm, he would keenly embrace the cause of the Scottish Queen?"¹

¹ MS. Letter, Orig. Draft, St. P. Off. Walsingham to Burghley, 11th April, 1575. Also St. P. Off. Orig. Draft. Walsingham to Elizabeth, 12th April, 1575.

Elizabeth was at last roused, and gave orders for the despatch of Henry Killigrew into Scotland, accompanied by Mr Davison, afterwards the celebrated Secretary, whom he was directed to leave as English resident at the Scottish Court.¹ But before the Ambassador crossed the Border, an affray broke out, which threatened the most serious consequences, and arrested him at Berwick. At a Warden Court, held by Sir John Forster, Warden of the Middle Marches, and Sir John Carmichael, Keeper of Liddesdale, a dispute arose which led to high words between these two leaders; and their followers, taking fire, assaulted each other. The Scots at first were repulsed, but being joined by a body of their countrymen from Jedburgh, rallied, attacked, and totally routed the English. Sir John Heron, Keeper of Tynedale, was slain; whilst Sir John Forster, Sir Francis Russell, Sir Cuthbert Collingwood, Mr Ogle, Mr Fenwick, and about three hundred men, were made prisoners, and carried by the Earl of Angus to the Regent at Dalkeith. Morton received them with much courtesy, dismissed the prisoners of inferior rank, and expressed, in a letter to Elizabeth, his readiness to afford redress: but he detained the Lord Warden; and when the Queen insisted that the Regent should meet Lord Huntingdon, the President of the North, in a personal conference in England, he peremptorily refused. Such a proceeding, he said, was beneath the dignity of the office he

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Orig. Instructions to Henry Killigrew, 27th May, 1575.

held; but he offered to send the Justice Clerk to arrange a meeting in Scotland.¹

On being informed of this, Elizabeth, already chafed by the detention of her Warden, broke into one of those furious fits of passion which sometimes caused her highest councillors to tremble for their heads, and disagreeably reminded them of her father. In this frame she dictated a violent message to the Scottish Regent, which she commanded Killigrew to deliver without reserve or delay. She had seen, she said, certain demands made, on his part, by the Justice-clerk, and did not a little wonder at so strange and insolent a manner of dealing. He had already been guilty of a foul fact in detaining her Warden, the Governor of one of the principal forts in her realm; he had committed a flagrant breach of treaty; and had she been inclined to prosecute her just revenge, he should soon have learnt what it was for one of his base calling to offend one of her quality. And, whereas, continued she, he goeth about to excuse the detaining of our Warden, alleging that he feared he might revenge himself when his blood was roused for his kinsman's death,—such an excuse seemed to her, she must tell him, a scornful aggravation of his fault; for she would have him to know, that neither Forster nor any other public officer or private subject of hers dared to offer such an outrage to her government, as, for private revenge, to break a public treaty. As to the conference with Huntingdon, instead of receiving

¹ MS. Relation of the Affairs of Scotland from 1566 to 1579. Warrender MS. Collections, vol. B. fol. 208.

her offer with gratitude, he had treated it with contempt. He had taken upon him to propose a place of meeting, four miles within Scotland; an ambitious part in him, and savouring so much of an insolent desire of sovereignty, that she would have scorned such a request had it come from the King his master, or the greatest Prince in Europe. To conclude, she informed him that, if he chose to confer with the Earl of Huntingdon at the *Bond Rode*,¹ she was content; and he would do well to remember that his predecessor the Regent Murray had not scrupled to come to York, and afterwards to London, to hold a consultation with her commissioners.²

This passionate invective I have given, as it is highly characteristic of the Queen; but Huntingdon and Killigrew deemed it proper to soften its expressions, in conveying the substance of it to the Regent, whom they had no mind unnecessarily to irritate.³ Even in its diluted state, however, it awed him into submission. He met the English President on the 16th of August at the appointed place, arranged all differences, and not only dismissed his prisoners, but loaded them with presents, and sent Carmichael up to England to ask pardon of Elizabeth. Amongst his gifts were some choice falcons; upon which a saying rose amongst the Borderers, alluding to the death of

¹ The *Bond Rode*, or boundary road, a place or road on the Marches near Berwick, common to both kingdoms.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. To Killigrew in Scotland. From the Queen.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Killigrew to Leicester, 14th August, 1575.

Sir John Heron, that for this once the Regent had lost by his bargain: He had given live hawks for dead Herons.¹

The quarrel having been adjusted, Killigrew proceeded to Scotland. On his arrival there, he perceived everywhere indications of the same flourishing condition in which he had lately left the country. Whilst the people seemed earnestly disposed to preserve the amity with England, all lamented the late accident on the Borders; and the ministers in their sermons prayed fervently for the continuance of the peace. As to the Regent himself, the Ambassador found him still firm in his affection to England, and in resisting the advances of France. Although not popular, generally, the vigour and success of his government were admitted even by his enemies: property and person were secure; and he gave an example of this in his own conduct; for he never used a guard, and would pursue his diversions, walking abroad with his fishing-rod over his shoulder, or his hawk on his wrist,² almost alone, to the wonder of many. The Borders, since the late disturbance, had been quiet; and so rapidly had the foreign commerce of the country increased, that Killigrew reckoned it able to raise twenty thousand mariners.

Such was the favourable side of the picture; but

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. Huntingdon to Leicester, 14th August, 1575. Ibid. MS. Letter. Huntingdon to Sir T. Smith, 17th August, 1575. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. The Regent to Walsingham, 20th September, 1575. And Hume of Godscroft, vol. ii. p. 253.

² Murdin, p. 283.

there were some drawbacks to this prosperity, arising chiefly out of the feuds amongst the nobility, and the discontent of the clergy. It was reported that Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, who had shot the Regent Murray, and fled to the continent after the murder, was to be brought home by the Lord of Arbroath. This nobleman was second son of the late Duke of Chastelherault, and, owing to the insanity of Arran his elder brother, had become the chief leader of the Hamiltons. The idea of the return of his murderer, roused the friends of the late Regent to the highest pitch of resentment; and Douglas of Lochleven, his near kinsman, assembling a force of twelve hundred men, vowed deadly vengeance against both the assassin and Arbroath his chief. The Earls of Argyle, Athol, Buchan, and Mar, with Lords Lindsay and Ruthven, espoused the quarrel of Lochleven; Arbroath, on the other hand, would be supported, it was said, by all the friends of France and the Queen; whilst Morton in vain endeavoured to bring both parties to respect the laws. Arbroath, too, meditated a marriage with the Lady Buccleugh, sister to the Earl of Angus, the Regent's nephew and heir; and when Morton appeared to countenance the match, a clamour arose amongst the young King's friends that he showed an utter disregard to the safety of his sovereign. Was not the Duke, they said, failing the King, the next heir to the throne? was not Arran his eldest son mad? and did not the right of the royal succession devolve on Arbroath? Had the Regent forgotten the ambition of the House of Hamilton, and Arbroath's

familiarity with blood? and would he strengthen the hands of such a man by a marriage in his own family? If so, he need not look for the support of any faithful subject who tendered the young King's preservation.¹

To these were added other causes of disquiet and difficulty. Morton was no longer popular with the citizens of Edinburgh; nor, indeed, could he reckon upon the support of any of the middle or lower classes in the state. His exactions had completely disgusted the merchants of the capital. He had imprisoned the most opulent amongst them, and this caused so great an outcry that many scrupled not to say, that, if he did not speedily change his measures the same burghers' hands which had put him up, would as surely pull him down again. To all these causes of discontent, must be added his quarrel with the Kirk, and the soreness arising out of his recent establishment of Episcopacy. This had given mortal offence to some of the leading ministers, who considered the appointment of Bishops, Abbots, and other Catholic dignitaries to be an unchristian and heterodox practice, utterly at variance with the great principles of their Reformation. They arraigned, and with justice, as far as regarded the Regent, the selfish and venal feelings which had led to the preservation of this alleged relic of Popery. It was evident, they said, that avarice, and not religion, was at the root of the whole. The nobles and the laity had already seized a large portion of the Church lands, and their

¹ Murdin, pp. 282, 283.

greedy eyes still coveted more. These prizes they were determined to retain; whilst the poor ministers who laboured in the vineyard, and to whom the thirds of the benefices had been assigned, found this a nominal provision, and were unable, with their utmost efforts, to extract a pittance from the collectors; the whole of the rents finding their way into the purses of the Regent and his favourites. And how utterly ridiculous was this last settlement of the Bishops? Was it not notorious that the See attached to the primacy of St Andrew's belonged, in reality, to Morton himself? that there was a secret agreement, a nefarious collusion, between him and the Prelate, his own near relative, whom he had placed in it? Was it not easy to see that the chief purpose of this ecclesiastical office was to enable the Regent more readily and decently to suck out the riches of the benefice, as, in the north country, farmers would sometimes stuff a calf's skin, called there a *Tulchan*, and set it up before a cow to make her give her milk more willingly? What were all these Bishops, and Abbots, and Priors, whom they now heard so much about, but mere *Tulchans*,—men of straw,—clerical calves, set up by the nobility to facilitate their own Simoniacal operations?

These arguments, which were enforced with much popular eloquence and humour, by those ministers who were attached to the Presbyterian form of Church Government, produced a great effect upon the people, already sufficiently disgusted by the exactions and tyranny of the Regent. Morton, too,

increased the discontent by his violence, threatening the most zealous of the ministers, and broadly declaring that there would be no peace or order in the country till some of them were hanged.¹

At this crisis, Andrew Melville, a Scottish scholar of good family, who had been educated first in his native country, and afterwards brought up in the strictest principles of Calvin and Beza at Geneva, returned to Scotland from the continent. He was profoundly skilled in the Greek and Latin languages, and calculated, both by his learning and enthusiasm, to be of essential service to the reviving literature of his country; but he was rash and imperious, a keen republican, sarcastic and severe in his judgment of others, and with little command of temper. Soon after his arrival he acquired a great influence over Durie, one of the leading ministers of the Kirk, who, at his instigation, began to agitate the question, whether the office of a Bishop was consistent with the true principles of Church Government as they could be gathered from the Word of God? After various arguments and consultations held upon the subject, a form of Church polity was drawn up by some of the leading ministers; and the Regent, with greater indulgence than his former proceedings had promised, appointed some members of the Council to take it into consideration: but they had scarcely met, when the State was suddenly plunged into new troubles, which at once broke off their conference.

¹ Calderwood, MS. Hist. British Museum. Ayscough's Catalogue, No. 4735, p. 1053 of the MS.

This revolution originated in a coalition of the Earls of Athol and Argyle against the Regent. Both these noblemen were of great power and possessions, and could command nearly the whole of the north of Scotland. Athol, a Stewart, was considered the leader of that party which had recently attached themselves to the young King, under the hope of prevailing upon him to assume the Government in his own person. Being a Roman Catholic, he was, for this reason, much suspected by Morton; and he, in his turn, hated the Regent for his cruel conduct to Lethington, to whom Athol had been linked in the closest friendship. Argyle, on the other hand, although he had formerly been united with Morton in most of his projects, was now completely estranged from his old comrade; and the cause of quarrel was to be traced to the Regent's cupidity. Argyle had married the widow of the Regent Murray, Agnes Keith, a sister of the Earl Marshal, and through her had got possession of some of the richest of the Queen's jewels. These Mary had delivered to Murray in a moment of misplaced confidence. He, as was asserted, had advanced money upon them to the State; at his death they remained in the hands of his widow; and Morton now insisted on recovering them, in obedience to an order given on the subject by Parliament. Argyle and his lady resisted; and although the jewels were at last surrendered, it was not till the noble persons who detained them were threatened with arrest. This, and other causes of dispute, had entirely alienated Argyle from Morton: but, for a short

season, the Regent derived security from the sanguinary contests between the two northern Earls themselves. Their private warfare, however, which had threatened to involve in broils and bloodshed the whole of the north, was suddenly composed; and by one of those rapid changes which were by no means unfrequent in feudal Scotland, the two fierce rivals, instead of destroying each other, united in a league against the Regent. This new state of things is to be traced to the influence of Alexander Erskine, the Governor of the King and Commander of Stirling Castle. This gentleman had recently discovered that Morton, with that subtle and treacherous policy, of which he had already given many proofs, was secretly plotting to get possession of the person of the young monarch, and to place a creature of his own in command of the Castle of Stirling. To confound his scheme, Erskine, who was beloved by the higher nobles, and a principal member of the confederacy which had been formed for the King's protection, wrote secretly to Athol and Argyle, inviting them to come to Stirling, assuring them that James was already well disposed to redress their complaints against the Regent, and promising them immediate access to the royal person.

It is scarcely to be believed that these plots and jealousies should have altogether escaped the attention of Morton. He had his secret emissaries both in Scotland and in England, and he must have been well aware of his increasing unpopularity. The age of the young King, who had now completed his twelfth year,

and begun to take an interest in the Government, admonished him that every succeeding year would render it a more difficult task for any Regent to engross the supreme power; and as long as James remained under the care of Alexander Erskine, whom he had reason to believe his enemy, it was evident that the continuance of his authority must be precarious. Already, he saw his sovereign surrounded by those who, for their own ends, sought to persuade him that he was arrived at an age when he ought to take the Government into his own hands.

So far-sighted and experienced a political intriguer as Morton, could not be sensible of all this, without speculating on the best mode of encountering the storm when it did arrive, and averting the wreck of his power. To continue sole Regent much longer was evidently full of difficulty; but to flatter the young Monarch by a nominal sovereignty, and to rule him as effectually under the title of King, as he had done when sole Regent, would be no arduous matter, considering his tender years, provided he could undermine the influence of Erskine his Governor, and crush the confederacy with Argyle and Athol. In the mean season, he resolved to await his time, and watch their proceedings. But the Regent, although cautious and calculating, was not aware of the full extent of the confederacy against him; and the catastrophe arrived more suddenly than he had anticipated. The intrigues of Argyle and Athol had not escaped the eyes of Walsingham; and in December, 1577, Elizabeth, suspecting an

impending revolution, despatched Sir Robert Bowes to Scotland, with the hope of preventing any open rupture between Morton and the nobility. He was instructed to inculcate the absolute necessity of union, to prevent both themselves and her kingdom from falling a sacrifice to the practices of foreign powers; and to threaten Morton, that, if he continued refractory, and refused to make up his differences with his opponents, she would make no scruple to cast him off, and herself become a party against him. He carried also a flattering letter from the Queen to the Earl of Athol, in which she assured him of her favourable feelings and recommended peace.¹

For a moment, the envoy appears to have succeeded; but he was aware that the friendship professed on both sides was hollow, and the lull of civil faction only temporary. This is evident from a letter which he wrote to Leicester, upon his return to Berwick:—"Albeit," said he, "those matters (in Scotland) are for a season wrapped up, yet it is not unlike, without wise handling and some charge to her Majesty, that the fire will be readily kindled again. * * * The readiest way, in my opinion, to preserve the realm in quietness, with continuance of this amity, is to appease and ——² all the griefs between the Regent and others of the realm, and by friendly reconciliation and union to make him gracious

¹ MS. Instructions to Thomas Randolph, 30th January, 1577-8, St. P. Off. Orig. Draft of MS. Letter, St. P. Off. The Queen's Maj. to the Earl of Athol, December, 1577.

² A word in the original is here illegible.

amongst them. For which he must receive some apt lessons, with gentleness, from her Majesty: but with the same, he must also receive some comfort, agreeable to his nature."¹ It is evident from this, that Bowes had become convinced that, to conciliate Morton and preserve peace, Elizabeth must deal less in objurgation, and more in solid coin, than she had lately done; nor need we wonder that the envoy, afraid of undertaking so delicate a task, was happy to return: but the Queen, who had received some new and alarming information of the success of French intrigue in Scotland, commanded him to revisit Edinburgh, and watch the proceedings of both parties. Even this, however, did not appear enough: and soon after, Randolph was despatched on a mission to the young King and the Regent; its object being similar to that of Bowes', but his instructions more urgent and decided.² Some delay, however, occurred; and he had scarcely arrived in Scotland, when the clouds which had been so long gathering burst upon the head of the Regent. The rapidity of the movements of the conspirators, and their complete success, were equally remarkable. On the 4th of March, (1577-8) Argyle rode with his usual retinue to Stirling, and being immediately admitted by Erskine to an interview with the young King, complained loudly

¹ MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. v. fol. 86. Sir R. Bowes to Leicester, October 9, 1577, Berwick.

² MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. v. fol. iii. Instructions given, 31st January, to Thomas Randolph. Also MS., St. P. Off. Mr Randolph's several Instructions in his Ambassades.

of Morton's insolent and oppressive conduct, not only to himself, but to the whole nobility and people. He implored him to call a Convention to examine his complaints; and, if he found them true, to take the Government upon himself, and put an end to a system which, whilst it cruelly opprest his subjects, left him nothing but the name of a King. These arguments were enforced by Erskine the Governor; the famous Buchanan, one of the tutors of the young monarch, threw all his weight into the same scale; and the other confederates who had joined the conspiracy, Glamis the Chancellor, the Abbot of Dunfermline, the Secretary, Tullibardin the Comptroller, and the Lords Lindsay, Ruthven, Ogilvy and others, eagerly joined in recommending such a course. Athol at this time was absent: but he arrived, no doubt by concert, at the moment his presence was most necessary; and being instantly admitted into the castle, and led to the King, his opinion was urgently demanded. Scarcely, however, had he time to deliver it, and to express his detestation of the tyranny by which they had been so long kept down, when a messenger brought letters from Morton, keenly reprobating the conduct of the northern Earls. He remonstrated with the King on the outrage committed against his royal person and himself; represented the necessity of inflicting on such bold offenders speedy and exemplary punishment; and concluded by declaring his anxiety to resign his office, if his royal master was prepared to overlook such proceedings. This offer was too tempting to be rejected:

letters were addressed to the nobility requiring their instant attendance at court. Argyle, Athol, and Erskine, took care that those summonses should find their way only to their friends. The Convention assembled; a resolution was unanimously passed that the King should take the Government upon himself; and before the Regent had time to retract, he was waited upon by Glamis the Chancellor, and Lord Herries, who brought a message from his Sovereign, requiring his immediate resignation. Although startled at the suddenness of the demand, Morton was too proud, or too wary, to pretend any repugnance. He received the envoys with cheerfulness; rode with them from his castle at Dalkeith to the capital; and there, at the Cross, heard the herald and the messenger-at-arms proclaim his own deprivation, and the assumption of the Government by the young King. He then, in the presence of the people, resigned the ensigns of his authority; and, without a murmur or complaint, retired to one of his country seats, where he seemed wholly to forget his ambition, and to be entirely engrossed in the tranquil occupations of husbandry and gardening,

The news of this revolution was instantly communicated by Randolph to his friend Killigrew, in this laconic and characteristic epistle, written when he was on the eve of throwing himself on horseback to proceed to England, and in person inform Elizabeth of the alarming change.

“All the devils in hell are stirring and in great rage in this country. The Regent is discharged—

the country broken, the Chancellor slain by the Earl of Crawford, four killed of the town out of the castle, and yet are we in hope of some good quietness, by the great wisdom of the Earl of Morton. There cometh to her Majesty from hence an Ambassador shortly. I know not yet who, but Sandy Hay in his company. It behoveth me to be there before: and so show my wife." ¹

The death of the Chancellor, Lord Glammis, here alluded to by Randolph, was in no way connected with the revolution which he describes, but took place in a casual scuffle between his retinue and that of the Earl of Crawford. His high office was bestowed upon Athol, Morton's chief enemy, and the leader of the confederacy which had deposed him. But this, though it preserved the influence of the successful faction, scarcely compensated for the loss of their associate, who was accounted one of the wisest and most learned men in Scotland.

Meanwhile, the confederated nobles followed up their advantages. As the King was not yet thirteen, a Council of twelve was appointed. It consisted of the Earls of Argyle, Athol, Montrose, and Glencairn; the Lords Ruthven, Lindsay, and Herries; the Abbots of Newbottle and Dunfermline; the Prior of St Andrew's: and two supernumerary or extraordinary Councillors; Buchanan, the King's tutor, and James Makgill, the Clerk-Register. All royal letters were to be signed by the King and four of this number; and

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Randolph to Killigrew, 20th March, 1577—that is, 1577-8. Signed jocularly—*Thomazo del Niente*. Sandy Hay was Alexander Hay, Clerk-Register.

as the first exercise of their power, they required from Morton the delivery of the Castle of Edinburgh, the Palace of Holyrood, the Mint, and the Queen's jewels and treasure. To all this prostration of his former greatness, he appears to have made no resistance; but simply required, that, in the next Parliament, they should pass an act approving of his administration during his continuance in the Regency. He then held a hurried conference with Randolph, before his setting off for the English Court; intrusted him with a brief letter to his old friend, Lord Burghley, written in his new character as a private man,¹ and seemed prepared, with perfect contentment, to sink into that condition.

It was evident, however, from the expressions he used in this short note, that he had informed Randolph of some ulterior design for his resumption of power, which he did not choose to commit to writing; and that the Ambassador, long versant in Scottish broils and intrigues, considered it a wise and likely project. Nor was he wrong in this conclusion: for the development of this counter-revolution, which restored Morton to power, followed almost immediately; and the outbreak was as sudden, as the success was complete.

The King's Lords, as Argyle and his friends were called, had formed their Council,² assembled in the

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. The Earl Morton to Lord Burghley, 28th March, 1578. He signs simply, "Morton."

² MS. Record of the Privy Council in Register House, Edinburgh, 24th March, 1577-8.

capital, conferred the Chancellor's place on Athol, and proclaimed a Parliament to be held on the 10th of June. On the 24th of April, the General Assembly met at Edinburgh; and having chosen Mr Andrew Melvil to be their Moderator, proceeded to their deliberations with their usual zeal and energy. It was determined to revise the Book of Church Policy, and lay it before the King and Council; and a blow was aimed at the late Episcopal innovations, by a declaration that, owing to the great corruption already visible in the state of Bishops, no see should be filled up till the next General Assembly of the Church.¹ During these transactions, Morton lived in retirement, and appeared wholly engrossed in his rural occupations; but he had secretly gained to his interest the young Earl of Mar, whose sister was the wife of Angus, Morton's heir, and the head of the house of Douglas. To Mar, he artfully represented that he was unjustly and shamefully treated by his uncle, Erskine the Governor. He, the young Earl, who was no longer a boy, was entitled by hereditary right to the government of Stirling Castle; but his uncle usurped it, and with it kept hold of the King's person. It was Alexander Erskine, not the Earl of Mar, who was now considered the head of that ancient house. Would he submit to this ignominy, when, by a bold stroke, he might recover his lost rights; when the house of Douglas, with all its strength and vassalage, was ready to take his part;

¹ MS. Calderwood, pp. 1055-1059.

and his uncles, the Abbots of Dryburgh, and Cambuskenneth, offered their council and assistance? These arguments easily gained over the young lord; and as he and his retinue were generally lodged in the castle, he determined to put Morton's plan in execution.

On the 26th April, about five in the morning, before many of the garrison were stirring, Mar, who had slept that night in the castle, assembled his retinue, under the pretence of a hunting party, and riding to the gates with the Abbots of Dryburgh and Cambuskenneth, called for the keys. He was met by his uncle, Erskine the Governor, with a small company, who, for the moment, suspected nothing; but finding himself rudely accosted as a usurper by the Abbots, instantly dreaded some false play. To shout treason, seize a halbert from one of the guard, and call to his servants, was with Erskine the work of a moment; but, ere assistance arrived, his little band was surrounded, his son crushed to death in the tumult, and himself thrust without the gates into an outer hall, whilst Mar seized the keys, put down all resistance, and became master of the castle. In the midst of this uproar the young King awoke, and rushing in great terror from his chamber, tore his hair, and called out that the Master of Erskine was slain. He was assured that his governor was safe; and the Earl of Argyle, who had been roused by the tumult, finding the two Abbots arguing with Erskine in the hall, but showing him no personal violence, affected to consider it a family quarrel, between the

uncle and the nephew, and retired, after advising an amicable adjustment. News of the tumult was, that evening, carried to the Council at Edinburgh, accompanied by an assurance from Mar, Argyle, and Buchanan the King's tutor, that the dispute was adjusted. Upon this they despatched Montrose, the same night, to Stirling; who, coming alone, was courteously received and admitted into the castle: but next day when the Council rode thither in a body and demanded admittance, this was peremptorily refused by Mar. They should all see the King, he said, but it must be one by one; and no Councillor should enter the gates with more than one attendant.¹

Incensed at this indignity, the Council assembled in Stirling, and issued a proclamation, prohibiting any resort of armed men thither, whilst they sent secret orders to convoke their own forces. But their measures were too late: Douglas of Lochleven had already entered the castle, joined Mar, and communicated with Morton, whose hand, it was strongly suspected, although it did not appear, had managed the whole. Angus, meantime, by his directions was ready, at six hours' warning, with all the armed vassals of the house of Douglas; and the ex-Regent, forgetting his gardens and pleasure grounds, hurried from his rural seclusion and reappeared in public, the same subtle, daring, and unscrupulous leader as before.²

¹ MS. Calderwood, Brit. Mus. p. 1061.

² Copy, Caligula, C. v. fol. 89. Sir Robert Bowes to Lord Burghley, Edinburgh, April 28, 1578. In this letter of Bowes

Events now crowded rapidly on each other. At the earnest request of the young King, an agreement took place between Mar and his uncle, Alexander Erskine. The Earl retained the Castle of Stirling, and with it the custody of the royal person. To the Master of Erskine, so Alexander was called, was given the keeping of the Castle of Edinburgh; and in a meeting held at Craigmillar, between Morton, Athol, and Argyle, it was decided that they should next day repair together to Stirling, and adjust all differences before the King in person. This was determined on the 8th of May; and that evening the two northern Earls, after sharing Morton's hospitality at Dalkeith, rode with him to Edinburgh. In the morning, however, Morton was nowhere to be found; and it turned out that he had risen before daybreak, and, with a small retinue, had galloped to Stirling, where he was received within the castle, and soon resumed his ascendancy both over Mar and the King.¹

Against this flagrant breach of agreement, Argyle and Athol loudly remonstrated; and Sir Robert Bowes, the English Ambassador, exerting himself to

to Burghley, written in the midst of this revolution, and on the very day the Council rode to Stirling, he says,—“What storm shall fall out of these swelling heats, doth not yet appear. But I think, verily, within two or three days, it will burst into some open matter, discovering sufficiently the purposes intended; wherein, to my power, I shall seek to quench all violent rages, and persuade to unity and concord amongst them.”

¹ MS. Calderwood, Brit. Mus. Ayscough, 4735, p. 1061. Also, Orig. Draft, St. P. Off. Articles delivered by Argyle, Athol, &c. to Lord Lindsay.

restore peace, the young monarch summoned a convention of his nobles: but the northern Earls and their associates received such a proposal with derision, and sent word by Lord Lindsay, that they would attend no convention held by their enemies, within a fortress which they commanded. Other Lords obeyed, but came fully armed, and with troops of vassals at their back; and both factions mustered in such strength, and exhibited such rancour, that, but for the remonstrances of Bowes, the country would have hurried into war.

Amidst the clamour and confusion, however, it was evident that the ex-Regent directed all. By his persuasion a new Council was appointed, in which he held the chief place. It was next determined to send the Abbot of Dunfermline as Ambassador from the young King to Elizabeth. He was instructed to thank that Princess for the special favour with which she had regarded him from his birth, to confirm the peace between the two countries, and to propose a stricter league for mutual defence, and the maintenance of true religion.¹

The Parliament had been summoned to meet in July at Edinburgh: but Morton was well aware of his unpopularity in that city, and dreaded to bring the King into the midst of his enemies. By his persuasion, therefore, the young monarch changed the place of assembly to the great hall within Stirling Castle, where he knew all would be secure. But

¹ MS. Draft, St. P. Off. 18th June, 1578.

this new measure gave deep offence; and when the day approached, Argyle, Athol, Montrose, Lindsay, and Herries, with their adherents, assembled in the capital, declaring that nothing should compel them to attend a Parliament within a citadel garrisoned by their mortal enemies, and where it would be a mockery to expect any free discussion.

Despising this opposition, Morton hurried on his measures, and the Estates assembled in the great hall within Stirling Castle.¹ It was opened by the King in person; but scarcely had the members taken their seats, when Montrose and Lord Lindsay presented themselves as Commissioners from Argyle, Athol, and their adherents, and declared that this could in no sense be called a free Parliament. It was held, they said, within an armed fortress; and for this cause the noble peers, whose messengers they were, had refused to attend it; and we now come, said Lindsay, with his usual brevity and bluntness, to protest against its proceedings. Morton here interrupted him, and commanded him and his companion to take their places; to which Lindsay answered, that he would stand there till the King ordered him to his seat. James then repeated the command, and the old lord sat down. After a sermon, which was preached by Duncanson, the minister of the royal household, and a harangue by Morton, who, in the absence of Athol the Chancellor, took upon him to fill his place, the Estates proceeded to choose the Lords of the Articles; upon which Lindsay again

¹ July 16, 1578.

broke in upon the proceedings, calling all to witness, that every act of such a Parliament was null, and the choosing of the lords an empty farce. This second attack threw Morton into an ungovernable rage, in which he unsparingly abused his old associate. "Think ye, Sir," said he, "that this is a court of churls or brawlers? Take your own place, and thank God that the King's youth keeps you safe from his resentment." "I have served the King in his minority," said Lindsay, "as faithfully as the proudest among ye; and I think to serve his Grace no less truly in his majority." Upon which, Morton was observed to whisper something in the King's ear, who, blushing and hesitating, delivered himself of a little speech, which, no doubt, had been prepared for him before hand. "Lest any man," said he, "should judge this not to be a free Parliament, I declare it free; and those who love me will think as I think."¹

This silenced Lindsay, and the proceedings went on; but Montrose, abruptly leaving the hall, rode post to Edinburgh. It was reported that he bore a secret letter from the King, imploring his subjects to arm and relieve him from the tyranny of Morton. It is certain, that the recusant Earl drew a vivid picture of the late Regent's insolence, and roused the citizens to such a pitch of fury, that they mustered in arms, and declared that they would rescue their Sovereign from the hands of a traitor who had sold them to the English. Nothing could be more grateful to Argyle and Athol than such a spirit; and

¹ MS. Calderwood, Brit. Mus. pp. 1062, 1065.

sending word to the townsmen, that they would speedily join them with a force which would soon bring their enemies to reason, they summoned their feudal services, and prepared for war.¹

Montrose's sudden retreat saved him from imprisonment; for next day an order of Privy-council appeared, commanding him and Lindsay his associate to confine themselves to their own lodgings under pain of rebellion.² In the meantime the Parliament proceeded. Morton's demission of the Regency, and the King's acceptance of the government were confirmed. An ample approval and discharge was given him of all the acts done during his Regency, and a new Council appointed, in which he himself sat as chief, and could, in any emergency, command a majority. The revolution was thus complete. He had lost the name of Regent, but he had retained his power; and the nominal assumption of the government by the young King had removed many difficulties which before trammelled and perplexed him.³

But this daring and experienced politician had men to deal with who, having been trained in his own school, were not easily put down; and scarcely had the arrangements for the new government been completed, when Argyle and Athol occupied the city of Edinburgh, and communicating with the leading

¹ MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. v. fol. 101, Lord Hunsdon to Burghley, Aug. 19, 1578, Berwick.

² MS. Books of Privy Council, Register-House, Edinburgh, 17th July, 1578.

³ Draft, St. P. Off. Names of the King's Ordinary Council, and Acts of Parliament of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 94.

ministers of the Kirk, now completely estranged from Morton, assembled their forces. It was in vain that Sir Robert Bowes, the English Ambassador, remonstrated against this violence; in vain that a charge from the Privy-council was fulminated against the two Earls, commanding them, on pain of treason, to depart from Edinburgh within twenty-four hours. Both sides flew to arms: the country, so lately restored to peace, again resounded with warlike preparation: proclamations, and counter-proclamations were discharged against each other; summonses for their armed vassals issued in every direction; and so readily were the orders obeyed, that Argyle and Athol, who had marched out of Edinburgh on the 11th August with only one thousand men, found themselves, on mustering at Falkirk on the 13th, seven thousand strong. Of these troops the greater part were animated by the deadliest hatred of Morton; especially the hardy bands of the Merse and Teviotdale, led by their wardens Coldingknowes and Cessford. They carried before them a banner of blue sarsnet, on which was painted a boy within a grated window, with the distich "*Liberty I crave, and cannot it have.*"¹ This was meant to represent the King's thralldom to Morton; and below it was their answer, declaring that they would die to set him free. On the other side came Angus, who

¹ MS. Letter, Calig. C. v. fol. 101, Lord Hunsdon to Burghley, Aug. 19, 1578, Berwick. In these transactions the celebrated Buchanan acted as a kind of Secretary of State. Calderwood MS. fol. 1071.

had been recently proclaimed Lieutenant General to the King, with a body of five thousand men; and the skirmishing between the advanced parties of each army had commenced, when Sir Robert Bowes, accompanied by Lawson and Lindsay, the two principal ministers of the Kirk, rode hastily from the capital, and again offered himself, in the name of his mistress the Queen of England, as a peacemaker between the rival factions.¹

In this humane office, after prolonged and bitter discussions, he was successful. The young King, or rather Morton in his name, declared, that foreseeing the wreck and misery of the realm, if the present divisions were not speedily removed, he was ready to meet the wishes of the Queen of England; and therefore commanded his nobility, on both sides, to disband their forces. To reassure Argyle and Athol's faction, their late conduct in taking arms was accepted as loyal service; Argyle, Lindsay, and Morton, so recently denounced as traitors, were added to the Privy-council; a committee of eight noblemen was to be chosen, to advise with the King upon the best mode of reconciling his nobility; and, from this moment, free access was to be afforded to all noblemen, barons, or gentlemen, who came to offer their service to their Prince.² To these conditions both parties agreed; and by the judicious management of

¹ MS. Calderwood, p. 1071.

² MS. St. P. Off. Copy of the time. Articles agreed on in Scotland between the King and the Lords, 13th August, 1578.

Bowes, Scotland was saved for the present from the misery of civil war.

This minister, after the service he had thus performed, remained for some time resident Ambassador at the Scottish court; where Morton's successful intrigues had once more established him as the chief ruler in the state; a result which was viewed with much satisfaction by Elizabeth, who, even after his demission of his high office, had never ceased to give him the title of Regent.¹ For the name, however, he cared little: it was power to which he looked; and this, having for the moment secured, he was determined not speedily again to lose. The great principles upon which he had hitherto conducted the Government, were a strict amity with England, opposition to all foreign intrigue, a determined resistance to the deliverance of the Scottish Queen, and a resolution to maintain the Protestant faith. On this last important point, however, his motives had become suspected by the influential body of the ministers of the Kirk. This was owing to his introduction into Scotland of the Episcopal form of Church government, and his resistance to the book of Church polity which had been drawn up by the General Assembly, and presented to the King and the three Estates for their approval. Yet still, although no longer the favourite of the clergy, Morton was anti-Catholic enough to be preferred by them to Athol, a professed Roman Catholic, and his associates, who,

¹ Instructions to Randolph, 31st January, 1578, Caligula, C. v. fol. 111, Brit. Mus.

for the most part, were either avowed or suspected Romanists; and for the present the ministers refrained from endangering the restored peace of the country by any violence of opposition.

Yet it was impossible for any acute observer not to see that the times were precarious. The elements of discord were lulled in their active efforts, but not destroyed; the intrigues of France and Spain for the deliverance of Mary, and the reëstablishment of the ancient faith, were still busily carried on; and Bowes the Ambassador, who, from long experience, was intimately acquainted with the state of the rival factions, regarded the Court and the country as on the eve of another change. On the 3d November, shortly previous to his leaving Scotland, he thus wrote from Edinburgh to Lord Burghley:—

“By my common letters to the Lords of her Majesty’s Council, the weltering estate of this realm, that now attendeth but a tide for a new alteration of the Court, will appear to your Lordship, and how necessary it is in this change approaching, and in the confederacies presently knitting, to get some hold for her Majesty amongst them.”¹ It had been his own earnest endeavour to get such hold over them; and for this purpose he had entered into negotiations with the Earl of Caithness, one of the principal leaders of the confederacy against Morton. He and his associates had sent articles of agreement, in the usual

¹ MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. v. fol. 109. Sir R. Bowes to Burghley, 3d November, 1578, Edinburgh.

form, to the English Ambassador : but they expected, also, the usual gratuity ; and as it turned out, valued their devotion to Elizabeth at a higher rate than that parsimonious Princess was disposed to reckon it. Caithness, indeed, was of loose and accommodating principles, both in politics and religion ; and although Bowes flattered himself that, on his departure from Scotland, he had left the faction opposed to Morton very favourably disposed to England, he did not conceal from Walsingham his apprehensions that the continuance of this feeling was precarious. “ I fear,” said he, in his letter to this minister, “ that no great inwardness shall be found in them, when they find her Majesty’s liberality coming slowly to them, that use not often at the fairest call to stoop to empty lure.”¹

These apprehensions of the English minister regarding the unsettled state of Scotland were not without good foundation. Mary’s indefatigable friend, the Bishop of Ross, whose intrigues in the affair of the Duke of Norfolk had already given such alarm to Elizabeth, was now busily employed on the Continent, exciting France, Spain, Germany, and the Papal Court, to unite for her deliverance ; and holding out the present crisis of affairs in Scotland as eminently favourable for the restoration of the true faith. The extent to which these operations were carried, was amply proved by a packet of intercepted letters, written in cipher, and seized by Walsingham or Burghley, whose spies and informers were scattered

¹ MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. v. fol. 110. Sir R. Bowes to ———, Nov. 24, 1578. I suspect to Walsingham.

all over Europe. It was found that the Earl of Athol, a Roman Catholic, the great leader of the late cabal against Morton, and Chancellor of Scotland, was in constant correspondence with the Bishop of Ross. The letters of the Scottish Queen herself, written immediately after Morton's resignation of the Regency, to the same prelate, and directed to be communicated to the Pope, expressed her satisfaction at the late revolution in Scotland, and her zealous concurrence with his Holiness in his project for the restitution of the true faith in Britain, by the united efforts of the great Catholic powers. She alluded, in the same letter, to a project for the carrying off her son, the young King, to the Continent, which the Pope had offered to forward by an advance of money. She informed him, that in consequence of the changes in Scotland since Morton's demission, she felt perfectly assured of the affection and services of the young Prince, and of his councillors; she urged the necessity of placing him, if possible, in the hands of her friends of the house of Lorrain; alluding to the imminent danger he incurred from Elizabeth's intrigues to get possession of his person, or even to deprive him of his life; she declared her conviction, that if her son were once in France, and removed from the sphere of Elizabeth's influence, a more lenient treatment of herself would ensue; and, lastly, she directed Ross to communicate upon all these matters with the Pope's nuncio at Paris.¹

¹ MS. Brit. Mus. ex cyphris Reginæ Scotiæ ad Episcopum Rossensem, Caligula, C. v. fol. 102.

In an intercepted letter, written about the same time by Beaton, Bishop of Glasgow, Mary's Ambassador at the Court of France, to the Bishop of Ross, the determination of Henry the Third, and the Duke of Guise, to assist her to their utmost, was clearly intimated.¹ In the autumn of the same year, and soon after the pacification between the rival factions in Scotland, which we have seen effected by Bowes, the Bishop of Ross made a progress into Germany, with the object of exciting the Emperor, and the Duke of Bavaria, to unite with the other Catholic Powers for the speedy liberation of his royal mistress, and the restoration of religion. From both potentates he received the utmost encouragement. The Emperor declared his readiness to cooperate with the endeavours of his brother Princes for the deliverance of the Scottish Queen, and the securing to her and her son their undoubted right to the English throne; and the Duke professed his determination to peril both property and life itself for the restoration of the Catholic faith.² This encouraging information was conveyed by Ross to the Cardinal Como, in a letter written from Prague on the 27th September, 1578, which, unfortunately for his mistress, fell into the hands of her enemies; and, at the same time, this indefatigable prelate, at the request of the Emperor, had drawn up a paper on

¹ Ex literis Archiep. Glasguensis ad Episcop. Rossen. 14th June, 1578. Calig. C. v. fol. 103 d. Brit. Mus.

² MS. Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. v. fol. 104 d. Ex literis Episcop. Rossensis ad Cardinalem Comensem, Pragæ, 27th Sept. 1578.

the state of parties in Scotland, in which he carefully marked the relative strength of the Roman Catholic and Protestant peers,¹ and pointed out the favourable crisis which had occurred. In a second interview, to which the Emperor admitted him, he described the state of parties in Scotland, following certain heads communicated by his royal mistress;² and by all these united exertions, there is no doubt that a deep impression was made throughout Europe in favour of the Scottish Queen. Well, therefore, might Sir Robert Bowes describe the condition of affairs in Scotland as one full of alarm; and before we condemn Elizabeth for her severity to Mary, we must weigh the perils to the Protestant faith which these intercepted letters so clearly demonstrated. But, on the other hand, it must not be forgotten, that these very dangers arose out of the injustice of her imprisonment.

In the mean time, Morton once more bore the chief sway in Scotland, where his triumph over the conspiracy of Athol and Argyle had really increased his power; whilst his possession of the King's person enabled him to overawe the young monarch as effectually as he had ever done when Regent. This resumption of strength he now employed to crush the house of Hamilton.

The Duke of Chastelherault was now dead; his eldest son the Earl of Arran, had been insane for some years; and in these melancholy circumstances,

¹ MS. Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. v. fol. 105.

² Ibid. fol. 106.

the leaders of this potent and ancient family were his brothers the Lord of Arbroath and Lord Claud Hamilton. Arbroath, in the event of the death of Mary and the young King, was next heir to the throne; and his possessions were described by Bowes as the greatest and the richest in Scotland.¹ These lands were conterminous with the vast estates of the Earl of Angus, which included nearly all the Overward of Clydesdale, as Arbroath's did the Netherward; and Morton and the Douglasses had long looked upon them with greedy eyes. But although his enmity against Arbroath and his brother was entirely selfish, Morton was not guilty of injustice when he persuaded the young King that it was his duty to proceed with severity against the house of Hamilton. It had a long reckoning of crime and blood to account for. There was little doubt that the late Archbishop of St Andrew's, its chief leader and adviser, had suffered justly as an accessory to the murder of Darnley; and this cast a strong suspicion of implication upon its present leaders. It was certain that they were guilty of the death of the Regent Murray; it was as undoubted that Lord Claud Hamilton had given the order which led to the murder of the Regent Lennox; and the houses of Mar and Douglas were bitterly hostile to the whole race. The Hamiltons being thus miserably situated, the

¹ MS. Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. v. fol. 82. Also, Draft of the King's Proclamation against John Hamilton, some time Commendator of Arbroath, and Claud Hamilton, some time Commendator of Paisley, dated 2d May, 1579, Bowes Papers.

terrible work of feudal retribution commenced, and was prosecuted in the rapid and cruel spirit of the times. Morton and Angus in person besieged the Castle of Hamilton, commanded by Arthur Hamilton of Merton.¹ He offered to surrender on being assured of his life, and pardon to himself and his garrison of all their offences, except the murder of the King and the two Regents; but these terms were scornfully refused, and he was at last compelled to submit unconditionally.² Much interest was made to save him: but Mar and Buchan, with Lochleven and James Douglas, a natural son of Morton's, were furious at the idea of his escaping their vengeance; declaring that the lives of any ten Hamiltons were a poor recompense for the Regent Murray. He and his company, therefore, were hanged; amongst whom was Arthur Hamilton, a brother of Bothwellhaugh who shot the Regent, and was known to have held the stirrup when the murderer threw himself on horseback and escaped.³ The Castle of Draffen, another stronghold of this great family, in which the Duchess of Chastelherault, and the unfortunate Earl of Arran, had taken refuge, was invested and taken

¹ 4th May, 1579.

² MS. Letter to Sir George Bowes from (as I suspect) Mr Archibald Douglas, Edinburgh, 24th May, 1579, copy of the time, Bowes Papers.

³ MS. Brit. Mus. Occurrences out of Scotland, 14th May, 1579, and 24th May, 1579, Caligula, C. v. fol. 120, copy. Also MS. Letter, 9th May, Bowes Papers. Also MS. Ibid. Caligula, C. v. fol. 122, Notes of Occurrences, 1st June, 1579. Also MS. Calderwood, Brit. Mus. Ayscough's Catalogue, 4735, fol. 1083.

about the same time, its garrison having abandoned it during the night; and in a convention of the nobility held soon after at Stirling, it was determined to complete the ruin of this devoted house by processes of treason in the next Parliament. Nothing could be more wretched than its condition at this moment. The Lord of Arbroath had fled to Flanders, where he was an almost houseless exile; Lord Claud escaped to England, and threw himself upon the compassion of Elizabeth; its lesser chiefs were trembling under an impending sentence of forfeiture; and its head, the Earl of Arran, whose royal descent and great power had made him, in former days, an almost accepted suitor, first of Elizabeth, and afterwards of Mary, was a prisoner, hopelessly insane, and placed, with his unhappy mother the Duchess, under the charge of Captain Lammie, a soldier of fierce and brutal habits, and a determined enemy of the house of Hamilton. Yet these accumulated miseries do not appear to have excited the slightest degree of sympathy in this unfeeling age; and when Elizabeth, compassionating the misfortunes of the Hamiltons, despatched her envoy Captain Arrington, to plead their cause at the Scottish Court, he found the young King, and the whole body of the nobility, inflamed with the deepest hatred against them, expressing a conviction that their continuance in Scotland was dangerous to his person, and resolute against their pardon or return.¹

¹ MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Nicolas Arrington to Burghley, 10th Oct. 1579, Berwick. Caligula, C. v. fol. 130.

In the midst of these cruel transactions, Athol the Chancellor, and the great leader of the confederacy against Morton, died suddenly, and under circumstances of much suspicion.¹ He had just returned from a banquet, given by Morton at Stirling, to commemorate the reconciliation of the nobles; and the symptoms of poison so strongly indicated themselves both before and after death, that his friends did not hesitate to say publicly, that he had met with foul play from the ex-Regent, who treated the report with contempt. The body was opened, and examined by a learned circle of "mediciners, chirurgeons, and poticaries;" but they disagreed in their verdict. By some the poison was so plainly detected, that they declared there was not a doubt upon the subject; whilst Dr Preston, the most eminent physician of the time, was equally positive that there was no poison in the case,—certainly none in the stomach. On being irritated by contradiction, however, he had the temerity to touch a portion of its contents with his tongue, and, to the triumph of his dissentient brethren, almost died in consequence, nor did he ever completely recover the unlucky experiment.² In the mean time, though the dark report was thus strength-

¹ He died at Kincardine on the 25th April, 1579. "The whole friends of the dead are convened at Dunkeld upon the third of May, where the young Earls of Athol and Montrose put in deliberation what were best way to come by revenge of this heinous fact." MS. Letter, 5th May, 1579, without a signature, to Sir George Bowes, enclosed in a letter to Mr Archibald Douglas. Bowes Papers.

² MS. Calderwood, Brit. Mus. pp. 1083, 1084.

ened, Morton's power, and the absence of all direct proof, protected him from any farther proceedings.

Sometime after this, the General Assembly of the Kirk met at Edinburgh; and having chosen Mr Thomas Smeton for their moderator, at his request appointed a council of the brethren to advise with him upon matters of importance. To this council Mr Thomas Duncanson, Minister of the Royal Household, presented a letter from the young King, which contained a request, that the Assembly would at present abstain from debating upon such matters touching the polity of the Kirk, as in a former conference had been referred for debate and decision to the Estates of Parliament. The same letter informed them, that Parliament would shortly meet and take these matters into consideration; and it expressed the King's hope, that, in the mean season, the Assembly would exert themselves to promote peace and godly living, not only amongst their own members, but throughout the whole body of the subjects of the realm; so that the expectations of such busy meddlers as were enemies to the public tranquillity, should be disappointed.

The Assembly having taken this royal letter into consideration, in its turn appointed a committee of their brethren,—the principal of whom were Erskine of Dun, Duncanson the King's minister, and Andrew Melville, to wait upon the King, with some requests to which they besought his attention. These were—that he would interdict all parents, under heavy penalties, from sending their children to be educated

at the University of Paris, or other foreign colleges professing Papistry; that he would cause the University of St Andrew's, some of whose professors had recently left the Protestant communion, to be reformed in all its colleges and foundations; and take order for the banishment of Jesuits, whom the Assembly denominated "the pestilent dregs of a most detestable idolatry." They further besought him to proceed to a farther conference upon such points of Church policy as had been left undetermined at the last conference at Stirling, and to desist from controlling or suspending, by his royal letters, any of the decrees of the General Assembly.¹ Calderwood, the zealous and able historian of the Scottish Kirk, has pronounced a high eulogium upon the learning, holiness, and unanimity of this Assembly.²

Not long after this, Esmé Stewart, commonly called Monsieur D'Aubigny, cousin to the King, and a youth of graceful figure and accomplishments, arrived in Scotland.³ He was the son of John Stewart, brother of Matthew Earl of Lennox, the late Regent, and had scarce been a week at Court when he became a great favourite with his royal relative. It was immediately whispered, that he had been sent over by the Guises, to fill Athol's place as leader of the French faction, and to act as a counterpoise to

¹ MS. Calderwood, sub anno 1579, Brit. Mus. Ayscough's Catalogue, 4735, p. 1092.

² Ibid. fol. 1092.

³ On the 8th September, 1579. MS. Letter, Bowes Papers, an anonymous correspondent, whose mark is 4°, to Sir G. Bowes, 9th September.

the predominating influence of Morton. He was accompanied by Monsieur Momberneau, and Mr Henry Ker,—the first a man of great wit and liveliness, gay, gallant, and excelling in all the sports and pastimes to which the young monarch was partial; the second, Ker, of a more subtle and retired character,—who had been long a confidential servant of Aubigny's, and was strongly suspected by the ministers of the Kirk to be a secret agent of the Guises.

All this excited the fears of Elizabeth; and the information sent her by her secret agents, both in Scotland and France, was by no means calculated to remove her apprehension. As D'Aubigny and his friends, however, acted as yet with great caution and reserve, the Queen contented herself, for the moment, with a mission of observation and inquiry; for which she selected Captain Nicolas Arrington, a brave and intelligent officer of the garrison of Berwick, who had already been repeatedly employed in Scotland. His open instructions were to intercede with James for some favour to the Hamiltons; his more secret orders, to acquaint himself with the character and intentions of D'Aubigny, the state of parties, and what projects were then agitated for the young King's marriage. On the first point, the pardon, or at least the more lenient punishment of the house of Hamilton, he prevailed nothing,—so deep was James's hatred, or perhaps more truly, that of Morton, against him. With regard to the marriage, Arrington informed Burghley, that neither the Council nor D'Aubigny had yet made any formal proposal upon the subject. "It was

evident," he said, "that the young French stranger had already won the affection of his royal kinsman, and might look for high preferment;" probably to be Earl of Lennox, with a large share of the forfeited lands of the Hamiltons, if he could be prevailed upon to change his religion.¹

The old soldier who thus wrote to Burghley, requested his indulgence, should his information prove incorrect, as he had been more familiar with "another weapon than the pen;" but the course of events soon proved the accuracy of his intelligence. Wherever James went, he insisted on having D'Aubigny beside him. When he removed, for the purpose of holding his Parliament, from Stirling to Holyrood, his graceful cousin had splendid apartments provided for him in the palace, nearest to the royal bed-chamber; and in the sports and pageants with which the citizens received their monarch, the favourite, for so he was now declared, found himself universally regarded and courted. The expensive scale on which these civic festivities were conducted evinced a remarkable increase in the national wealth. They exhibited the usual confusion of classical, feudal, and religious machinery; in which "Dame Musick," attended by four fair virgins representing the cardinal virtues, and the Provost and three hundred citizens, clad in velvet and satin, enacted their parts with great assiduity and success. Whilst the twentieth psalm was being sung, a little child emerged from a silver

¹ MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. v. fol. 130. Nicolas Arrington to Burghley, 10th Oct. 1579, Berwick.

globe, which opened artificially over the King's head, and fluttering down to his Majesty's feet, presented him with the keys of the city. Religion, a grave matron, then conducted him into the High Church; and thence, after hearing sermon, the monarch and the congregation repaired to the Market Cross, where Bacchus sat on a gilded puncheon, with his painted garments and a flowery garland. The fountains ran wine; the principal street of the city was hung with tapestry, and, at the conclusion of the procession, the town presented the King with a cupboard of plate, valued, says a minute historian, at six thousand merks.¹

These pageants were introductory to the Parliament which assembled on the 20th of October, and, as had been anticipated by Arrington, was principally occupied with the proscription of the Hamiltons, and the exaltation of D'Aubigny. The Lord Arbroath and Lord Claud Hamilton, with many more of the same name and house, were proclaimed traitors, and their estates forfeited; whilst all who had been partakers in the slaughter of the two Regents, Murray and Lennox, were commanded, under pain of death, to remove six miles from Court. On the other hand, the King conferred the Earldom of Lennox upon his favourite, and presented him, at the same time, with the rich Abbacy of Arbroath. Not long after, the stream of royal favour flowed still more munificently. He was made Chamberlain for Scotland; his earldom

¹ Moyse's Memoirs, Bannat. Edit. p. 25. Also, MS. Calderwood, Brit. Mus. vol. ii. p. 1099. History of James the Sext, p. 179, Bannat. Edit.

was erected into a dukedom; and he was so caressed by the young sovereign, that Argyle and many of the principal nobility began not only to treat him with high consideration, but, according to the common usage of the times, to enter into those bands or covenants by which they bound themselves to his service, and with which the reader of this history is already so well acquainted.¹

Morton, however, and the ministers of the Kirk, still kept aloof: the one animated by that proud and haughty feeling which prompted him rather to crush than to court a rival: the ministers, from the horror with which they regarded all Roman Catholics, and the suspicions they had from the first entertained that D'Aubigny was a secret emissary of the Pope and the Guises. When these fears were once excited, the churches resounded with warnings against the dark machinations of Popery; and the pulpit, as had frequently happened in these times, became a political engine. It was recollected that the Duke of Guise had accompanied D'Aubigny to Dieppe, and remained with him for many hours in secret conference in the ship; he had been known also to have had consultations with the Bishops of Glasgow² and Ross; and for what purpose (so the ministers argued) could the forty thousand crowns, which he brought with him, be so naturally applied

¹ MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. v. fol. 133, and also 135. Bowes to Burghley, 22d October, 1579, Berwick.

² St. P. Off. French Cor. Paulet to Walsingham, 29th August, 1579, Paris.

as in corrupting the Protestant nobles? Nay, was it not known that a part had already found its way into the coffers of the Lady Argyle; and did not all men see the warm and sudden friendship between her husband the Earl, and the favourite? ¹

Amid these suspicions and jealousies, the year 1579 passed away; and it was apparent to all who regarded the state of the country with attention, that it could not long remain without some sudden change or convulsion. The King was wretchedly poor; and the revenues of the crown, during his minority, had been plundered and dilapidated to such an extent that he could not raise three thousand pounds to defray the expenses of his household. The nobility, on the other hand, were rich; they had prospered as the crown had sunk; and so determined were they to hold fast their gains, that they “would spare nothing they possessed to the King’s aid, without deadly feud.” ² It had been earnestly recommended, that the King’s person, in those unsettled times, should be defended by a body-guard, and that six Privy-councillors, in rotation, should always remain with the Court: but no funds could be raised to pay the soldiers’ wages; the Councillors refused to support a table for themselves; no money was forthcoming elsewhere; and the King was frequently left almost alone, without court or council around him; a state

¹ MS. Calderwood, Brit. Mus. sub anno, 1579, f. 1098.

² MS. Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. v. fol. 155. Copy. Memorial of the present state of Scotland, 31st December, 1579,

of destitution which, it was justly apprehended, might lead to the most dangerous results.

When Elphinston, Abbot of Dunfermline, was sent to England, in the preceding summer,¹ his main purpose was to explain to the Queen the poverty under which the young Prince had entered on his government; the great insecurity of his person, surrounded as he daily was by men "who had dipped their hands in the blood of his parents and dearest kinsfolks," and the absolute necessity for a supply of money to pay the expenses of his guards and household.² But Elizabeth could not be induced to advance any supplies; and these evils and dangers had ever since been on the increase. Since the arrival of Lennox, too, the feuds amongst the nobility had risen to an alarming height. Morton, jealous of the new favourite, and animated by a hatred of Argyle, absented himself from Court; the powerful Border septs of the Humes and Cars regarded the ex-Regent with the deadliest rancour; Elphinston, the King's Secretary, a man of talent, and long his firm friend, was now estranged from him; and even the potent Angus, his nephew, and his heir, kept at a safe distance, and watched events. But Morton's great wealth, his energy, courage, and experience, made him still a formidable enemy; and they who most wished his downfall, knew not on what side to attack him. The young King, in the mean time, who

¹ 30th July, 1578.

² MS. St. P. Office. Demands of the Abbot of Dunfermline, Ambassador from the King of Scots, 30th July, 1578.

had always felt an awe for the late Regent, became daily more devoted to Lennox, whom, with a boyish enthusiasm, and a precocious display of theology, he was now labouring to convert from what he esteemed his religious errors. He gave him books of controversy, brought him to attend the sermons of the ministers, procured one of the mildest and most learned of their number to instruct him, and so far succeeded, that, if not converted, he was reported to be favourably inclined to the Protestant Church. Any sudden recantation would have been suspicious; and, meanwhile, his royal and youthful mentor congratulated himself upon his favourite's hopeful and inquiring state.¹

Amid these cares and controversies, a sudden rumour arose, none could tell from what quarter, that the Earl of Morton had plotted to seize the King, and carry him to Dalkeith. How this was to be effected, no one could tell; but James, who had ridden out on a hunting expedition, precipitately interdicted the sports, and galloped back to Stirling Castle. Morton loudly declared his innocence, and defied his calumniators to bring their proofs; yet scarcely had this challenge been given, when the Court was again thrown into terror and confusion, by news secretly brought to the Earl of Mar, that Lennox and his faction had fixed on the night of the 10th April to invade the royal apartments, lay hands on the King, hurry him to Dumbarton, and thence

¹ MS. Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. vi. fol. 2. Captain Arrington to Burghley, 4th April, 1580, Stirling.

transport him to France.¹ It was whispered, also, that a deep confederacy had been formed against the Earl of Morton, by the same junto: that Sir James Balfour, now a fugitive in France, and one who was well-known to have been a chief accomplice in the murder of the King's father, had promised to purchase his pardon, by giving up the bond for the murder, signed by Morton's own hand; and that thus there was every hope of bringing the hoary and blood-stained tyrant to the scaffold, which had so long waited for him.

In the midst of these ominous rumours, the night of the 10th April arrived, and all in the castle prepared for an attack. Mar permitted none to see the King; soldiers were stationed within and without the royal chamber; and a shout arising, that Lennox ought to be thrust out of the gates, he shut himself up in his apartments, with a strong guard of his friends, armed at all points, and swore that he would set upon any that dared invade him. In the morning, Argyle, Sutherland, Glencairn, and other adherents of Lennox, hurried to Stirling; but were refused admittance to the castle; and their fears for Lennox increased, when they heard it reported, that Morton was on the road to join his party. All was thus in terror and uncertainty: men gazed, trembled, and whispered fearfully amongst each other, aware that secret plots were busily concocting; that the ground they stood on was being mined: and yet none could

¹ MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. vi. fol. 8. Captain Arrington to Lord Burghley, 16th April, 1580, Berwick.

tell where the blow would fall, or when the train might be exploded. At this moment, Captain Arrington, Elizabeth's envoy, was in Stirling Castle, and thus wrote to Burghley: "The young King is in heavy case, and much amazed with these troubles, and the more by reason of his great affection towards D'Aubigny, whom he perceives the mark they shoot at. Mons. D'Aubigny, with his faction, doth offer to abide the trial by law, or otherwise, in their very persons, that there was never any such plot or meaning by him, or his consent, or by any others to their knowledge, to have drawn the King either to Dumbarton or any other sinister course."¹

It is difficult to arrive at the truth amidst these conflicting accusations of the two factions. Elizabeth certainly had received a warning from her Ambassador in France, that there was a design on foot to have the young King brought thither; and Morton had probably been encouraged by the English Queen to prevent it by every possible means.² Lennox, on the other hand, although he indignantly, and probably truly, repelled any such treasonable intentions, avowed his wish to reform the Council, and protect the King from the pillage of the blood-suckers of the royal revenue, who had been thrust into their offices

¹ MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. vi. f. 7. Arrington to Walsingham or Burghley, 10th April, 1580, Stirling. The address of the letter is torn away.

² MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. vi. f. 17 and 18. Copy. Lord Treasurer and Walsingham to Mr Robert Bowes, 17th April, 1580.

by Morton and Mar. In this project, James himself appears to have borne a part; and had probably intended, under pretence of a hunting party at the Doune of Menteith, to have escaped from the tutelage of Mar, and accomplished a revolution in the Court.¹ The secret project, however, was discovered, and defeated by the vigilance of the house of Erskine.

In the mean time, the picture drawn by Arrington, of the dangerous state of the country, threw Elizabeth into alarm, and she immediately despatched Sir Robert Bowes to Stirling. His instructions were to strengthen, by every means, the decaying influence of Morton,—to declare the Queen's willingness to gain some of the chief in authority by pensions,—to pull down the power of Lennox,—to plead for the pardon of the Hamiltons, and thoroughly to sift the truth of the late rumours of a conspiracy for carrying off the young King. Bowes also, before he set out, received a letter from Secretary Walsingham, recommending him to use the utmost vigilance in this mission. This, he said, was most necessary, as it was already reported in Spain, that mass was set up once more in Scotland, and arms taken against the Protestants; and, as he knew for certain, that Ker of Fernyhirst, a Roman Catholic, and an active friend of the Scottish Queen, with Bothwellhaugh, the blood-stained Hamilton who had shot the Regent Murray, had both recently ridden post from France into Spain.²

¹ Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. vi. f. 29. Bowes to Burghley and Walsingham, 10th May, 1580, Stirling.

² Draft, St. P. Off. Walsingham to Bowes, 3d May, 1580.

On reaching court, the Ambassador was received, by the young King, with great courtesy: but his manner instantly changed when any allusion was made to the Hamiltons; and it was evident to all that his exertions on this head would be unavailing.¹ It was apparent, also, that the revival of Morton's former power promised to be a matter of extreme difficulty. He himself was so completely convinced of the strength of his enemies, and the deep estrangement of the King, that he had resolved to retire altogether from public affairs. In a secret conference held, in the night, with Bowes at Stirling Castle, he expressed much doubt whether it was not too late to attempt anything against Lennox, who now professed himself a Protestant, and had so completely conciliated the ministers of the Kirk, that they addressed a letter in his commendation to the Council.²

As to the late rumoured conspiracies for carrying off the King, the Ambassador found it difficult to discover the truth: but he was witness to a strange scene of violence and brawling before the Council, in which Morton, Mar, and Lennox gave the lie to their accusers, and the King, with much feeling and good sense, exerted himself to restore peace: a striking contrast, no doubt, to Bowes' experience of the decorous gravity and awe preserved by Elizabeth in her Council, in which the highest nobles generally spoke

¹ MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. vi. fol. 25. Bowes to Burghley and Walsingham, May 3, 1580, Stirling.

² MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. vi. fol. 31. Bowes to Burghley and Walsingham, May 10, 1580, Stirling.

upon their knees, and none but her Majesty was permitted to lose temper. On the subject of the alleged plot of Lennox, James was at first reserved, although he expressed much love and admiration for Elizabeth; but the Ambassador, at last, gained his confidence, and drew from him many particulars, which showed that the conspiracy, intended to have been carried into effect at Castle Doune, involved the ruin of Morton,—the dismissal of Mar, and other obnoxious councillors, and a complete reconstruction of the government under Lennox and Argyle. As it appeared, also, that Sir John Seton, Sir George Douglas, and some of the captive Queen's most attached servants were to have been brought into the Council, Bowes at once suspected that the design originated in France, and that Lennox and his youthful sovereign acted under the influence of the Guises. He was the more persuaded of this, when Morton assured him that, since D'Aubigny's arrival, the King's feelings had undergone a great change in favour of that country.

But the time called for action, not for speculation; and, on consulting with his friends, regarding the most likely means of averting the dangers threatened by this alarming state of things, there were many conflicting opinions. It was recommended to have tried councillors about the King, and a strong body-guard to prevent surprise; as it had been remarked, that the late alarms and plots had all broken out when there was scarce a single councillor at court who could be depended upon. Yet this could not be

done without money; and where was money to be had in the present exhausted state of the royal revenue?¹ Soon after this, the Ambassador took an opportunity of seeing the young King alone, and delivering a secret message from Elizabeth, upon a subject of the deepest interest to both: his succession to the English crown after her death. The particulars of the interview, and the answer given by James, were communicated in cipher, in a letter of which the address is now lost, but which was addressed probably to Burghley or Walsingham,—his usual correspondents when the subject was of high moment. “In private with the King (so wrote the Ambassador) I have offered to acquaint him with a secret greatly importing him and his estate, and lately discovered to me by letters, which were not out of the way, in case he should desire sight thereof; and, taking his honour in pledge for the secrecy, which he readily tendered, I opened to him, at large, all the contents specified in the cipher note last sent to me, and to be communicated to him, persuading him earnestly to beware that he made not himself the cause of greater loss to him, than France, Scotland, or Lennox could countervail. He appeared here to be very much perplexed; affirming that he would both most chiefly follow her Majesty’s advice, and also ask and require her counsel in all his great adoes. * * * In which good resolution and mind (continued Bowes) I

¹ MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. vi. fol. 24 and 27, inclusive, and fol. 28 and 32. Bowes to Burghley and Walsingham, May 3, 1580. The same to the same, May 10, 1580.

left him; wherein with good company and handling I think he may be well continued. But Lennox having won great interest in him, and possessing free and sure access to him at all times, * * I dare not, therefore, assure, in his tender years, any long continuance or sure performance of this promise.”¹ These anticipations of James’s fickleness proved to be well founded; for neither the prize held out by Elizabeth, nor all the efforts of Bowes could retain the Monarch in his good resolutions. The influence of Lennox and his friends became daily more predominant; his youthful master’s arguments on the errors of the Church of Rome, seconded by the expositions of the Presbyterian clergy, had, as he affirmed, convinced him; he had publicly avowed his conversion to Protestantism, and had signed the articles of Religion drawn up by the Scottish clergy. His enemies were thus deprived of their principal ground of complaint and alarm; and, although they accused him of insincerity,—and certainly the circumstances under which this recantation was made, were suspicious,—still, as he afterwards died professing himself a Protestant, we have every reason to believe his assertions to have been sincere.²

But whether at this moment sincere or interested, Lennox’s conversion, and consequent increase of power, placed Morton, and the other old friends of

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Orig. Cipher and Decipher. The letter contains proof that its date must be 16th or 17th May, 1580.

² MS. Letter, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. vi. fol. 36. Bowes to Burghley and Walsingham, 16th May, 1580, Edinburgh.

England, in a dangerous predicament. Had they been assured of immediate support, they were ready, they said, to resist the intrigues of France, which became every day more successful,—the Bishops of Ross and Glasgow keeping up a correspondence with Lennox. But Elizabeth, as Walsingham confessed to Bowes, was so completely occupied and entangled with the negotiations for her marriage with the Duke of Anjou, that every other subject was postponed. No answer, which promised any certain assistance, arrived; and Morton, wearied out and irritated with this neglect, declared to the Ambassador, that he would be constrained to provide for his personal safety by a reconciliation with Lennox. “He utterly distrusted,” he said, “Elizabeth’s intention to be at any charges for the affairs of Scotland; his own peril was great and imminent; yet, had he been backed by England, he would have adventured to beard his enemies, and to have retained the country at the devotion of the Queen. It was too late now; and to save himself from ruin, he would be driven to means which could be profitable to neither of the realms, and were much against his heart.”¹ Bowes soon after was recalled from Scotland.²

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Bowes to Walsingham, August 2, 1580.

² On the 2d August he seems to have been at Edinburgh; on the 10th August he was at Berwick.