CHAP. V.

JAMES THE SIXTH.

1586—1587.

CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.

England.	*France.*	*Germany.*	*Spain.*	*Portugal.*	*Pope.*
Elizabeth.	Henry III.	Rudolph I.	Philip II.	Philip II.	Sixtus V.

ELIZABETH, as has been already hinted, had a great purpose in view, when she concluded this league and sent Archibald Douglas into Scotland. Two months before, her indefatigable minister, Walsingham, had detected that famous conspiracy known by the name of "Babington's plot," in which Mary was implicated, and for which she afterwards suffered. It had been resolved by Leicester, Burghley, and Walsingham, and probably by the Queen herself, that this should be the last plot of the Scottish Queen and the Roman Catholic faction; that the time had come when sufferance was criminal and weak; that the life of the unfortunate, but still active and formidable captive, was inconsistent with Elizabeth's safety and the liberty of the realm. Hence the importance attached to this league, which bound the two kingdoms together, in a treaty offensive and defensive, for the protection of the Protestant faith, and separated the

young King from his mother. Hence the eagerness for the return and pardon of Archibald Douglas, who had sold himself to Elizabeth, betrayed the secrets of Mary, and now offered his influence over James to be employed in furthering this great design for her destruction.

It is now necessary to enter upon the history of this plot, and Mary's alleged connexion with it,—one of the most involved and intricate portions in the history of the two countries. To be clear, and prevent the mind from getting entangled in the inextricable meshes of Walsingham and his informers, it will be proper for a moment to look back. Mary had now been nineteen years a captive; and, upon the cruelty and illegality of her imprisonment during this long and dreary period, there can be but one opinion. She was seized and imprisoned during a time of peace; contrary to every feeling of generosity, and in flagrant violation of every principle of law and justice. On the one hand, it was the right and the duty of such a prisoner to attempt every possible means for her escape; on the other, it was both natural and just that the Catholic party, in England and Scotland, should have combined with France and Spain to deliver her from her captivity, and avenge upon Elizabeth such an outrage on the law of nations as the seizure of a free Princess. But the same party regarded Elizabeth as a heretic, whose whole life had been obstinately opposed to the truth. Some of them went so far as to consider her an illegitimate usurper, whose throne belonged to the Queen of Scots.

They had plotted, therefore, not only for Mary's deliverance, but for the reëstablishment of their own faith in England, and for Elizabeth's deposition; nay, some of them, mistaking fanaticism for religion, against Elizabeth's life. All these conspiracies continued more or less during the whole period of Mary's captivity, and had been detected by the vigilance of Elizabeth's ministers, acting through the system of private spies; one of the most revolting features of an age which regarded craft and treachery as necessary parts of political wisdom. With all these plots, the Queen of Scots had been in some degree either directly or indirectly connected: her rival felt acutely (and such a feeling was the retributive punishment of the wrong she had committed) the misery of keeping so dangerous a prisoner; but up to this time, there seems to have been no allegation that Mary was implicated in anything affecting Elizabeth's life, anything more, in short, than a series of plots continued at different times for her own escape. Nor did Elizabeth very highly resent them. So far at least from adopting the extreme measures to which she had been advised by many of her councillors, she had repeatedly entered into negotiations with her royal captive, in which she held out the hope of her liberty on the one hand; whilst Mary, on the other, promised not only to forsake all connexion with public affairs, and leave the government to her son, but to impart to her good sister the most valuable secret information. These scenes had been so repeatedly begun, and repeatedly broken off, that they had be-

come almost matters of yearly form. On both sides, in all this, there was probably much suspicion and insincerity; but chiefly on the part of Elizabeth: for Mary, at last sinking under the sorrows of so long a captivity, and worn out by deferred hope, became ready to pay the highest price for freedom; to give up the world, to sink into private life, to sacrifice all except her religion, and her title to the throne. It was on this principle, that she was ready to enter into that agreement with her son already alluded to, and known by the name of "the Association." By the terms of this, James was to continue King; his mother resigning her right into his hands, and taking up her residence, with an allowance according to her rank, either in England or Scotland. Elizabeth, to whom the whole design was communicated, and who was included as a party to the treaty, was to release the Scottish Queen, resume with her the friendly relations which had been so often broken off, and receive, in return, such general good advice, and such secret revelations, as Mary could give consistently with fidelity to her friends.

Now, at the very time when this association seemed to be concluded; when the hopes of the unhappy captive were at the highest; when she was looking forward to her liberty with the delight "which the opening of the prison brings to them that are bound," the cup, for the hundredth time, was dashed from her lips. Throckmorton's treason occurred; a plot still involved in great obscurity. Parry's conspiracy, also, took place, which included

an attempt against the life of the English Queen; and the covenant, or "association," for the defence of Elizabeth's person, was concluded at the urgent instance of Leicester, by which "men of all degrees throughout England bound themselves, by mutual vows and subscriptions, to prosecute to the death all who should directly or indirectly attempt anything against their Sovereign." It was in vain that Mary disclaimed all connexion with these plots, affirming passionately, and apparently sincerely, that it would be cruel to hold her responsible for all the wild attempts of the Roman Catholic faction who professed to be her friends, but did not inform her of their proceedings; in vain, that she offered to sign the Association for Elizabeth's safety, and act upon it as if she were her dearest sister. She was met by a cold refusal; the treaty for her freedom was abandoned; the Master of Gray, and Archibald Douglas, men whom she had implicitly trusted, were bribed to betray her most private transactions; and, as the last and bitterest ingredient in her misery, her own son broke off all intercourse with her, threw himself into the arms of the English Queen, and, by the "League" which we have just seen concluded, became the sworn pensioner of her enemy, and the avowed persecutor of that religion which she firmly believed to be the truth. Are we to wonder that, under such circumstances, she renounced her promises to Elizabeth, and, as a last resource, encouraged the Roman Catholics to resume their projects for the invasion of England, her delivery from captivity, and

the restoration of what she believed the only true Church?

It is certain, that two years before this, in 1584, she had been cognizant of Throckmorton's plot already alluded to, and got up by the English Catholic refugees in Spain and France for the invasion of England, the dethronement of Elizabeth, and her own delivery. One of the principal managers of this conspiracy was Thomas Morgan, a devoted Catholic, Mary's agent on the continent, a man deeply attached to her interests, and who had been long trained in the school of political intrigue. The rest were Francis Throckmorton, who suffered for it; Thomas, Lord Paget; Charles Arundel, who fled to France; and some others. It is extremely difficult to discover what portion of the plot was real, and what fictitious; but that schemes were in agitation against Elizabeth, in which the Spanish Ambassador, Mendoza, participated, and with which Mary was well acquainted, cannot be doubted. So clear did her servant Morgan's guilt appear to the King of France, in whose dominions he then resided, that although he refused to deliver him up as Elizabeth required, he threw him into prison, sent his papers to England, and treated him with much severity. Even in this durance, he managed to continue his secret practices; but Mary, who had now entered into negotiations with the Queen for her liberty, renounced, for a season, all political intrigue; and the smouldering embers of the recent conspiracies were allowed to cool and burn out, whilst she looked forward with sanguine hope

to her freedom. When, however, this hope was blasted; when she was removed from the gentler custody of the Earl of Shrewsbury to the severer jailorship of Paulet;[1] when she was haunted by reports of private assassination, and at last saw Elizabeth and her son indissolubly leagued against her, she resumed her correspondence with Morgan, and welcomed every possible project for her escape.[2]

At this time, Walsingham, the English Queen's principal Secretary, had brought the system of secret information to a state of high perfection, if we may use such an expression on the subject. The Queen of Scots, the French and Spanish Ambassadors, the English Roman Catholic refugees, were all surrounded by his creatures, who insinuated themselves into their confidence, pretended to join their plots, drew them on to reveal their secrets, and carried all they knew to their employers. Amongst these base tools of Walsingham, were Poley, a man who had found means to gain the ear and the confidence of Morgan, and been employed by him in his secret correspondence with the Catholics of England and France;[3] Gilbert Gifford, a seminary priest of a good family in Staffordshire, who was also intrusted by Morgan with his secrets; Maud, a sordid wretch, who pretended great zeal for the Catholic faith; and some others.

[1] In October, 1584, Mary was removed from the Castle of Sheffield to Wingfield. In January, 1585-6, from Wingfield to Tutbury. In January, 1586-7, from Tutbury to Chartley.

[2] Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 501.

[3] Murdin, p. 499, Morgan to Mary. Ult. Martii, 1586.

He was also assisted by Thomas Phelipps, a person of extraordinary skill in detecting real, and concocting false plots by forging imaginary letters, and of equal talent in discovering the key to the most difficult and complicated ciphers. In his service, too, was one Gregory, who, by reiterated practice, had acquired the faculty of breaking and replacing seals with such nicety, that no eye could suspect the fracture.[1] By means of these agents Walsingham, about the same time that the league had been concluded between Elizabeth and the King of Scots, discovered a conspiracy for the assassination of that Princess. Of this atrocious design, Ballard, a seminary priest, and Savage, an English officer who had served in the Netherlands, were the principal movers; but Morgan, Mary's agent, undoubtedly encouraged the plot, and drew into it some of the English Catholic refugees. At the same time, the former great project for the invasion of England, the dethronement of Elizabeth, and the escape of Mary, was resumed by Spain, France, and the Scottish Queen's Catholic friends in England and Scotland; and the captive Princess herself became engaged in a secret correspondence on this subject with Morgan, Charles Paget, Sir Francis Englefield, and the French and Spanish Ambassadors. Here, then, were two plots simultaneously carrying on; and amongst the actors to

[1] MS. St. P. Off., Orig. Cipher and Decipher, endorsed by Phelipps. Papers of Mary Queen of Scots. Pietro, 24th April, 1586, and Gilbert Gifford's Letter, deciphered by Curle. Pietro was one of the names by which Gilbert Gifford was designated.

whom the execution was intrusted, some persons were common to both,—that is, some were sworn to assist alike in the invasion and in the assassination; others knew only of the design against the government, and had no knowledge of the darker purpose against Elizabeth. Amongst these last, up to a certain date which can be fixed, we must undoubtedly class the Scottish Queen. She was fully aware, and indeed was an active agent in the schemes which were in agitation for the invasion of the country, and her own deliverance;[1] but she was ignorant at first of any designs against the life of her enemy.[2] Whether to the last she remained so ignorant of all, has been disputed; but, in the mean time, the predicament in which she stood, as all must see, was one of extreme peril, and so the result proved. Walsingham, through his spies, became acquainted with both plots; and his fertile and unscrupulous mind, assisted and prompted by such an instrument as Phelipps, projected a scheme for involving Mary in a knowledge of both, and thus drawing her on to her ruin. Such being the general design, let us now look more minutely into the history and proceedings of the conspirators.

John Savage, a Roman Catholic gentleman, who had served in the wars of the Low Countries, becoming acquainted with some fanatical priests of the Jesuit seminary of Rheims, was induced, by their

[1] MS. St. P. Off., Morgan to Mary, a decipher in Phelipps' hand. Ult. Martii, 1586, printed in Murdin, p. 481.

[2] Murdin, p. 527, Morgan to Mary, 4th July, 1586.

arguments, to believe that the assassination of the English Queen would be a meritorious action in the sight of God. They argued that the Papal bull, by which this Princess was excommunicated, was dictated by the Holy Spirit; and that to slay any person thus anathematized must be accounted an act of faith, and not of murder. Savage, thus worked upon, took a solemn vow that he would kill the Queen; and prepared to return to England for the purpose.[1] Previous to his departure, however, John Ballard, a priest of the same seminary, and a busy agent of Morgan, returned to France, from a tour which he had made amongst the Catholics of England and Scotland. The purpose of his mission thither had been to organize the plot for the invasion of England; the object of his return was to confer upon the same subject with Mendoza the Spanish Ambassador, Charles Paget, and the other English Catholic refugees. Ballard was accompanied by Maud, the person already mentioned as a spy of Walsingham, who had deceived Ballard and Morgan, by pretending a great zeal for the Catholic cause; and through this base person the English Secretary became acquainted with all their proceedings.[2] Paget being consulted, argued strongly that no invasion could succeed during the lifetime of Elizabeth; and Ballard, assuming the disguise of a soldier, and taking

[1] Carte, vol. iii. p. 601; and MS. Brit. Mus., Caligula, C. ix. fol. 290, Savage's Confession.

[2] Carte, vol. iii. p. 601. Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 515. Murdin, p. 517, Charles Paget to Mary, May 29, 1586.

the name of Captain Fortescue, or Foscue, came back to England much about the same time as Savage, whose fell purpose Morgan had communicated to him.

Soon after his arrival, Ballard addressed himself to Anthony Babington, a young gentleman of large fortune, and ancient Catholic family, in Derbyshire, who had before this shown great zeal and activity in the service of the Queen of Scots. This was known to Ballard; and he, therefore, confidently opened to him the great scheme for the invasion of England; explained the ardour with which it had been resumed by Morgan and the Scottish Queen; and exhorted him to second their efforts by every means in his power. Babington, it is certain, had been long warmly devoted to Mary. He had formed, when he was in France, an intimate friendship with Morgan; had been introduced to Beaton the Bishop of Glasgow, her Ambassador in that country; and had returned to England with letters from both these persons, which strongly recommended him to the Scottish Queen. From this time, for the period of two years, he had continued to supply her with secret intelligence, and to receive and convey her letters to her friends.[1] Latterly, however, all intercourse had been broken off; whether for some private cause, or on account of the greater strictness of Mary's confinement, does not appear certain. This interruption of Mary's correspondence with Babington had, however, given distress to Morgan; and most unfor-

[1] Hardwicke's Papers, vol. i. p. 227.

tunately, as it happened for the Scottish Queen, he had written to her, in urgent terms, on the 9th of May, 1586, advising her to renew her secret intercourse with him, and describing him as a gentleman on whose ability and high honour she might have the firmest reliance.[1]

On being sought out by Ballard, Babington evinced all his former eagerness for the service of the captive Queen; but expressed strongly the same opinion as that already given by Charles Paget, that no invasion or rising in England could succeed as long as Elizabeth lived. Ballard then communicated to him Savage's purpose of assassination; adding, that the gentleman who had solemnly bound himself to despatch that Princess was now in England. This revelation produced an immediate effect; and Babington expressed a decided opinion that the simultaneous execution of both plots held out the fairest prospect of success. It would be dangerous, however, he said, to intrust the assassination to only one hand: it might fail, and all would be lost. He suggested, therefore, an improvement, by which the murder should be committed by six gentlemen of his acquaintance, of whom Savage should be one; whilst he pointed out the best havens where foreign troops might be landed; summed up the probable native force with which they were likely to be joined; and demonstrated the surest plan for the escape of the

[1] Murdin, p. 513. Morgan to the Queen of Scots, 9th May, 1586, or old style, 29th April. Mary and her secretaries always followed the Roman or new, Walsingham, Burghley, and Phelipps, the old style.

Scottish Queen.[1] With all this Ballard was highly pleased; and from the time when the first meeting with Babington took place,[2] he and Babington employed themselves in discovering, amongst their acquaintance, such men as they deemed likely to engage in this abominable design. Three were soon procured to join with Savage. Their names were Abingdon, the son of the late cofferer of the Queen's household; Barnwell, who was connected with a noble family in Ireland; and Charnock, a Catholic gentleman in Lancashire.[3] Some time after, the number of six was made up by the addition of Charles Tilney, one of the Queen's band of gentlemen pensioners; and Chidiock Titchbourne. Other gentlemen of their acquaintance were engaged to assist in the project for the invasion, and the escape of Mary; but the darker purpose of assassination was not revealed to them.

During all this time, Mary, on account of the strictness of her confinement under Sir Amias Paulet, had found it extremely difficult to continue her correspondence with her friends abroad; but she had never abandoned the project of the Spanish invasion: and on the 5th May, she addressed a letter to Charles Paget, giving minute directions regarding the likeliest method of succeeding in their common enterprise

[1] Murdin, p. 513. Morgan to the Queen of Scots, May 9, 1586; or old style, April 29; also, Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 515.

[2] This period or interval cannot be precisely fixed. It seems to have been between the 27th of May and the 25th June.

[3] Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 516.

against Elizabeth. From this letter, which, though long, is highly interesting, some passages must be given. They develop the whole plot for the invasion of England, and exhibit a determination in her designs against Elizabeth, which, when known, (as they came to be by the interception of the letter,) could not fail to excite extreme resentment.

"With an infinite number of other letters in cipher, (so she addressed Paget,) I received five of yours, dated the 14th January, 16th of May, and last of July 1585, and the 4th of February 1586. But, for their late arrival here, and all at once, it hath not been possible for me to see them all deciphered. And I have been, since the departure from Wingfield,[2] so wholly without all intelligence of foreign affairs, as, not knowing the present state thereof, it is very difficile for me to establish any certain course for re-establishing the same on this side; and methinks I can see no other means to that end, except the King of Spain, now being pricked in his particular, by the attempt made on Holland, and the course of Drake, would take revenge against the Queen of England, whilst France, occupied as it is, cannot help her; whereof I desire that you should essay, either by the Lord Paget during his abode in Spain, or by the Spanish Ambassador, to discover clearly if the said King of Spain hath intention to set on England."

Mary then proceeded to state, with great force, the

[1] MS. St. P. Off. decipher by Phelipps'. Mary to Mendoza, 20th May, 1586.

[2] Mary was removed to Wingfield in October 1584.

reasons which ought to move the Spanish King to adopt this course; after which, she thus expressed her hopes of giving him effectual assistance:—

"Now, in case that he deliberate to set on the Queen of England, esteeming it most necessary that he assure himself also of Scotland, either to serve with him in the said enterprise, or, at the least, to hold that country so bridled that it serve not his enemy; I have thought good that you enter with the Ambassador of Spain, in these overtures following; to wit, that I shall travel by all means to make my son enter in the said enterprise; and if he cannot be persuaded thereunto, that I shall dress a secret strait league among the principal Catholic lords of that country, and their adherents, to be joined with the King of Spain, and to execute, at his devotion, what of their parts shall be thought meet for advancing of the said enterprise; so being they may have such succours of men and money as they will ask; which, I am sure, shall not be very chargeable, having men enough within the country, and little money stretching far and doing much there. Moreover, (continued Mary,) I shall dress the means to make my son be delivered in the hands of the said King of Spain, or in the Pope's, as best by them shall be thought good; but with paction and promise to set him at liberty whensoever I shall so desire, or that after my death, being Catholic, he shall desire again to repair to this Isle. * * * This is the best hostage that I and the said lords of Scotland can give to the King of Spain for performance of

that which may depend on them in the said enterterprise. But withal must there be a Regent established in Scotland, that [may] have commission and power of me and my son, (whom it shall be easy to make pass the same, he being once in the hands of the said lords,) to govern the country in his absence; for which office I find none so fit as the Lord Claud Hamilton, as well for the rank of his house, as for his manhood and wisdom; and to shun all jealousy of the rest, and to strengthen him the more, he must have a Council appointed him of the principal lords, without whom he shall be bound not to ordain anything of importance. I should think myself most obliged to the King of Spain, that it would please him to receive my son, to make him be instructed and reduced to the Catholic religion, which is the thing in the world I most desire; affecting a great deal rather the salvation of his soul than to see him monarch of all Europe; and I fear much, that so long as he shall remain where he is, (amongst those that found all his greatness upon the maintenance of the religion which he professeth,) it shall never be in my power to bring him in again to the right way; whereby there shall remain in my heart a thousand regrets and apprehensions, if I should die, to leave behind me a tyrant and persecutor of the Catholic Church.

"If you see and perceive the said Ambassador to have *goust* in these overtures, and put you in hope of a good answer thereunto, which you shall insist to have with all diligence, I would then, in the mean

time, you should write to the Lord Claud, letting him understand how that the King of Spain is to set on this country, and desireth to have the assistance of the Catholics of Scotland, for to stop, at least, that from thence the Queen of England have no succours; and to that effect, you shall pray the said Lord Claud to sound and grope the minds hereunto of the principal of the Catholic nobility in Scotland. * * * And to the end they may be the more encouraged herein, you may write plainly to the Lord Claud, that you have charge of me to treat with him of this matter. But by your first letter, I am not of opinion that you discover yourself further to him, nor to other at all, until you have received answer of the King of Spain, which being conform to this designment, then may you open more to the Lord Claud; showing him, that to assure himself of my son, and to the end (if it be possible) that things be passed, and done under his name and authority, it shall be needful to seize his person, in case that willingly he cannot be brought to this enterprise; yea, and that the surest were to deliver him into the King of Spain's hands, or the Pope's, as shall be thought best; and that in his absence, he depute the Lord Claud his Lieutenant-general and Regent in the government of Scotland; which, you are assured, I may be easily persuaded to confirm and approve. For if it be possible, I will not, for divers respects, be named therein, until the extremity. * * * I can write nothing presently to the Lord Claud himself, for want of an alphabet between me and him, which now

I send you herewith enclosed without any mark on the back, that you may send it unto him."[1]

Here, then, was Mary's plan minutely detailed by herself; in which Spain was to "set on England," as she expressed it; Lord Claud Hamilton to be made Regent in Scotland; her son, in the event of his refusal to turn Catholic, and combine against Elizabeth, to be seized, imprisoned, and coerced into obedience.

The vigour and ability with which the whole is laid down, needs no comment; and the Scottish Queen omitted no opportunity to encourage her friends in that great enterprise which was now regarded as the forlorn hope for the recovery of her liberty, and the restoration of the Catholic faith in Britain.[2] All this time, however, Mary had no communication with Ballard. He had been specially warned not to attempt to hold any intercourse with the Queen; and she had been informed by Morgan, in a letter written from his prison, that such an agent was in England labouring busily in her behalf, but that there were strong reasons why she should avoid, for the present, all communication with him. "He followeth (said he) some matters of consequence, the issue whereof is uncertain; wherefore, as long as

[1] MS. St. P. Off., Decipher by Phelipps, Queen of Scots to Charles Paget, 20th May, 1586, Chartley.

[2] MS. St. P. Off., Mendoza to the Queen of Scots, May 19, 1586. Decipher by Phelipps. Ibid. Decipher by Phelipps, Sir Francis Englefield to Nau, 3d May, 1586. Ibid. Archbishop of Glasgow to Mary, Decipher, 20th May, 1586. See supra, pp. 280, 281, Randolph's intimation of this Conspiracy to Walsingham.

these labours of his and matters do continue, it is not for your Majesty's service to hold any intelligence with him at all, lest he, or his partners, be discovered, and they, by pains or other accidents, discover your Majesty afterwards to have had intelligence with them, which I would not should fall out for any good in the world. And I have specially warned the said Ballard (he continued) not to deal at any hand with your Majesty, as long as he followeth the affairs that he and others have in hand, which tend to do good, which I pray God may come to pass; and so shall your Majesty be relieved by the power of God."[1]

In a postscript of a letter of Morgan's to Curle, Mary's French secretary, written on the same, which was intercepted and deciphered by Phelipps, an indirect allusion was made to these practices of Ballard against the life of Elizabeth. "I am not unoccupied (said he) although I be in prison, to think of her Majesty's state, and yours that endure with her, to your honours; and there be many means in hand to *remove the beast that troubleth all the world*."[2]

But although Mary, thus warned, prudently abstained from any communications with Ballard, she continued in active correspondence with Morgan, Englefield, Mendoza, Paget, and Persons, on the subject of "the great enterprise." The principal person through whom she transmitted her letters was Gil-

[1] Morgan to the Queen of Scots, Murdin, p. 527.

[2] MS. St. P. Off., Morgan to Curle. Decipher by Phelipps, 24th June old style, 4th July new.

bert Gifford, who had sold himself to Walsingham. Her letters accordingly were regularly intercepted, deciphered by Phelipps, copied, considered by Walsingham, and then forwarded to their destination.[1] The English minister, therefore, was quite as well acquainted with the plot for the invasion of the realm, and the insurrection of the Roman Catholics, as the conspirators themselves. He knew, also, the desperate designs of Ballard, Babington, and his fellows, against the Queen's life; yet, as Mary had abstained from all intercourse with the conspirators, there was no evidence to connect her with their designs. There might be presumptions against her; (and it seems to me impossible for any one to have read Morgan's allusion to the secret designs of Ballard without having a suspicion of some dark purpose;) but nothing had yet brought her into direct contact with Ballard or Babington. Here, then, was the difficulty; and as Walsingham pondered over the way to remove it, it seems to have fallen out, most unhappily for the Scottish Queen, that in consequence of the advice of Morgan, she resolved to renew her correspondence with Babington, who probably about this time had returned from France to England, bringing with him the letter of the 29th April above-mentioned.[2] It has been imagined, that Mary was drawn on to renew her correspondence with Babington by a stratagem of Walsingham's; but although Wal-

[1] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Paulet to Walsingham, 11th April, 1586.

[2] Supra p. 299.

singham was busy and ingenious in his stratagems after the correspondence had begun, there is no proof that any measures of his led to its renewal; and it is evident, from what has been already stated, that for this purpose no trick or stratagem was required.

But, however this may be, Mary could not have adopted a more fatal step; indeed, it was the very crisis of her fate. Hitherto, she knew only of the project for the Spanish invasion; and, listening to the suggestions of prudence and suspicion, had connected herself in no way with Ballard and the plot against Elizabeth's life. Had she continued thus cautious, she was ignorant, and she was safe. But Babington arrived in England; his residence lay in the near neighbourhood of Mary's prison; Morgan had given him a letter to that Princess, recommending the renewal of their intercourse. The person who then managed the secret conveyance of Mary's letters was the treacherous Gifford. He, we know, would first convey it to Walsingham to be deciphered; it would be then forwarded to the Scottish Queen. What a moment of suspense must this have been for the English secretary, who was watching, silent and darkling, for the evidence which might convict the captive Queen? Had she suspected, or hesitated, or delayed, Morgan, who was in communication with Ballard, and likely to be soon informed of Babington having joined the plot against Elizabeth's life, might have warned her against having any communication with him, as he had done against corresponding with

Ballard. But Mary, if we are to believe the letters produced on her trial, which, however, she affirmed to be forgeries, had no suspicion. She wrote to Babington, at first, briefly. He, if we are to accept as genuine a copy of his letter produced at the trial, replied at great length. In his reply, the scheme for the invasion was connected with the conspiracy for the assassination of the Queen. Mary again answered; at least so it was alleged by her enemies, who produced a copy of her reply; she there gave directions for the landing of the troops and her own escape; she alluded also to the assassination; and in her letter, if genuine, certainly did not deprecate it. The agent who managed this secret correspondence was Gifford; the man in whom Babington chiefly confided was Poley. Both were sold to Walsingham: every letter was thus carried first to him, deciphered by Phelipps, copied and reserved for evidence; every conversation between the conspirators was reported. At last, when all seemed ripe for execution, the signal was given; Gifford and his base assistants dropt the mask; Walsingham stept from behind the curtain; Ballard and Babington were seized; and the unfortunate captive, one moment elated with hope, and joyous in the anticipation of freedom, found herself in the next, detected, entangled, lost. This rapid summary has been given, to bring, at one glance, under the reader's eye, the great lines in this miserable and intricate story; and, before proceeding to trace it farther, one observation must be added. From the system adopted by Walsingham, and the assistance he might derive

from the unscrupulous ingenuity of Phelipps, it is clear, that if he were so base as to avail himself of it, he was in possession of a machinery by which he could make Mary appear guilty of any plot he pleased. The letters of her correspondents, Morgan, Babington, Paget, and others, were written in cipher to her, and her replies were conveyed in cipher to them. Both fell into the hands of the English secretary; and, at the subsequent trial of Mary, the two long letters which proved, as was contended, the Queen's accession to the plot against Elizabeth's life, were produced, not in the originals, but in alleged copies of the deciphered documents. Nothing can be more evident than that, under such a system, Mary may have been wholly innocent, and yet may have been made to appear guilty. The real letters which passed between her and Babington, and which were never produced, may have related solely to the great project for the invasion of England, and her escape. The copies of these letters, avowedly taken by Phelipps, Walsingham's servant, may have been so manufactured, as to connect the invasion with the assassination of Elizabeth. We shall afterwards see that Mary asserted this was really done; but, meanwhile, let us proceed with the story.

Mary had two secretaries, named Nau and Curle: the first, a man of ability, intelligence, and education, but quarrelsome, and fond of political intrigue; the second, chiefly employed as a clerk and decipherer. Both of them enjoying her confidence, and intrusted with the management of her secret correspondence.

It does not exactly appear when the Scottish Queen received, through Babington, Morgan's letter, recommending the renewal of her correspondence with this gentleman; but, on the 4th July, 1586,[1] Curle sent to Gifford, or to the substitute who sometimes acted for him, a packet, in which he enclosed a letter, which he begged him to convey to Anthony Babington. The letter accompanying this packet was in cipher, and in the following words:—

"On Sunday last, I wrote unto you by this bearer, having received nothing from you since your letter dated the sixteenth of this instant.[2] I hope to have her Majesty's despatch, mentioned in my foresaid, ready for to-morrow sevennight, [conform to] the appointment. In the mean season, her Majesty prayeth you to send your foot-boy, so closely as you can, with these two little bills: the one so ɔ marked, to Master Anthony Babington, dwelling most in Derbyshire, at a house of his own, within two miles of Winkfield;[3] as I doubt not but you know, for that in this shire he hath both friends and kinsmen; and the other bill, without any mark, unto one Richard Hurt Mercer, dwelling in Nottinghame Tower. Unto neither of the two foresaid personages, your said boy needeth not to declare whose he is, (unless he be already known by them with whom he shall have to do;) but only ask answer, and what is given him, to bring it to your hands; which her

[1] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Curle to *ff* [Gifford,] July 4, Saturday.
[2] By this is meant the 16th of June.
[3] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Curle to *ff* [Gifford,] July 4, Saturday.

Majesty assureth herself, you will, with convenient diligence, make come unto her. Her Majesty desireth that you would, on every occasion you have to write hither, participate unto her such occurrences as come to your knowledge, either foreign or within the realm; and, in particular, what you understand of the Earl of Shrewsbury, his going to Court. God preserve you. Chartley, of July the fourth, on Saturday."[1]

This letter, the authenticity of which there is no reason to dispute, is a small slip of paper written wholly in cipher; the decipher being added below it by Phelipps, but much mutilated. It will not, however, escape an attentive reader, that the writer does not specify by whom the enclosed letter to Anthony Babington was written. It may have been from Mary, or it may possibly have been from her secretary, Nau, or from Curle. Walsingham and Burghley, indeed, alleged at the trial, and it was so pleaded, that the enclosure was a letter from the Queen of

[1] This letter is preserved in cipher in the St. P. Off., in a most valuable collection of original papers and letters, entitled, "Papers of Mary Queen of Scots." The deciphered part, in Phelipps' hand, is, much of it, illegible. It is now printed, for the first time, from a decipher, by Mr Lemon of the State-paper Office. It is singular, as that gentleman has remarked, that Curle, or Nau, in writing it, made an error in the date. In 1586, the 4th of July, Roman style, which Mary's Secretaries used, was on a Friday, not a Saturday; Saturday was the 5th of July, but the writer had mistaken the day of the month. This trivial circumstance appears to me to confirm the authenticity of the letters; and there is another instance of carelessness in it: he speaks, although writing on the 5th July, of the 16th "of this instant;" evidently meaning the 16th June. This tells the same way.

Scots to Babington; and this original letter is certainly alluded to as extant in a list drawn up by Burghley; but if it ever existed, it is now lost. It was not brought forward at the trial, when Mary demanded to see it, and alleged that no such letter was ever written by her: a copy was all that was then produced; and a copy of the decipher is all that we now have.[1] This letter, purporting to be addressed by Mary to Babington, was as follows:—

"My very good friend, albeit it be long since you heard from me, no more than I have done from you, against my will; yet would I not you should think I have the meanwhile, or ever will be unmindful of the effectual affection you have showed heretofore towards all that concerneth me. I have understood, that upon the ceasing of our intelligence, there were addressed unto you, both from France and Scotland, some packets for me. I pray you, if any be come to your hands, and be yet in place, to deliver them to

[1] It may be added, that there is also in the St. P. Off., a copy of the same letter in cipher, made by some unknown hand, most probably Gifford's, on the back of the small ciphered letter already quoted, of date the 4th July, enclosing to Gifford the Queen's letter to Babington. It may be conjectured that Gifford, before forwarding the original to Babington, took a copy of it on the back of his own letter. This letter was deciphered for me by Mr Lemon, and is exactly the same as that printed in the text, with the exception, that the date is thus given in the ciphered letter: "Of June the twenty-fifth, at Chartley, by your assured good friend, MARIE R." The long interval between June 25 and July 5, can only be accounted for by supposing that Mary, in writing to Babington, contrary to her usual practice, used the old style; whilst Curle, or Nau, in writing to Gifford, and enclosing the Queen's letter, used the new. The 25th June old style, was exactly the 5th July new, as there should be a difference of ten days.

the bearer hereof, who will make them to be safely conveyed unto me. And I will pray God for your preservation. At Chartley, your assured good friend, MARIE R."[1]

When the packet containing this letter reached Gifford, it was immediately conveyed to Sir Amias Paulet, who transmitted it to Walsingham on the 29th June, with many regrets that it appeared to him too small to contain any very important matter. He, at the same time, informed the English secretary, that Phelipps, who was then in London, and to whom Elizabeth and Walsingham appear to have committed the management of the whole plot for the interception of Mary's letters, had written a letter to him, in which he laid down a new plan of operations, by which he hoped to succeed more surely and speedily. Paulet, however, rejected it as dangerous, and liable, by exciting suspicion, to break off the good course already begun.[2] He added, that this was the more to be feared, as it was expected, that on the 3d of the month, "great matter" would come from these people. Three days after this letter

[1] MS. Copy, St. P. Off., Mary to Babington, June 25.

[2] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Paulet to Walsingham, June 29, 1586. In this letter of Paulet, which is too long to quote, we obtain a clear view of the machinery and the actors in this secret correspondence. Mary employed a brewer, who supplied the castle, and went by the name of "the honest man," to receive her letters from Gifford. He carried the answers to Gifford again, or to a cousin of his, who acted as his substitute; and all the three were in the pay of Walsingham and Paulet; so that the letters of the Queen, or her secretaries, were sure to be intercepted, sent to Walsingham, deciphered by Phelipps, and then retransmitted to Paulet, who forwarded them to their destination.

of Paulet's of the 29th June,[1] Mary wrote from Chartley to Morgan, informing him that Pietro, the name given to Gifford in their letters, at his last return from France, had brought her three letters from him, one of which regarded Babington. She stated, also, that she had received an anonymous letter, which, she imagined, came from Poley, who made courteous offers; but she was afraid to deal in it till she had ascertained the matter more certainly; advising Morgan, for the greater security, to keep those persons with whom she had to deal as much as possible unknown to each other. She then added this remarkable passage regarding her intercourse with Babington: "As to Babington, he hath both kindly and honestly offered himself and all his means, to be employed any way I would; whereupon I hope to have satisfied him by two of my several letters since I had his. He hath seen that mine hath prevented him with all lawful excuses shown on my part of the long silence between us." In the conclusion of the same letter, the Scottish Queen, in answer to the passage regarding Ballard, already quoted from Morgan's letter of the 4th July,[2] thus spoke of him:—"I have heard of that Ballard of whom you write, but nothing from himself, and, therefore, have no intelligence with him."[3]

On the day after, 13th July, Nau, Mary's secre-

[1] On the 12th July new style, or 2d July old.

[2] Supra, p. 306.

[3] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Original decipher by Phelipps, Mary to Morgan, 12th July new style, *i. e.*, 2d July old.

tary, wrote to Babington, informing him that his mistress had received his letters "yesternight," that is, on the evening of the 12th July;[1] which letters, he added, before this bearer's return, cannot be deciphered. He then continued:—"He (the bearer) is, within three days, to repair hither again, against which time her Majesty's letter will be in readiness. In the mean time, I would not omit to show you, that there is great assurance made of Mr Poley's faithful serving of her Majesty; and by his own letters [he] hath vowed and promised the same." But he subjoined this caution. "As yet, her Majesty's experience of him is not so great as I dare embolden you to trust him much; he never having written to her Majesty but once, whereunto she hath not yet answered. * * * Let me know plainly what you understand of him.—12th July, Chartley.—NAU."[2]

Although these two letters, the first from Mary to Morgan, the second from Nau to Babington, appear not in the original, but only in the decipher, which is in the handwriting of Phelipps, and must therefore be regarded with suspicion, there seems no sufficient reason for doubting their authenticity; and they establish the fact, that the Scottish Queen, at this time, had twice written to Babington, and meant to write again. They prove, also, that, on the 12th July, she had received letters from Babington. But with regard to the subject of his offers to her, or her

[1] 12th July new style; 2d July old.

[2] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Original decipher by Phelipps, endorsed, Nau to Babington, 13th July.

reply to him, upon which depends the whole question of her guilt, all is still dark.

To understand what occurred next, the reader must keep in mind, that in his secret communications with Mary, Babington sometimes remained at Litchfield in the neighbourhood of Chartley, and sometimes went to London, for the purpose of holding his private meetings with the conspirators, and also of visiting Secretary Walsingham, to whom, strange as it may appear, he had offered himself as a spy upon the practices of the Roman Catholic party. His object in this was evident. He believed that Walsingham knew nothing of his designs; and hoped, under this disguise, to become acquainted with all the secret purposes of the Secretary. But Walsingham was too old a diplomatist to be thus taken in. He accepted his offers, and made his own use of them. Hitherto Babington seems to have been in London when he received, through Gifford or his substitutes, the letters from Mary; but he now proposed to come down to Litchfield, and communicate with her secret messenger in person. It is evident that this change made some alteration necessary on the part of Walsingham and Phelipps; for the delay which must have occurred in having the intercepted letters sent up to London, deciphered, copied, and retransmitted, to be delivered again to Babington, would have raised suspicion, and must, in all probability, have led to discovery. Phelipps, therefore, was sent down to Chartley,[1] where, on pretence of some

[1] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Phelipps to Walsingham, Chartley,

other business, he took up his residence with Sir Amias Paulet; and thus no time was lost in deciphering the intercepted letters, and no suspicion raised. In this way Walsingham trusted that he would be enabled, following out what they had begun, to draw the nets more tightly round the Scottish Queen; and procure, at last, a clear and positive ground of conviction. Keeping this in view, the correspondence grows more and more interesting.

Phelipps left London for Chartley on the evening of the 7th July,[1] and on the way thither he met a messenger with a packet from Sir Amias Paulet to Walsingham, which, according to the directions he had received from this minister, he opened. It contained a letter of Mary's to the French Ambassador. This the decipherer carried back with him to Chartley, determining to copy it with all speed, and send it up again; adding in his letter, that he knew the Ambassador was expecting it earnestly. "By Sir Amias' letter, (to quote his note to Walsingham,) I find (said he) all things to stand in so good terms, as my abode here will be the less, but for Babington's matters, which I beseech you resolve thoroughly and speedily."[2] * *

14th July, 1586. Also, Ibid., Phelipps to Walsingham, Stilton, 8th July.

[1] It is stated by Dr Lingard, that he brought with him Babington's long letter to Mary, and it seems very probable that he did so; but I have found no authority for this, and none is given for it.

[2] MS. St. P. Off., Phelipps to Walsingham, 8th July, 1586.

The arrival of Phelipps at Chartley was not unnoted by the Scottish Queen, whose mind, with the acuteness and suspicion produced by a long captivity, eagerly scrutinized every new person or circumstance which might affect her destiny. She remembered that Morgan had employed many years ago a gentleman of the same name; but she had never seen him. Could this be the same, and was he to be trusted, or might he not be some new spy or eavesdropper of her enemies? To ascertain this, she sent a minute description of his person to Morgan.[1] He must have arrived at Chartley on the 9th July, and, having deciphered the intercepted packet to the French Ambassador, he, on the 14th, transmitted it with this letter to Walsingham.

"It may please your Honour, the packet is presently returned, which I stayed, in hopes to send both that and the answer to Ba. letter at once: in the meanwhile, beginning to decipher that which we had copied out before. And so I send your Honour her letter to the French Ambassador, which was in cipher, and her letters to the Lord Claud[2] and Courcelles out of cipher, Likewise, the short note was sent to Bab., wherein is somewhat only in answer of

[1] "He was," she said, "of low stature, slender every way, dark, yellow-haired on the head, and clear yellow-bearded, pitted in the face with small-pocks, short-sighted, and, as it appeared, about thirty years of age." We have here a minute portrait of an acute, unscrupulous, and degraded man; whose talents, as a spy and decipherer, were so successfully employed by Walsingham in the detection and destruction of the Scottish Queen.

[2] Lord Claud Hamilton.

that concerned Poley in his. *We attend her very heart in the next.* She begins to recover health and strength, and did ride about in her coach yesterday. I had a smiling countenance, but I thought of the verse—

'Cum tibi dicit Ave—sicut ab hoste Cave.'

I hope by the next to send your Honour better matters." * * The postscript of this letter is important. "If the posts make any reasonable speed, these will be with you by to-morrow noon; and G. G. (he means Gilbert Gifford) may have delivered his packet, and received his answer, by Sunday; which then despatched hither, would give great credit to the action; for otherwise we look not to depart this se'nnight, and, therefore, as good all that belonged hereto were done here as at London."[1]

How strange a scene was that now presented by the Castle of Chartley, Mary's prison. The poor Queen carrying on a plot for her escape; watching anxiously the fate of her letters on which all depended, and believing all safe; whilst Phelipps, living then under the same roof, and meeting her, as he says, with a smiling countenance, was opening every packet; communicating her most secret thoughts to Walsingham and Elizabeth; and weaving, at her very elbow, the toils in which she was to be caught.

On this same day, the 14th July, Sir Amias Paulet wrote to Walsingham, acquainting him that

[1] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., 14th July, 1586, Phelipps to Walsingham, Chartley.

the packet, sent by Mr Phelipps, had been thankfully received; with such answer given by writing as the shortness of the time would allow; and a promise made to answer more at length at the return of the honest man, which, he added, would be in three days. This packet, brought down by Phelipps, and thankfully received by Mary, appears to have contained a long letter from Babington, describing the conspiracy for the invasion of the realm, the escape of the Scottish queen, and the assassination of Elizabeth. This letter, which was not produced at the trial, and which Mary denied having ever received, no longer exists, if it ever did exist, in the original; but a copy, in a clerk's hand, has been preserved. Its purport was to excuse his long silence, every means of conveying his letters having been cut off, since the time that she had been committed to the custody of such a Puritan as Paulet. He then gave an account of his conference with Ballard; informed her of the intended murder of the Queen of England by six gentlemen selected for that purpose, and of his resolution to set her at the same time at liberty; and he requested her to assign rewards to the actors in this tragedy, or to their posterity, should they perish in the attempt.[1]

It is to be remembered, that this day, the 14th July, in Sir Amias' letter and Mr Phelipp's, was the 24th July according to the new style, which Mary and her secretaries, Curle and Nau, followed in their

[1] Carte, vol. iii. p. 603. Lingard, vol. viii. p. 205.

letters; and, accordingly, we find that Curle, on the 22d July new, or 12th July old style, and on the 27th July new, or 17th old, wrote two short letters in cipher, which were deciphered by Phelipps, then at Chartley. They were addressed to Gifford; and in the first, he told him, that the Queen of Scots had received his letter, dated the 12th of that instant, with its enclosure; that she was grateful for his diligence, but approved of his cousin Gilbert's advice, not to employ frequently a certain person to whom he had alluded. He (Curle) then added this sentence: "If Mr Babington be past down to the country, for whom this character ⚹ shall serve in time coming, her Majesty prayeth you to cause convey to him this enclosed, otherwise to stay it until you hear from her Majesty again. With my next I shall do my best to satisfy you touching the other characters. God have you in protection. Of July 22. CURLE, Chartley."[1]

In the other letter, of the 27th July, Curle wrote to the same person, or to Gilbert Gifford, much to the same purpose, informing him, that Mary had received his letter of the 25th inst.; that she commended his zeal, and begged him to have "this enclosed surely delivered in the hands of Anthony Babington, if he were come down in the country; otherwise to keep it still in his own hands, or his brother's, until Babington should arrive." He goes on to say, that, within ten days, her Majesty would

[1] MS. St. P. Off., Cipher and decipher, July 22, Curle.

have a packet ready to be sent to the French Ambassador by his boy, who, by the same means, might also carry the other to Babington at London, if he was not come sooner.[1]

Here, then, at last, is the anxiously expected packet from Mary to Babington, to which, as we have seen, Phelipps alluded in his letter of the 14th July, when he wrote to Walsingham, with such emphatic eagerness, "We attend her very heart at the next." It was enclosed in the packet with this letter of Curle's, of the 27th July, and was instantly pounced upon by those who were watching for it. Accordingly, on the 19th July, which, it must be recollected, is the 29th July new style, Phelipps wrote in exultation from Chartley to Walsingham: "It may please your Honour, you have now this Queen's answer to Babington, which I received yesternight. If he be in the country, the original will be conveyed into his hands, and, like enough, answer returned. I hope, for your Honour's speedy resolution touching his apprehension or otherwise, that I may dispose of myself accordingly. I think, under correction, you have enough of him; unless you would discover more particularities of the confederates, which may be done even in his imprisonment. If your Honour mean to take him, ample commission and charge would be given to choice persons for search of his house. It is like enough, for all her commandment, her letter will not be so soon defaced. I wish it for an evidence

[1] MS. St. P. Off., Cipher and decipher, July 27, 1586.

against her, if it please God, to inspire her Majesty with the heroical courage that were meet for the avenge of God's cause, and the security of herself and this State. At least, I hope she will hang Nau and Curle, who justly make Sir Amias Paulet take upon him the name she imputes to him—of a jailor of criminals. * * * I have sent you herewith of this Queen's letters, in the packet was last sent, those to the Bishop of Glasgow, Don Lewis and Morgan. * * * She is very bold to make way to the great personage; and, I fear, he will be too forward in satisfying her for her change, till he see Babington's treasons, which I doubt not but your Honour hath care enough of, not to discover which way this word comes in. I am sorry to hear from London, that Babington was not yet taken, and that some searches, by forewarning, have been frustrated."[1]

Phelipps concluded his letter, by cautioning Walsingham against one Thoroughgood, who had applied for a license to leave the country, and whom he suspected might be Ballard under a feigned name; and added this postscript: "It may please your honour, by Berdon, or my man, to inform yourself whether Babington be at London or no; which known, we will resolve presently upon return." Paulet also wrote briefly, but joyfully, to Walsingham. His words, he said, would be few; the papers now sent containing matter enough for one time; but he rejoiced that "God had blessed his labours, giving him

[1] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Phelipps to Walsingham, July 19, 1586.

the reward of true and faithful service, and trusted, that the Queen, and her grave councillors, would make their profit of the merciful providence of God towards her Highness and England."[1]

It must here be remarked, that there seems no good reason to doubt the perfect authenticity of those two notes of Curle's, of the 22d and 27th July; and, therefore, no ground for questioning the fact, that the Queen of Scots had transmitted two several letters to Babington: neither can there be any doubt that the letters of Phelipps, written on his road to Chartley, and during his residence there, are authentic; for they, like Curle's notes, are preserved, and prove themselves. But it is certainly remarkable, and cannot but excite suspicion, that, at this critical moment, the originals of Mary's two letters to Babington, which Phelipps undoubtedly received, and the contents of which proved, as was affirmed, Mary's knowledge of the plot against Elizabeth's life, have both disappeared. Nay, the singularity goes farther; for Mary sends two letters to Babington, one on the 25th, the other on the 27th; and only one was afterwards produced against her, and that confessedly not an original. All the other letters of Curle, Morgan, Nau, Gifford, and others, in these intricate doings, have been preserved, and generally with the decipher; but this letter, the most important of all, on which, indeed, the whole question turned, is a copy. At the trial, when this copy was produced and argued on, when Mary solemnly asserted that it was never

[1] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Paulet to Walsingham, July 20, 1586.

written by her, and challenged her enemies to show the original, it was not forthcoming. It is impossible not to regard this as a suspicious circumstance, coupled with the fact already noticed, that the letter of Babington to Mary is in the same predicament, and exists only as a copy; and this suspicion is greatly increased by an assertion of Camden, that, after intercepting and opening the Scottish Queen's letter to Babington, Walsingham, and his assistant Phelipps, cunningly added to it a postscript in the same characters, desiring him to set down the names of the six gentlemen, and it is likely (he observes) other things too.[1] Hitherto this statement of Camden, which involves a charge of so dark a kind against Walsingham, has rested on his bare averment, unsupported by all evidence; but I have found recently in the State-Paper Office, a small letter, written wholly in the same cipher as that of Mary's long letter to Babington, and endorsed in the hand of Phillipps, "The postscript of the Scottish Queen's letter to Babington." It runs thus, and certainly gives great support to the allegation of Camden:—"I would be glad to know the names and qualities of the six gentlemen which are to accomplish the designment; for that it may be I shall be able, upon knowledge of the parties, to give you some further advice necessary to be followed therein;[2] as

[1] Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 517.

[2] After this, in the original cipher, follows this sentence scored through, but so as to be quite legible: "And even so do I wish to be made acquainted with the names of all such principal persons, as also wo be already as also who be."

also, from time to time, particularly how you proceed; and as soon as you may, for the same purpose, who be already, and how far every one, privy hereunto."[1] The exact bearing of this postscript, as a proof of Mary's innocence, will afterwards appear. In the mean time, it is sufficient to remark, that it goes far to establish the fact, that her letters to Babington were tampered with, and added to by Walsingham.

Returning, however, to the contents of her reply, we find that Mary, in this real or pretended letter to Babington, entered fully into the details of the intended invasion. She recommended them to examine deeply, first what forces they might raise; what captains they should appoint; of what towns and havens they could assure themselves; where it would be best to assemble their chief strength; what number of foreign auxiliaries they required; what provision of money and armour; by what means the six gentlemen deliberated to proceed; and in what manner she should be assisted in making her escape. Having weighed all this, she recommended them to communicate the result, and their intentions, to Mendoza the Spanish Ambassador, to whom she promised to write; she enjoined on them the greatest caution and secrecy: and, to conceal their real designs, ad-

[1] This was deciphered for me by Mr Lemon of the State-Paper Office, who has added this sentence: "I hereby declare, that the above is a true and literal decipher of the document in the State Paper Office in cipher, endorsed by Philipps—*The Postscript of the Scottish Queen's letter to Babington*. The lines struck through with the pen are in a similar manner struck through in the original. The spelling has been modernised. ROBT. LEMON."

vised them to communicate it only to a few, pretending to the rest of their friends that they were arming themselves against some suspected attack of the Puritans. She then expressed herself in these remarkable words:—

"Affairs being thus prepared, and forces in readiness, both without and within the realm, then shall it be time to set the six gentlemen to work; taking order, upon the accomplishing of their design, I may be suddenly transported out of this place, and that all your forces, in the same time, be on the field to meet me. * * * Nor for that there can be no certain day appointed of the accomplishing of the said gentlemen's designment,—to the end that others may be in readiness to take me from hence, I would that the said gentlemen had always about them, or, at the least, at Court, four stout men furnished with good and speedy horses, for, so soon as the said design shall be executed, to come with all diligence, to advertise thereof those that shall be appointed for my transporting; to the end that, immediately thereafter, they may be at the place of my abode, before that my keeper can have advice of the execution of the said design, or at least before he can fortify himself within the house, or carry me out of the same. It were necessary to despatch two or three of the said advertisers by divers ways, to the end that if one be staid, the other may come through; and at the same instant, were it also needful, to assay to cut off the post's ordinary ways. This is the plat which I find best for this enterprise, and the order whereby you

should conduct the same for our common securities. * * * I shall assay, (she continued,) that at the same time that the work shall be in hand in these parts, to make the Catholics of Scotland arise, and to put my son in their hands; to the effect, that from thence our enemies here may not prevail to have any succour." She then added this caution, little believing that, in the moment she was writing, her cause had been betrayed, "Take heed of spies and false brethren that are amongst you, specially of some priests already practised by our enemies for your discovery; and in any wise, keep never any paper about you that in any sort may do harm; for from like errors have come the condemnation of all such as have suffered heretofore." * * * In the last place, the Queen informed Babington, that for a long time past, she had been a suitor to have the place of her confinement changed, and that Dudley Castle had been suggested, to which place it was not unlikely she might be removed by the end of summer. She then observed, "If I stay here, there is for that purpose [her escape] but one of these three means following to be looked [to.] The first, that at one certain day, appointed, in my walking abroad on horseback on the moors, betwixt this and Stafford, where ordinarily you know very few people do pass, a fifty or threescore men, well horsed and armed, come to take me there; as they may easily, my keeper having with him ordinarily but eighteen or twenty horsemen only with dags.[1] The second

[1] Dags—Pistols.

mean, is to come at midnight, or soon after, to set fire in the barns and stables, which you know are near to the house; and whilst that my guardian's servants shall run forth to the fire, your company (having every one a mark whereby they may know one another under night) might surprise the house, where I hope, with the few servants I have about me, I were able to give you correspondence. And the third: some that bring carts hither, ordinarily coming early in the morning, their carts might be so prepared, and with such cart-leaders, that being cast in the midst of the great gate, the carts might fall down or overwhelm, and that thereupon you might come suddenly with your followers to make yourself master of the house and carry me away." * * * She concluded her letter with expressions of deep gratitude to Babington:—"Whatsoever issue the matter taketh, I do and will think myself obliged, as long as I live, towards you for the offers you make to hazard yourself as you do for my delivery; and by any means that ever I may have, I shall do my endeavour to recognise, by effects, your deserts herein. I have commanded a more ample alphabet to be made for you, which herewith you will receive. God Almighty have you in protection!—Your most assured friend for ever. ✕. Fail not to burn this present quickly."[1]

As soon as Walsingham had procured this letter, which directly implicated Mary, not only in the con-

[1] MS. Copy, St. P. Off.

spiracy for the invasion, but proved, by inference, her assent to the plot for the assassination of the English Queen, he determined to secure Ballard and his fellows on the first opportunity. It was necessary, however, to act with extreme caution. If one of the conspirators was laid hold of before another, the rest might take alarm and escape, the news reach Chartley, and Mary, whose papers he had resolved to seize, might order everything to be destroyed. He was too acute not to anticipate great difficulty even after all he had done and intercepted. The letters of Mary to Morgan and to Babington were not in the Queen's hand, but in cipher, and were written by her secretaries, Nau or Curle. She might deny them. The small notes enclosing these letters were also in cipher, and confessedly from Curle and Nau. She might assert that they had written them without her orders, and unknown to her.[1] The only way of completing the proof was to search her repositories for the original minutes or rough drafts of these letters, and to seize Curle and Nau, and compel them to confess all they knew. Hence the extreme danger of giving any alarm at Chartley, which might lead to the destruction of the one, or the escape of the other. Babington apparently was still unsuspicious, and in constant communication with Walsingham. Contrary to his original intention, he had given up his plan of going down to Litchfield, and

[1] The reader will observe, that I am here reasoning on the assumption that Mary's letters to Babington, as they appear in the copies, were authentic.

had remained in London, where he held secret meetings with Ballard, Savage, Poley, Dun, and the other conspirators.

In these difficult circumstances, Walsingham was compelled to act rapidly, and yet with caution. He sent for Phelipps, (July 22,) who remained still at Chartley, busy in the task of deciphering the last letters intercepted, addressed to Mendoza and the French Ambassador.[1] Elizabeth, he said, would thank him, on his arrival, with her own lips; but as Babington was still in London, he must bring with him the original letter of Mary to this traitor. It was not, however, brought up by the decipherer till the 27th or 28th, and was then conveyed to Babington by a secret messenger, to whom he promised to have the answer ready by the second of August.[2] And here, in passing, it seems very important to remark, that the original letter of Mary to Babington, the letter which brought home to her the knowledge of the conspiracy against the Queen's life, and which has been already fully quoted, was confessedly in the hands of Phelipps the decipherer from the evening of the 18th July, when he intercepted it,[3] to the 27th or 28th of the same month, a period of nine days at the least. There was ample time, therefore, to make any changes or additions which might seem necessary

[1] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Walsingham to Phelipps, July 22, 1586, Papers of Mary.

[2] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Paulet to Walsingham, 29th July, 1586, Papers of Mary.

[3] See supra, p. 322.

for the implication of the Scottish Queen. So far with Walsingham all had proceeded well. Babington had received the important letter, and promised his answer. Meanwhile, the task of arresting Ballard had been committed to Milles, one of Walsingham's secretaries; but this conspirator used so many devices, and glided about so mysteriously, often changing his lodging, that for some time he eluded all their vigilance. At last he was seized and lodged in the Counter, a prison in Wood Street.[1] Phelipps, however, began to be in great alarm about Babington, who had now become suspicious that they were discovered, and instead of keeping his appointment for the 2d August, had ridden out of town, none knew where. The truth seems to have been, that the unhappy man was in an agony of suspense. He had discovered Maud's treachery, and trembled for their plot being on the point of detection. If he fled, the cause was lost. If he remained, it might be to perish miserably. He at last resolved to write to Mary, and return with the vain hope of still overreaching Walsingham. His letter to the Scottish Queen, dated the 3d August, was intercepted like the rest.[2] It informed her of their danger, but conjured her not to be dismayed, for all would yet go well. It was God's cause, he said, and that of the Church; it must succeed: and they had sworn to

[1] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Milles to Walsingham, 4th Aug., 1586.

[2] MS. Letter. St. P. Off., Phelipps to Walsingham, Aug. 2, 1586.

perform it or die. He added, that he would send the answer to her propositions, and their final determination, in the next.[1] This promised letter, however, he was destined never to write. He returned to London on the 4th August, the day on which Ballard was apprehended; heard the fatal news; attempted a feeble remonstrance with Walsingham; was reassured by the crafty excuses of that veteran intriguer for a few hours; again doubted and trembled; and at last eluding the men who were set to watch his motions, escaped, in disguise, with some of his companions, and concealed himself in St John's Wood near the city.

Walsingham appears hitherto, in these plots and counterplots, to have acted on his own responsibility; but it was now necessary to determine on Mary's fate: and with this view, he now, for the first time, laid before Elizabeth, in their full extent, the appalling discoveries which he had made; the conspiracy for the invasion of the realm; and that also against her own life. The Queen was thunderstruck. She saw her extreme danger. The plot was evidently proceeding in her own dominions, in Scotland, in Spain, perhaps in France; yet, though its general purpose was clear, its particular ramifications, especially in Scotland, and at Rome, were still unknown. She now recalled to mind Randolph's solemn and warning letter, written from Edinburgh some months before this. The persons to whom he alluded must be fellow-conspi-

[1] MS. Letter, Copy, St. P. Off., Babington to the Queen of Scots, Aug. 3, 1586.

rators of Ballard; and this man, who seemed the principal agent, could probably tell all. Walsingham had used the precaution of apprehending him, simply on the charge of being a seminary priest, and, as such, interdicted by law from entering England. Elizabeth, under these circumstances, commanded Walsingham to keep everything still to himself. It was not time yet, she said, to consult the Council: she and he must act alone; and it was her advice, that he should first bribe some of Ballard's confidants, if he knew of any such, and thus elicit his secrets. She suggested, also, that if any cipher used by the traitor in his correspondence had come to his hands, he might employ it to extract from him the particulars of the plot against her life. It is from Walsingham's answer to this proposition of the Queen, that the above particulars are drawn, and the letter itself is too interesting to be omitted. It is as follows:—

"It may please your most Excellent Majesty, I will, as duty bindeth me, most pointedly observe your Majesty's commandment, especially in keeping to myself both the depth and the manner of the discovery of this great and weighty cause. The use of some apt instrument towards Ballard, if there could be such a one found as he could confidently trust, or we might stand assured would deal faithfully, nothing would work so good effect as such a course. The party that hath been used between us, seemeth not in any sound concert with him, though he was content for the serving of his turn to use him. Touching the use

of a cipher, there is none between him and any other come to my hands, so as nothing can be wrought that way as your Majesty most politicly adviseth. Mr Vice-chamberlain[1] and I are humbly to crave your Majesty's directions touching the placing of Ballard afore examination. He remaineth now under a most strait guard in one of the Counters; and for the avoiding of intelligence, there are two trusty[2] placed with him to attend on him. In case he shall not lay himself open by disclosing, then were it fit he were committed to the Tower, with two trusty men to attend on him, to the end he may be examined out of hand, and forced by torture to utter that which otherwise he will not disclose."[3]

We must now turn to Mary, who not only remained in utter ignorance of all that happened, but continued her secret correspondence with her foreign friends "greedily," as Paulet expressed it, when he intercepted the packet.[4] The time had now come to disclose the toils. On the 3d of August, Mr Wood, a Privy-councillor, posted from London, met Paulet in the fields near Chartley, and held a secret consultation. Its result was soon seen. The Scottish Queen was still fond of the chase. She had cheerfully boasted to Morgan, in one of her letters, that when her enemies were representing her as bedrid,

[1] Sir C. Hatton.

[2] So in orig.

[3] MS. St. P. Off., Orig. Drafts, Walsingham to Elizabeth, about 5th or 6th Aug., 1586.

[4] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Paulet to Walsingham, 30th July, 1586.

she was able to handle her cross-bow, and follow a stag.[1] On the morning of the 8th August, her keeper, Paulet, invited her to hunt in the neighbouring park of Tixall, belonging to Sir Walter Ashton: she accepted, rode from Chartley, with a small suite, amongst whom were Nau and Curle her secretaries, and had not proceeded far when Mr Thomas Gorges encountered them, and riding up to the Queen, informed her of the discovery of the conspiracy; adding, that he had received orders not to suffer her to return to Chartley, but to carry her to Tixall. At the same instant, Nau and Curle were seized, kept separate from each other, and hurried away, under a strong guard, to London. Mary was completely taken by surprise. She broke into violent reproaches, and called upon her suite to defend their mistress from the traitors who dared to lay hands on her. But a moment's reflection convinced her they were far too weak for resistance; and she suffered Paulet to lead her to Tixall.[2] Here, by Elizabeth's orders, she was kept a close prisoner, secluded from her servants, refused the ministry of her private chaplain, served by strangers, deprived of the use of writing materials, and completely cut off from all intelligence. Whilst this scene of arrest was acting in the fields, Mr Waad had arrived at Chartley; where he broke open her repositories, seized her caskets, papers, letters, and ciphers; and was, soon after,

[1] The Queen of Scots to Morgan, July 27, 1586. Murdin, 534.

[2] MS. St. P. Off., Sir Amias Paulet's Postils to Mr William Waad's Memorial. Ibid., Esnevall to Courcelles, Oct. 7, 1586.

joined by Paulet, who took possession of her money. All was then packed up and sealed, preparatory to being sent to Elizabeth, who now appears to have directed every step. This Princess was overjoyed at the success which had attended the arrest of Mary: she wrote to Paulet, addressing him as the most faithful of her subjects; promised him a reward "*non omnibus datum*;" and, soon after, sent a new message, eagerly desiring him to write the whole story of everything done to Mary; not that she suspected (as she said) he had omitted any part of his duty, but "simply that she might take pleasure in the reading thereof."[1] Above all things, Elizabeth urged the safe keeping, and immediate transmission to her, of the caskets found in the Queen of Scots' repositories. These, and the things contained in them, she declared were, in her esteem, of far greater value than Nau or Curle; and, not content with a written message, she deputed a special envoy from Windsor to look after these treasures and bring them at once.[2]

Shortly before this, Elizabeth had a new triumph in the seizure of Babington and his companions. Till now, they had escaped the officers who were in pursuit; but driven at last by hunger from the woods

[1] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Mr Necasius Yetswert to Sir Francis Walsingham, Windsor, August 19, 1586.

[2] Could it be that the Queen expected to find, amongst these treasures, the famous casket, containing the letters of Bothwell, which she had made such strenuous exertions to get into her possession in 1583? See supra, p. 139. Lingard, 4th edition, vol. viii. p. 212.

into the open country, they were apprehended near Harrow, and carried in triumph to London, amid the shouts and execration of the citizens. There was no want of evidence against them, and their own confessions corroborated all; but after the day for their trials had been fixed, and everything seemed ready, the English Queen suddenly caught alarm, from the idea, that if the charge made by the Crown lawyers, and the evidence of the witnesses, deeply implicated Mary, her own life was not safe. Elizabeth had not yet resolved on the trial of the Scottish Queen, and the evidence against her was most imperfect. Her two secretaries, Nau and Curle, had as yet confessed nothing which materially involved their mistress. No original minutes of the letters to Babington had been found.[1] Even if Mary's trial were to take place, it was clear that a considerable interval must elapse between her arraignment and the execution of the conspirators; and, in this interval, thought Elizabeth, what might not be attempted against her own life? Though some of the leading conspirators were taken, yet many desperate men might still be lurking about Court; and so intensely did she feel upon this subject, that, on the evening of the 12th September, the very day before the trial, she sent repeated messages and letters to Burghley, commanding that, in the "Indictment" and in the evidence, there should be no enlargement of the Queen of Scots' crime. It was her favourite, Sir Christopher Hatton the Vice-chamberlain, who

[1] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Walsingham to Phelipps, 3d Sept. 1586.

transmitted these wishes to Burghley; and the reason he gave, was, that Elizabeth felt that it might be perilous to herself, if anything were given in evidence which touched Mary "criminally for her life."[1]

Amid these alarms the trials proceeded; and Babington, Ballard, and Savage, with the rest of the conspirators being found guilty, were executed on the 20th and 21st of September, with a studied cruelty, which it is revolting to find proceeded from Elizabeth's special orders.

She had at first suggested to her council, that some "new device" should be adopted to enhance their tortures, and strike more terror into the people; to which it was answered by Burghley, that the manner of the execution prescribed by law, would be fully as terrible as any other new device, if the hangman took care to "protract the action," to the extremity of their pains, and to the sight of the multitude who beheld it.[2] The executioner by special direction did so: but the sight of seven men cut up alive, after being partially strangled, was found to excite the rage and disgust of the multitude; and next day the second seven were permitted to be executed after a milder fashion.[3]

But, leaving these cruel scenes, we must turn to the unhappy Mary. On the 25th August, she was removed from Tixall, to her former residence at Chartley, under the charge of Sir Amias Paulet, and a body

[1] MS. Letter, Burghley to Sir Christopher Hatton, Sept. 12, 1586, discovered by Mr Leigh, who is at present preparing a work on Babington's Conspiracy.

[2] Lingard, vol. viii., 8vo edition, pp. 215, 216.

[3] Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 518.

of gentlemen of the neighbourhood, to the number of a hundred and forty horse. This strong escort Elizabeth thought necessary, from the suspicion that many commiserated her fate; and indeed, Walsingham's letters betrayed considerable uneasiness on the subject. But his apprehensions were needless; for nothing could now be more utterly helpless than the situation of the royal captive. She had been deprived, during her stay at Tixall, of all her servants, and was surrounded by strangers. When seen coming from the gate of the castle, a crowd of poor people assembled round her; and on some asking alms, she answered, weeping, that she had nothing to give. All has been taken from me, said she: I am a beggar as well as you. Then turning to Sir Walter Ashton, the proprietor of Tixall, and the other gentlemen, she again burst into tears, exclaiming, "Good gentlemen, I am not witting of anything intended against the Queen." On reaching Chartley Castle, her old prison, an affecting incident occurred. The wife of Curle her secretary, had been confined during the interval between Mary's removal and her return; and before going to her own chamber, the Queen, with the affectionate consideration which she always showed to her servants, went to visit the mother and child. It was a female; and turning to Paulet, who stood by, she begged him, since her own priest was removed from her, to suffer his chaplain to christen the babe, and give it the name of Mary. It might have been imagined that Sir Amias, who constantly talked of Catholicism as idolatry, and believed Protestantism to be the truth,

would have welcomed the proposal; but he peremptorily refused. The Queen said nothing at the time; but retiring for a short season, came again into the room, and taking the infant on her knee, dipped her hand in a basin of water, and sprinkling its face, said, "Mary, I baptize thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Paulet, in a letter to Walsingham, which described the scene, affected to be shocked at a scandal which he might himself so easily have prevented. He was ignorant, probably, that the Catholic Church, under such circumstances, permitted lay baptism; but the man was of a perverse churlish temper—a strict Puritan; and, as his letters often showed, more remarkable for his zeal than his charity.[1] Mary now proceeded to her own apartment; and on reaching it, the keys of the chamber, and of her coffers, were offered to one of her servants, who had been at length suffered to attend on her: but the Queen commanded him not to receive them; and bade Mr Darrel, one of Paulet's assistants, open the door. He did so; and on entering, finding her papers seized, and her repositories empty, she expressed herself with deep indignation: declaring, that there were two things which the Queen of England could never take from her,—her English blood, and her Catholic religion. She then added, that some of them might yet be sorry for this outrage; a threat which ruffled and disturbed Paulet.[2]

[1] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Paulet to Walsingham, Aug. 22, 1586. Ibid., same to the same, Aug. 24, 1586. Ibid., same to the same, Aug. 27, 1586.

[2] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Paulet to Walsingham, Aug. 27, 1586.

All the efforts of Elizabeth and Walsingham were now directed to collect conclusive evidence against the Scottish Queen. Her secretaries, Nau and Curle, were in their hands, and repeatedly examined; but, up to the 3d of September, their confessions did not materially involve their mistress.[1] The evidence, connecting her with the general conspiracy for the invasion of the realm, was perfectly clear; her correspondence with France, Spain, and Scotland, and her secret practices with the Catholics in England, was fully made out. But this was not considered enough; and Walsingham, in despair, wrote to Phelipps, then at Chartley, that Nau and Curle would by no means be brought to confess that they were acquainted with the letters that passed between their mistress and Babington: adding, "I would to God that these minutes could be found!"[2] It is evident that, by these minutes, the Secretary meant such rough drafts, or notes of Mary's letters to Babington, as he conjectured might be preserved in her repositories: and here we have a clear admission that, unless such were found, the evidence against the Scottish Queen was considered incomplete. At this moment of perplexity and difficulty, Burghley wrote to Sir Christopher Hatton, suggesting that it was terror for themselves that kept the Scottish Queen's secretaries silent: they refused, as he thought, to implicate their mistress, because it might bring ruin on themselves;

[1] MS. St. P. Off., Walsingham to Phelipps, 3d Sept., 1586.

[2] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Walsingham to Phelipps, 3d Sept., 1586.

but, he added, assure them of safety, and then we shall have the whole truth from them. "Surely then, said he, (to use his own revolting expressions,) they will yield in writing somewhat to confirm their mistress's crime, if they were persuaded that themselves might scape, and the blow fall upon their mistress, betwixt her head and her shoulders."[1] So jocularly could the aged Treasurer anticipate the scaffold and the block for the unhappy victim whom he was so solicitous to sacrifice. On the same day (4th September) Walsingham wrote to Phelipps, who was then at Court. It was evident, he said, that Mary's "minutes were not extant." He directed him, therefore, to seek access to Elizabeth, and persuade her to promise some extraordinary favour to Curle, who had admitted, in general terms, his mistress's correspondence with Babington, but obstinately refused to be more explicit.[2]

Both this person Curle, and his brother secretary, Nau, were, in truth, in a difficult dilemma. If they acknowledged that the correspondence between the Queen and Babington was in their handwriting, whether the letters were in written characters or in cipher, or whether they related simply to the project of invasion, or included an allusion to the plot against Elizabeth's life, they stood convicted of treason. If they remained obstinate, they had before them the dreadful alternative of the Tower and the torture. They acted as might have been expected in such circumstances: at first denied everything, and at length

[1] MS. Letter, Burghley to Sir Christopher Hatton, Sept. 4, 1586, discovered by Mr Leigh. Lingard, vol. viii. p. 219.

[2] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Walsingham to Phelipps, Sept. 4, 1586.

made a partial admission, which increased the presumptions, but was not conclusive, against the Scottish Queen. On the 5th September, the day after Burghley had written to Hatton, Nau, actuated, no doubt, by Hatton's promises of escape and pardon, described minutely the manner in which Mary managed her secret correspondence. The Queen, he said, would never allow anything secret or important to be written anywhere but in her cabinet, himself and Curle sitting at the table. It was her usual practice to dictate the points which she was pleased should be written; he took them down, read them over to her, drew out the letters, again submitted them for correction, and finally delivered them to be put into cipher and disposed of according to her orders. In this manner were written the intercepted letters of the Queen to the Archbishop of Glasgow, Charles Paget, and the Spanish Ambassador: but as to the letter to Babington, he declared that his mistress had delivered it to him for the most part written in her own hand.[1] It was Curle, he said, who finally translated and put the letters in cipher; and this same process had taken place with this letter as with the rest. This evidence was far from being sufficiently explicit or satisfactory; and various attempts were made to amend it. Burghley now threatened Nau with the Tower;[2] and the terror of his commitment

[1] MS. St. P. Off., Sept. 5, 1586. Endorsed in Phelipps' hand,—"6th Sept., Copie, Nau, his Confession of the manner of writing and making up his Mistress' pacquets; and that she wrote Babington's letters with her own hand."

[2] Letter, Burghley to Walsingham, Sept. 8, 1586; in Ellis, vol. iii. p. 5.

drew from him, on the 10th September, a long declaration, addressed privately to Elizabeth; which Burghley threw aside as of no importance, as it did not charge the Scottish Queen with any direct accession to the conspiracy for Elizabeth's death, but simply with having previously known that such a plot existed.[1] The Queen, he affirmed, had neither invented nor desired, nor in any way meddled with this plot, but had confined herself to the designs for the invasion of the realm and her escape; and at this crisis the unfortunate letter from Babington had arrived, which Mary had received, but did not consider herself bound to reveal. It is quite clear that this declaration, wrung out from Nau, did not corroborate, but rather contradicted the alleged letter of the Scottish Queen to Babington,—a sufficient reason why Burghley should have disregarded it. After an interval of eleven days, Nau and Curle were again examined before the Lord Chancellor, Burghley, and Sir Christopher Hatton. Babington and his companions had been executed the day before: on that same morning seven more conspirators had been drawn to Tyburn. In the interval between this examination and their last, Ballard had been so "racked" that he was carried to the bar and arraigned in a chair;[2] and it was hoped that, under the influence of terror for a similar fate, the secretaries would declare all. Of this last

[1] MS. St. P. Off., Sept. 10, 1586. Endorsed, "Nau's long declaration of things of no importance, sent privately to her Majesty."—This endorsation is wholly in Burghley's hand.

[2] MS. St. P. Off., Secret Advertisements, Babington, Sept. 16, 1586.

examination no perfect account has been preserved: but in an original minute drawn up by Phelipps, it is stated that Nau confessed that Curle had deciphered Babington's letter to Mary: that he (Nau) afterwards took down, from her dictation, the points of her answer; in which his mistress required Babington to consider what forces they might raise, what towns they might assure, where were the fittest places to assemble, what foreign forces were required, what money they should demand, what were the means by which the six gentlemen deliberated to proceed, and in what manner she should be gotten out of the hold she was in.[1] Nau added, that there was one other clause of his mistress's letter to Babington, in which she advised the six gentlemen to have about them four stout men with good horses, who, as soon as their purpose was executed, were to bring speedy intelligence to the party appointed to transport the Queen of Scots. This statement of Nau was corroborated by Curle; who added, that his mistress wished him to burn the English copy of the letters sent to Babington.[2]

It was now considered that there was sufficient evidence against the Queen of Scots, and there only remained the question of the mode of trial; nor was this long in deliberation. Elizabeth held a special consultation with Burghley on the 24th September;[3] and after considerable discussion and delay in the

[1] MS. St. P. Off., September 21, 1586.

[2] Hardwicke Papers, vol. i. p. 237.

[3] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Burghley to Phelipps, Sept. 24, 1586.

Privy-council, a commission was issued on the 5th October to thirty-six individuals, including Peers, Privy-councillors, and Judges, directing them to inquire into, and determine all offences committed against the statute of the 27th of the Queen, either by Mary, daughter and heiress of James the Fifth, late King of Scotland, or by any other person whomsoever.[1] Chasteauneuf, the French Ambassador, having heard of these proceedings, demanded, in the name of his master, that the Scottish Queen should have counsel assigned her for her defence; but this was peremptorily refused; and on the 6th of October, Sir Amias Paulet, Sir Walter Mildmay, and Mr Barker, a notary, waited on Mary at Fotheringay Castle, in Northamptonshire, to which place she had been removed from Chartley, and delivered her a letter from their mistress. It stated briefly and severely, that to her great and inestimable grief, she understood that Mary pretended, with great protestations, to have given no assent to, and even to have been ignorant of, any attempt against her State and person. It asserted, that the contrary would be verified by the clearest proofs; that she had, therefore, sent some of her chief and ancient noblemen to charge her with having consented to that most horrible and unnatural conspiracy lately discovered; that, living as she did within the protection of, and thereby subject to her laws, she must abide by the mode of trial which they enjoined; and she, therefore, required her to give credit to those noblemen

[1] Lingard, vol. viii. p. 222.

who held her commission under the Great Seal, and make answer to whatever they objected against her.[1]

Mary read the English Queen's letter with great composure. "I cannot but be sorry," said she, "that my sister is so ill informed against me, as to have treated every offer made by myself, or my friends, with neglect. I am her Highness' nearest kinswoman, and have forewarned her of coming dangers; but have not been believed: and latterly, 'the association' for her Majesty's preservation, and the Act passed upon it, have given me ample warning of all that is intended against me. It was easy to be foreseen, that every danger which might arise to my sister from foreign Princes, or private persons, or for matter of religion, would be laid to my charge. I know I have many enemies about the Queen. Witness my long captivity; the studied indignities I have received; and now this last association between my sister and my son, in which I was not consulted, and which has been concluded without my consent. As to my answer to the accusation now made, (continued Mary,) her Majesty's letter is indeed written after a strange sort. It seems to me to partake of the nature of a command; and it is, perhaps, expected that I am to reply as a subject. What!" she then exclaimed, catching fire at the word, whilst her eye flashed, and the colour, for a brief space, rose in her cheek; "does not your mistress know that I was born a Queen? and thinks she, that I will so far prejudice my rank and state, the blood whereof I am

[1] MS. Draft, St. P. Off., October 5, 1586.

descended, the son who is to follow me, and the foreign Kings and Princes, whose rights would be wounded through me, as to come and answer to such a letter as that? Never! Worn down as I may appear, my heart is great, and will not yield to any affliction. But why discuss these matters? Her Majesty knows the protestation I have once before made to the Lord Chancellor and Lord Delaware; and by that I still abide. I am ignorant of the laws and statutes of this realm: I am destitute of counsel: I know not who can be my competent Peers: my papers have been taken from me; and nobody dareth, or will speak in my behalf, though I am innocent. I have not procured or encouraged any hurt against your mistress. Let her convict me by my words, or by my writings. Sure I am neither the one nor the other can be produced against me. Albeit, I am free to confess, that, when my sister had rejected every offer which I made, I remitted myself and my cause to foreign Princes."[1] A few days after this spirited and dignified answer was reported to Elizabeth, the thirty-six commissioners arrived at Fotheringay, and chose a deputation from their number to wait upon the Queen; who, after four successive interviews with them, adhered to her resolution, and declined their jurisdiction. Into the clear and convincing reasons which she alleged for this proceeding, it is unnecessary to enter, although it is impossible

[1] MS. St. P. Off., October 12, 1586. The Scottish Queen's first Answers.

not to be struck with the spirit, ability, and talent, with which, unbefriended and unassisted by any one, she held her ground against the subtlety and perseverance of her assailants. On one of these occasions, turning to the Lord Chancellor Bromley, she requested him to explain the meaning of that passage in the Queen of England's letter, which affirmed that she was subject to the laws of England, and lived under the Queen's protection. "I came," said she, "into England to request assistance, and I was instantly imprisoned. Is that protection?" Bromley was taken by surprise, and contented himself by an evasion. The meaning of their royal mistress, he said, was plain; but, being subjects, it was not their part to interpret it.[1] Elizabeth was immediately informed of this determined refusal of Mary. She learned, at the same time, the resolution of her commissioners to hear the evidence, and pronounce sentence, although the accused declined to plead; and she wrote privately to Burghley the Lord Treasurer, commanding him and the other commissioners not to pronounce sentence till they had repaired to her presence, and made a report of the whole proceedings.[2]

It would have been well for Mary had she adhered to this first resolution; but some expressions of Sir Christopher Hatton the Vice-chamberlain, made a

[1] Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 521.

[2] MS. Letter, copy, Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. ix. fol. 332. The English Queen to Lord Burghley, Oct. 12. MS. St. P. Off., The Queen to the Lord Treasurer, and the Commissioners; a draft, in Secretary Davison's hand.

deep impression upon her. He had insinuated that her declining to answer would be interpreted as an admission of guilt: he implored her to remember that even if she refused to appear before the commissioners, (for hitherto Mary had received their deputation in her private chamber,) they must proceed against her in absence; and at the same moment, she received a brief and menacing note from Elizabeth; in which severity, if she remained obstinate, was blended artfully with a promise of favour, should she relent. It was in these words:—

"You have in various ways attempted to deprive me of my life, and to bring ruin on my kingdom, by shedding of blood. I have never proceeded so hardly against you; but, on the contrary, have cherished and preserved you as faithfully as if you were my own self. Your treasons will be proved and made manifest to you in that place where you now are. For this reason, it is our pleasure that you answer to the nobility and barons of my kingdom as you would do to myself were I there in person; and as my last injunction, I charge and command you to reply to them. I have heard of your arrogance; but act candidly, and you may meet with more favour.—ELIZABETH.[1]

We may imagine the bitter smile with which the royal captive read this letter, in which Elizabeth, in the nineteenth year of her imprisonment, took credit

[1] This is translated from the French of Chasteauneuf, (Life of Thomas Egerton, Lord Chancellor, p. 86,) who says he translates it word for word from the English original. Lingard, vol. viii. p. 223.

to herself for the kindness and protection she had extended to Mary. But there was a menace in its tone which shook her resolution: the last sentence held out a hope of favour: she had no one to advise with; and after a night of much suspense and trouble, she consented to appear before the commissioners.

The Court was held on Friday the 14th October, in the great hall at Fotheringay, which had been prepared for the purpose, having, at the upper end, a chair and canopy of state. It bore the arms of England only, and Mary was not suffered to occupy it. On each side of the room were benches for the commissioners. On one hand sat the Lord Chancellor Bromley, the Lord High Treasurer Burghley, with the Earls of Oxford, Kent, Derby, Worcester, Rutland, Cumberland, Warwick, Pembroke, and Lincoln: on the other, the Lords Abergavenny, Zouch, Morley, Stafford, Grey, Lumley, and other peers. Near to these were the knights of the Privy-council, Crofts, Hatton, Walsingham, Sadler, Mildmay, and Paulet. At a short distance in advance were placed the two Chief Justices of England and the Chief Baron of the Exchequer: opposite them, the other justices and barons, with two doctors of the civil law; and at a table in the middle sat Popham the Queen's Attorney-general, Egerton the Solicitor-general, Gawdy the Queen's Sergeant-at-law, the Clerk of the Crown, and two writers to take down the proceedings.[1] Before the bar stood such gentlemen and others as were permitted to be present.

[1] Howel, 1173.

On this day, at nine in the morning, Mary, attended by a guard of halberdiers, and leaning on Sir Andrew Melvil and her physician, entered the court. She was dressed in black, with a veil of white lawn thrown over her. One of her maids of honour carried her train, another a chair covered with crimson velvet, another a footstool; and as she walked to her seat, it was observed that she was lame and required support.[1] On coming into the middle of this august assembly, the Queen bowed to the lords: then observing that her chair was not allowed to be placed under the canopy of state, but lower, and at the side, she appeared to feel the indignity. "I am a Queen," said she, looking proudly and resentfully for a moment. "I have married a King of France; and my seat ought to be there." But the feeling was brief; and her features assumed again their melancholy cast, as she regarded the multitude of peers, statesmen, and judges. "Alas!" said she, "here are many counsellors, and yet there is not one for me."[2] Having then seated herself with great dignity, the Lord Chancellor stood up and declared, that the Queen's Majesty had at last determined to bring her to trial, in consequence of the practices used by her against her life: that she was not moved to this by personal fear, or from any malice; but because, if she

[1] Brit. Mus., copy, Caligula, C. ix., fol. 333. Order of the Proceedings at the arraignment of the late unfortunate Queen of Scots at Fotheringay.

[2] Chasteauneuf to Henry the Third, from the King's Library at Paris, 30th Oct., 1586; printed in Life of Lord Chancellor Egerton, p. 86.

failed to do so, she would be guilty of neglecting the cause of God, and of bearing the sword in vain. He was followed by Burghley the Lord Treasurer, who requested her to hear their commission, which was read by the clerk. On its conclusion, Mary rose up and answered that it was well known to all now present, that she had come into England to require assistance; and, contrary to all law and justice, had been made a prisoner. As for any commission, empowering them to bring her to trial, no one could grant it, because no one was her superior. She was a free Princess, an anointed Queen, subject to none but God; she had already delivered a protestation to this effect, and she desired her servants to bear witness that her answers were now made under this protestation.[1] Sergeant Gawdy spoke next: entered into a narrative of the whole plot, and brought forward the arguments, by which (he contended) it must be apparent to all, that the Scottish Queen was acquainted with the conspiracy against the life of Elizabeth. He explained Ballard's dealing with Morgan and Paget in France, the conspiracy for the invasion of England, and his repair to that country for the purpose of completing the plot; he adverted to the transactions between Ballard and Babington, to the formation of the new conspiracy against the life of the English Queen; to the renewal of the correspondence between Mary and Babington, which took place at this moment; and he concluded by contending that she had

[1] Camden, vol. ii. of Kennet, p. 522.

approved of the plot, had promised her assistance, and pointed out the readiest mode for its execution.[1]

To this Mary answered, that she had never seen Anthony Babington, nor received any letter from him, nor herself written any to him; that she knew nothing of Ballard, and had never relieved him; as for the Catholics of England, they were oppressed and took many things hardly. This she knew, and had represented it to the Queen her sister, imploring her to take pity on them. She acknowledged, also, that she had received offers of assistance from anonymous correspondents, but she had not embraced such offers; and how was it possible for a captive, shut up in prison, to search out the names or the intentions of unknown persons, or to hinder what they attempted? It was possible that Babington had written such a letter as he described, but let them prove that it had come into her hands;[2] and as for her own letters, let them produce them, and she would know what to answer.

Copies of the letter from Babington to the Queen of Scots, and of Mary's alleged answer, were then read; Babington's written confession was also quoted, besides the confessions of Dun, Titchbourne, and Ballard, three of his fellow conspirators; and it was contended by the Attorney-general Puckering, and by the Lord Treasurer Burghley, that nothing could be clearer than the evidence thus adduced, of direct connivance and approval. Mary, with great readiness,

[1] MS. Brit. Mus., Caligula, C. ix. fol. 333. Howel's State Trials, vol. i. pp. 1171, 1182. [2] Camden, p. 522.

replied, that all this evidence was second-hand, or hearsay. They spoke of the letters which she had received, of the answers she had sent; and they brought forward copies of a long letter from a man whom she had never seen, and a detailed answer, point by point, which she had never written. Was this garbled and manufactured evidence to be produced against her?[1] Let them produce the originals of these letters, if such originals ever existed. If Babington's letter was in cipher, as was alleged, she would then be able to compare the cipher with the copy now before them, to test the one by the other, and to discover whether it really was written in her alphabet or secret cipher, of which it was possible that her enemies might, by some treachery or other, have procured a copy. And, as for her alleged letter to Babington, if it, too, was written in cipher, and the original had been intercepted by them, why was it not now produced? If she was entitled to call for the original of Babington's alleged letter to her, much more were her accusers bound to produce the original of her pretended letter to Babington. She would then be able to examine it, to disprove it, and to detect the fraud which had been practised against her. At present she must be contented with a simple and solemn denial that she had not written the letters which had been now read, and that she was guiltless of any plot against the life of the Queen of England.

[1] Avis de ce qui a este faict en Angleterre par Monsieur de Bellievre sur les affaires de La Royne D'Escosse. Published in Egerton's Life of Lord Chancellor Egerton, pp. 98, 103.

"I do not deny," said she, weeping, "that I have longed for liberty, and earnestly laboured to procure it. Nature impelled me to do so; but I call God to witness, that I have never conspired the death of the Queen of England, or consented to it. I confess that I have written to my friends, and solicited their assistance in my escape from her miserable prisons, in which she has now kept me a captive Queen for nineteen years: but I never wrote the letters now produced against me. I confess, too, that I have written often in favour of the persecuted Catholics; and had I been able, or, even now at this moment were I able, to save them from their miseries by shedding my own blood, I would have done it; and would now do it: but what connexion has this with any plot against the life of the Queen? and how can I answer for the dangerous designs of others, which are carried on without my knowledge? It was but lately, she added, that I received a letter from some unknown persons, entreating my pardon if they attempted anything without my knowledge."[1]

To this Burghley, who had taken all along a most active part against her, undertook the reply; insisting strongly on the written confession of Babington, and the declarations of her own secretaries, Curle and Nau. This confession, and these declarations, subscribed by the parties themselves who made them, were now on the table, and they proved, he said, in the clearest manner, the correspondence between

[1] Avis de Monsieur Bellievre, p. 103. Camden, p. 523.

the Queen and Babington. The whole history of it was developed point by point, it was opened by the brief notes written sometimes by Curle, sometimes by Nau; it was they who had deciphered the letters of Babington, and communicated their contents to their mistress. Nay, the exact manner had been specified, in which the answer had been prepared by Nau. It was composed partly from minutes by the Queen, and from verbal dictation; it was written out at length in French, revised by Mary, translated and put into cipher by Curle, and then secretly sent to its destination. The letters also of the Scottish Queen to Englefield, of a date as far back as 9th October, 1584, proved, as he said, that the great plot, for the invasion of England, was then in agitation; her letter to Charles Paget, on the 21st of May last, (1586,) showed its resumption at that period; the letter of Charles Paget to the Scottish Queen, of the 29th May, connected her with Ballard and Mendoza the Spanish Ambassador; and the letters of the 27th July, to Lord Paget, Sir Francis Englefield, Mendoza, the Bishop of Glasgow, and Charles Paget, corroborated not only the confessions of the conspirators, but the contents of the letters between her and Babington, and the written testimony of her own secretaries.

During this address of the Lord Treasurer, he had occasion to mention the Earl of Arundel, as implicated in some degree, with the conspiracy; upon which Mary burst into tears, and lamented, with passionate expressions, the calamities which the noble House of Howard had endured for her sake; but,

soon drying her eyes, and reassuming her dignity and composure, she once more, in reply to the arguments of the Lord Treasurer, asseverated her innocence of any plot against the Queen's life. What Babington (she said) might, or might not confess against her, she was ignorant of; neither was it possible for her to say or discover, whether this written confession was in his handwriting or not. But why had they executed him before they had confronted him with herself, and permitted her to examine him? If he were now before them, she would have so dealt with him, that the truth would have come out; but they had taken good care to make this impossible. And the same thing might be said of Nau and Curle; why was she not confronted with them? Why was she not permitted to examine them? They at least, were alive: they might have been here if her adversaries had felt confident that they would have corroborated their written confessions. Curle, she was assured, was an honest man, though it was strange to find one in his station adduced as a witness against her. Nau was a more politic and talented person; he had been secretary to the Cardinal Lorrain, and she had received recommendations in his favour, from her brother, the French King; but she was by no means assured that hope, or fear, or reward, might not have influenced him to give false evidence against her; and it was well known that he had Curle at his beck, and could make him write whatever he pleased. It was asserted truly, that her letters were written, and put into cipher, by these secretaries. But what security had she, that they

had not inserted into them such things as she had never dictated? Was it not possible, also, that they might have received letters addressed to her, which they never delivered? was it not possible that they might have answered letters in her name, and in her cipher, which she had never seen? "And am I," said she, with great animation and dignity, "am I, a Queen, to be convicted on such evidence as this? Is it not apparent, that the majesty and safety of Princes falls to the ground, if they are to depend upon the writings and testimony of their secretaries? I have delivered nothing to them, but what nature dictated to me, under the desire of recovering my liberty; and I claim the privilege of being convicted by nothing but mine own word, or writing. If they have written anything which may be hurtful to the Queen, my sister, they have written it altogether without my knowledge: let them bear the punishment of their inconsiderate boldness. Sure I am, that if they were here present, they would clear me of all blame in this cause: and still more certain am I, that had my papers not been seized, and were I not thus deprived of my notes and letters, I could have more successfully and minutely answered every point which has been so bitterly argued against me."[1]

In the course of these proceedings (for it would be unjust to call that a trial, where the prisoner was deprived of counsel, not permitted access to her papers, and debarred from calling witnesses) Mary made a

[1] MS. Brit. Mus., Caligula, ix. fol. 383. Howel's State Trials, vol. i. pp. 1182, 1183. Also Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 523.

direct attack on Secretary Walsingham, in speaking of the facility with which her letters and ciphers might be counterfeited. "What security have I," said she, "that these are my very ciphers? a young man lately in France, has been detected forging my characters. Think you, Mr Secretary, that I am ignorant of your devices used so craftily against me? Your spies surrounded me on every side; but you know not, perhaps, that some of your spies on me proved false, and brought intelligence to me. And if such have been his doings my lords," she continued, appealing to the assembly, "how can I be assured that he hath not counterfeited my ciphers to bring me to my death? Has he not already practised against my life, and that of my son?" Upon this, Walsingham, rising in his place, warmly disclaimed the imputation. "I call God to witness, said he, that as a private person, I have done nothing unbeseeming an honest man, nor as a public servant of my royal mistress, anything unworthy of my office; but I plead guilty to my having been exceeding careful for the safety of the Queen, and this realm. I have curiously searched out every practice against both: nor if Ballard, the traitor, had offered me his help in the investigation, would I have refused it. With this plausible, but really indirect and evasive disavowal, Mary declared herself satisfied; and after some arguments of the Lord Treasurer, and the crown lawyers, which it is unnecessary to notice, the Court adjourned till next morning.

The proceedings on the second day were not materially different from the first. Mary was still alone,

unassisted, and it may be added, undismayed; although at times she gave way to tears, and seemed to feel her desolate condition. She renewed her protestation, declining the jurisdiction of the Court; and demanded that it should be recorded. As to the plot itself of which she was accused, some little variation took place in her mode of defence. On the former day, she had been wholly ignorant of the circumstances which were to be brought against her; and had commenced her defence by a general denial or disavowal of all treasonable correspondence. She was now aware of the evidence, and partially admitted and defended her letters to Morgan, Paget, and Mendoza; she even acknowledged such notes as, by her secretaries acting under her orders, had been sent to Babington;[1] but she again most pointedly asserted, that these notes and letters referred solely to the project for her escape. This project, she said, it was perfectly justifiable in her to encourage by every means, even by the invasion of the realm: she then reiterated her denial of being accessary to the conspiracy against the Queen's person; and entered into a detail of her repeated offers of accommodation made to that Princess. It had been her sincere desire, she affirmed, to remove every ground of dissatisfaction from the mind of her sister; but her proposals were disallowed, or suspected, or despised; so that, remaining a captive, she was driven to practices for her escape. "And now," said she, "with what injustice is this cause

[1] Egerton, p. 103. Avis de Monsieur Bellievre.

conducted against me! my letters are garbled, and wrested from their true meaning: the originals kept from me: no respect shown to the religion which I profess, or the sacred character I bear as a Queen. If careless of my personal feelings, think at least, my lords, of the royal majesty which is wounded through me: think of the precedent you are creating. Your own Queen was herself accused of a participation in Wyatt's plot; yet she was innocent. And Heaven is my witness that, although a good Catholic, and anxious for the welfare and safety of all who profess that faith, I would shudder to purchase it at the price of blood. The life of the meanest of my people, has been ever dear to me; and far rather would I plead with Esther, than take the sword with Judith; though I know the character that has been given me by my enemies, and how they brand meas irreligious." She then solemnly appealed to God, and to all foreign Princes, against the injustice with which she had been treated. "I came into England," she exclaimed, "relying on the friendship and promises of the Queen of England. I came, relying on that token which she sent me. Here, my lords," she said, drawing a ring from her finger, and showing it to her judges; "here it is, regard it well: it came from your royal mistress. And trusting to that pledge of love and protection, I came amongst you:[1] you can best tell how that pledge has been redeemed. I desire, said she, in conclusion, that I may have another day of hearing. I claim the

[1] Courcelles' Negotiations, p. 18. Bannatyne Club Edition.

privilege of having an advocate to plead my cause; or, being a queen, that I may be believed upon the word of a queen."[1]

The task of answering this appeal, was again undertaken by Burghley, who recapitulated the evidence against her; Mary frequently interrupting him by asseverations of her innocence, and a demand for more decided proof. It would now have been the time for the commissioners to deliver their opinions, and to pronounce sentence; but, to the surprise of many present, the Court broke up, having adjourned their meeting to the 25th October, at Westminster. The alleged ground of this abrupt measure, was the informality of pronouncing sentence before the record, or official report of the proceedings, was completed: the true cause, was the secret letter of Elizabeth already quoted.[1]

On the same day, on which the Court broke up, the High Treasurer repaired to his country seat of Burghley, from which he wrote the following letter to Davison. It is valuable, as illustrating the real character of so noted a statesman as Lord Burghley: the approbation with which he speaks of his own eloquence; the complacent description he gives of his success in counteracting the pity which most generous minds would have felt for Mary's desolate condition; and the cold sneer with which he styles her the "Queen of the Castle," are all in keeping with his former unfeeling

[1] Camden, pp. 524, 525.

[2] MS. Letter, Brit. Mus., Caligula, C. ix. 333. Howel's State Trials, vol. i. p. 1187.

witticism, on the probability of the blow falling between her neck and shoulders. Here is his letter.

"Mr Secretary. Yesternight, upon receipt of your letter, dated on Thursday, I wrote what was thought would be this day's work. The Queen of the Castle was content to appear again afore us in public, to be heard: but, in truth, not to be heard for her defence; for she would say nothing but negatively, that the points of the letters that concerned the practice against the Queen's Majesty were never by her written, nor of her knowledge. The rest, for invasion, for escaping by force, she said she will neither deny nor affirm. But her intention was, by long artificial speeches, to move pity; to lay all blame upon the Queen's Majesty, or rather on the Council, that all the troubles past did ensue; avowing her reasonable offers and our refusals. And in this her speeches I did so encounter her with reasons out of my knowledge and experience, as she had not that advantage she looked for; as I am assured the auditory did find her case not pitoyable, [and] her allegations untrue, by which means great debate fell yesternight very long, and this day renewed with great stomaching. But we had great reason to prorogue our Session till the 25th; and so we of the Council will be at Court on the 22d; and we find all persons here in commission fully satisfied, as, by her Majesty's order, judgment will be given at our next meeting."[1]

The same day, Walsingham wrote on the same

[1] MS. Lettter, Brit. Mus., Caligula, C. ix. fol. 433. Burghley to Davison, 15th Oct., 1586; since, Ellis, vol. i. p. 13.

subject to Leicester, declaring that even Mary's best friends thought her guilty; and adding, that but for a secret command of Elizabeth, they would have pronounced sentence. This delay and indecision appears to have so greatly annoyed the Secretary, that he represented it as a judgment from heaven, that her Majesty had no power to proceed against her as her own safety required.[1]

On the 25th of October, the commissioners met in the Star-chamber at Westminster, and the same proofs were adduced against the Scottish Queen which had been brought forward at Fotheringay; with the exception that her secretaries, Nau and Curle, were now examined, and corroborated their letters and confessions.[2] The former confessions of these two secretaries had been unsatisfactory to Walsingham and Burghley;[3] they proved the Queen to have received letters from Babington, and to have dictated to them certain answers in reply; but judging from the imperfect papers which remain,[4] there was no certain proof in their confessions, that Mary had dictated the passages which implied a knowledge of the conspiracy against Elizabeth's life; and, on this second occasion at Westminster, they merely corroborated their former confessions.[5] But Nau, if we may trust his own account, did more; for he openly asserted that the

[1] MS. Letter, Caligula, C. ix. fol. 415, Walsingham to Leicester, 15th Oct., 1586.

[2] Hardwicke Papers, vol. i. p. 224.

[3] Burghley to Walsingham, Sept. 8.

[4] Lingard, vol. viii. p. 219.

[5] Ibid. p. 229.

principal points of accusation against his royal mistress were false; and, refusing to be silenced by Walsingham who attempted to overawe and put him down, he declared that the commissioners would have to answer to God and all Christian Kings, if, on such false charges, they condemned an innocent Princess.[1]

Into these proceedings against Mary at Westminster it is unnecessary to enter farther. At Fotheringay we had the accused without the witnesses, at the Star-chamber we have the witnesses without the accused; for Mary remained at Fotheringay under the morose superintendence of Paulet, whilst the investigation proceeded at Westminster, directed by the indefatigable and unrelenting Burghley. Having heard the evidence, the commissioners, as was to be anticipated, pronounced sentence against the Queen: declaring that, since the 1st of June, in the 27th year of Elizabeth, divers matters had been compassed and imagined within this realm of England, by Anthony Babington and others, with the privity of the Queen of Scots, tending to the hurt, death, and destruction of the royal person of her Majesty the Queen of England.[2] They intimated, at the same time, with the object of conciliating the Scottish King, that nothing in this sentence should affect James' title to the English crown; which should remain exactly in the same state as if the proceedings at Fotheringay had never taken place.

A few days after this, Parliament met, and after

[1] Lingard, vol. viii. p. 229.
[2] Howel, vol. i. p. 1189.

approving and confirming this sentence, unanimously petitioned Elizabeth, as she valued Christ's true religion, the security of the realm, her own life, and the safety of themselves and their posterity, to consent that the sentence against the Queen of Scots should be published. To enforce their request, they called to her remembrance the anger of God against Saul when he spared Agag king of the Amalekites, and his displeasure with Ahab for pardoning Benhadad.[1]

The answer of Elizabeth was striking; and probably sincere, except in the pity and sorrow it expressed for Mary. She acknowledged, with expressions of deep gratitude to God, her almost miraculous preservation; and professed the delight she experienced, after a reign of twenty-eight years, to find her subjects' good will even greater to her now than at its commencement. Her life, she said, had been "dangerously shot at;" but her sense of danger was lost in sorrow, that one so nearly allied to her as the Queen of Scots should be guilty of the crime. So far had she herself been from bearing her sister any ill will, that, upon discovering Mary's treasonable practices, she had written her, that if she would privately confess them they should be wrapt up in silence; and now, if the matter had only involved dangers to herself, and not the welfare of her people, she protested that she should willingly pardon Mary. It was only for her people that she, Elizabeth, desired to live; and, if her death could bring them

[1] Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 526.

a more flourishing condition, or a better Prince, she would gladly lay down her life.

After somewhat more in this strain, she informed Parliament that their last Act had reduced her to great difficulties; and, in dwelling upon the sorrow felt for Mary, she artfully introduced a circumstance, which was well calculated to rouse their utmost resentment: telling them, that it was but a short while since she had, with her own eyes, seen and read an "oath, by which some persons had engaged to kill her within a month." This was on the 12th November, and two days after, (14th,) the Queen sent the Commons a message by her Vice-chamberlain, Sir Christopher Hatton, requesting them to consider whether they could not devise some gentler expedient, by which her commiseration for the Scottish Queen might be allowed to operate, and her life be spared.[1] On the 18th, after much debate, both Houses unanimously answered, "that they could find no other way;" and this brief but stern decision was forthwith carried by the Lord Chancellor and the Speaker of the House of Commons to the Queen, who was then at Richmond. This communication, it was expected, would elicit something direct and definite from Elizabeth; but the answer which she gave was one of studied ambiguity. "If," said she, addressing the Chancellor, "I should say unto you that I mean *not* to grant your

[1] MS. Letter, Sir George Warrender's MS. Collection, Archibald Douglas to the Master of Gray, 22d Nov., 1586, London. Also, Archibald Douglas to the King, 8th December, Warrender MSS., 1586.

petition—by my faith, I should say unto you more than, perhaps, I mean; and if I should say unto you I *mean to grant your petition*, I should then tell you more than it is fit for you to know: and so I must deliver you an answer answerless."[1]

It was now deemed proper that the captive Queen should be informed of these proceedings. Since the breaking up of the Court at Fotheringay, she had remained there under the custody of Paulet, whose letters to Walsingham breathed a personal dislike to his prisoner. On the 22d November, Lord Buckhurst, and Mr Beal the clerk of the Privy-council, arrived at Fotheringay, and communicated to her the sentence of death, which had been pronounced by the Commissioners, its ratification by Parliament, and the earnest petition of both Houses for her immediate execution. They warned her not to look for mercy; spoke severely of her attachment to the Catholic faith, which made her life incompatible with the security of the reformed opinions; and promised her the ministrations of a Protestant divine in her last hours. The Queen of Scots heard them with the utmost tranquillity, and mildly, but firmly, declined all such religious assistance. She declared that the judgment of the Court was unjust, as she was innocent of all consent to the plot against Elizabeth's life; but she implored them, in the name of Christ, to permit her to have the spiritual consolations of her Almoner, whom she knew to be in the castle, although debarred from her presence. For a brief period this

[1] Parliamentary History, vol. iv. p. 298.

was granted: but the indulgence was considered too great, and he was once more removed. Farther and more studied insults were soon offered. On the day after the arrival of Buckhurst, Paulet entered her chamber without ceremony, and informed her that, as she was now no longer to be considered a Queen, but a private woman dead in law, the insignia of royalty must be dispensed with. Mary replied, that whatever he or his Sovereign might consider her, did not much move her; she was an anointed Princess, and had received this dignity from God: into his hands alone would she resign both it and her soul.[1] As for their Queen, she as little acknowledged her for her superior, as she did her heretical Council for her judges; and, in spite of the indignities they offered, would die, as she had lived, a Queen. This spirited answer greatly enraged Paulet, who commanded Mary's attendants to take away the "dais," or cloth of state; and, when they refused, called in some of his own people, who executed the order. He then put on his hat, sat down in her presence, and pointing to the billiard-table which stood in the chamber, ordered it to be removed, remarking, that these vain recreations no longer became a person in her situation. Such brutal and insolent conduct would have disgraced the commonest jailor in the kingdom; and the man who was guilty of this outrage, could plead no order from Elizabeth.[2]

[1] Martyre de la Royne D'Escosse. Jebb, vol. ii. pp. 293, 294.

[2] Letter of Mary in Jebb, vol. ii. p. 293. Also, Bisselii Mariæ Stuartæ Acta, p. 219.

That Princess now gave orders that the sentence against the Queen of Scots should be proclaimed to the people; and, so highly excited were the citizens in the metropolis with the real or fancied dangers which they had escaped, that the communication was received with every mark of public rejoicing.[1] To Mary it brought no new pang, so far as life was concerned; but she became agitated with the suspicion that Elizabeth, to avoid the odium of a public execution, would endeavour to have her privately assassinated: and this new idea gave her the utmost inquietude.[2] Nor, if we are to believe Camden,[3] were these ideal terrors. Leicester, he affirms, on the first discovery of the conspiracy, had given it as his advice that Mary should be privately poisoned; and had even sent a divine to persuade Secretary Walsingham of the lawfulness of such a course, which he, however, utterly rejected and condemned. So horrid an accusation against Leicester would require some decided proof, which the historian has not given; and it will be afterwards seen, that Walsingham's aversion to such a course was exceedingly short-lived. It was at this time that Mary addressed her last letter to Elizabeth, in these touching and pathetic terms:—

"Madam—I bless God with my whole heart, that, by means of your final judgment, he is about to put a period to the wearisome pilgrimage of my life. I make no petition that it should be prolonged, having

[1] Lingard, vol. viii. p. 233.
[2] Letter of Mary to the Duke of Guise. Jebb, 334.
[3] Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 519.

already but too well known its bitterness: I only now supplicate your Highness, that, since I cannot hope for any favour from those exasperated ministers who hold the highest offices in your State, I may obtain, from your own sole bounty, these three favours:

"First, As it would be vain for me to expect a burial in England, accompanied by the Catholic rites practised by the ancient monarchs, your ancestors and mine, and since the sepulchres of my fathers have been broken up and violated in Scotland, I earnestly request that, as soon as my enemies shall have glutted themselves with my innocent blood, my body may be carried by my servants to be interred in holy ground; above all, I could wish in France, where rest the ashes of the Queen my most honoured mother. Thus shall this poor body, which has never known repose as long as it was united to my soul, have rest at last, when it and my spirit are disunited.

"Secondly, I implore your Majesty, owing to the terror I feel for the tyranny of those to whose charge you have abandoned me, let me not be put to death in secret, but in the sight of my servants and others. These persons will be witnesses to my dying in the faith, and in obedience to the true Church; and it will be their care to rescue the close of my life and the last breathings of my spirit from the calumnies with which they may be assailed by my enemies.

"Thirdly, I request that my servants, who have clung to me so faithfully throughout my many sorrows, may be permitted freely to go where they please, and to retain the little remembrances which my poverty has left them in my will.

"I conjure you, Madam, by the blood of Jesus Christ, by our near relationship, by the memory of Henry the Seventh our common ancestor, by the title of Queen, which I bear even to my death, refuse me not these poor requests, but assure me of your having granted them by a single word under your hand.

"I shall then die, as I have lived,

"Your affectionate Sister and Prisoner,

"MARY THE QUEEN."[1]

No answer was ever returned to this pathetic appeal, nor, indeed, is it absolutely certain that Elizabeth ever received it; but, in the meantime, some exertions to save the Scottish Queen were made by the French King, and by her son the King of Scotland. Henry the Third had never, during the long course of her misfortunes, exhibited for Mary any feelings of personal affection or deep interest, although, from political considerations, he had frequently espoused her cause; but the idea that a Queen and a near relative should be arraigned, condemned, and executed, was so new and appalling, that he deemed it imperative to interfere, and sent Monsieur de Bellievre his Ambassador to present his remonstrances to the English Queen. After many affected delays, Elizabeth received him in unusual state upon her throne, and heard his message with a flashing eye and flushed and angry countenance.[2] She restrained her feelings, however, sufficiently to make a laboured reply, pronounced a high encomium upon her own forbearance, promised a speedy and definite answer,

[1] Jebb, vol. ii. pp. 91, 92.

[2] November 27.

protracted the time for more than a month by the most frivolous excuses, and, at last, drove the Ambassador to declare, that if Mary was executed his master must resent it. The English Queen, fired at this threat, demanded whether his master had empowered him to use such language; and, having found that it was warranted by Bellievre's instructions, wrote a letter of lofty defiance to Henry, and dismissed his envoy. Aubespine the resident Ambassador renewed the attempt; but a pretended plot against the life of Elizabeth, which was said to be traced to some of his suite, furnished a subject for a new and bitter quarrel, and this, for a time, interrupted all amicable relations between the two Crowns.[1]

On the side of Scotland, James' efforts were not more successful. This young prince had been early informed of the conspiracy by Walsingham, and had written to Elizabeth congratulating her upon the discovery.[2] The English Secretary had employed his friend, the Master of Gray, to sound his royal master as to the intended proceedings against the Queen of Scots; and bade that nobleman remind the young King, that any mediation for Mary would come with a bad grace from a Prince whose father had received such hard measure at her hands.[3]

To confirm James in these feelings, care had been taken to send him an account of the plot, with full extracts

[1] Carte, vol. iii. pp. 613, 614.

[2] 10th September. MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Master of Gray to Burghley, 10th Sept., 1586.

[3] MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Orig. Draft by Walsingham, Sept. 17, 1586.

from the alleged intercepted correspondence of the Queen of Scots and Babington. In these letters, James must have perceived the severe terms in which he was spoken of by Mary, and become acquainted with her advice given to Lord Claud Hamilton, to seize his person and place him under a temporary restraint. Such revelations were little calculated to foster or preserve any sentiments of affection in a son towards a mother whom he had never known. Yet all this cannot excuse the coldness and indifference which he manifested. Monsieur de Courcelles, who was then in Scotland, received instructions from the French King to incite the young monarch to interfere for Mary; but he replied that his mother was in no danger, and as for the conspiracy, she must be contented, he said, to drink the ale she had brewed. He loved her as much as nature and duty bound him; but he knew well she bore him as little good will as she did the Queen of England: her practices had already nearly cost him his crown, and he could be well content she would meddle with nothing but prayer and serving of God.[1]

These selfish and moderate sentiments were far from acceptable to the Scottish nobles and people, who felt the treatment offered to the mother of their sovereign, and the superiority assumed by Elizabeth, as a national insult. Angus, Lord Claud Hamilton, Huntley, Bothwell, Herries, and all the leading men about Court, protested loudly against her insolence;

[1] 4th October. Extract of Monsieur Courcelles' Negotiations, Bannatyne edition, p. 4.

and declared their resolution rather to break into open war, than suffer it to proceed to further extremity.[1] On this subject, indeed, the feelings of the nobles had become so excited, as to impel them to speak out with fierce plainness to the King himself. James, it seems, suspected that Elizabeth would send an Ambassador, to persuade him to remain passive, whatever extremities might be adopted against his mother; and turning to the Earl of Bothwell, a blunt soldier, he asked his advice what he should do. If your Majesty, said he, suffers the process to proceed, I think, my liege, you should be hanged yourself, the day after. George Douglas, also, (the same brave and attached friend of Mary, who had assisted in her escape from Lochleven,) remonstrated in strong terms with his royal master; warning him to beware of giving credit to the lying tales of some about him, who were the pensioned slaves of Elizabeth, and paid to create bad blood between him and his parent. "And yet," answered James, "how is it possible for me to love her, or to approve her proceedings? Did she not write to Fontenay, the French Ambassador here, that unless I conformed myself to her wishes, I should have nothing but the Lordship of Darnley; which was all my father had before me? Has she not laboured to take the crown off my head, and set up a Regent? Is she not obstinate in holding a different religion?" "For that matter," said Douglas, "she adheres to her faith, in which she hath been brought up, as your

[1] Extract of Courcelles' Negotiations, pp. 11, 13. Bannatyne Club Edition.

Majesty doth to yours: and, looking to the character of your religious guides, she thinks it better that you should come over to her views, than she to yours." "Ay, ay," said the king, "truth it is I have been brought up amid a company of mutinous knavish ministers, whose doctrine I could never approve; but yet, I know my religion to be the true one."

In the mean time, the alarming news from England, and the representations of the French King, convinced James, that the question was no longer as to the imprisonment, but the life of Mary; and the moment he embraced this idea, his whole conduct changed. He wrote a letter of strong and indignant remonstrance to Elizabeth, and despatched it by Sir William Keith, who was instructed to express himself boldly, and without reserve upon the subject. He, at the same time, and by the same Ambassador, addressed a threatening note to Walsingham, whom he considered his mother's greatest enemy; and he commanded Keith, on his arrival at the English Court, to coöperate with the French Ambassador in all his efforts for the safety of the unhappy Princess, whose fate seemed to be so fast approaching. He had already written strongly to Archibald Douglas, his Ambassador at the English Court.[1] But it was suspected, on good grounds, that Douglas was wholly in the hands of Elizabeth and Walsingham; and currently said, that

[1] Appendix to Robertson's History of Scotland, No. XLIX. King James to Archibald Douglas, October 1586; also same, No. L., Archibald Douglas to the King, 16th Oct. 1586.

as he had been at the father's murder, he would have his hand as deep in the mother's death.[1]

On Keith's arrival at the English Court,[2] Elizabeth and her ministers attempted to frustrate the object of his mission, by the usual weapons of delay and dissimulation. When at last admitted, the Queen affected the utmost solicitude for Mary's life; but represented herself as driven to extremities by the remonstrances of her ministers, and the fears of her people. "And yet," said she, turning to the Ambassador, "I swear by the living God, that I would give one of my own arms to be cut off, so that any means could be found for us both to live in assurance.[3] I have already," she continued, "saved her life, when even her own subjects craved her death; and now, judge for yourselves which is most just, that I who am innocent, or she who is guilty, should suffer."[4] Repeated interviews took place, and Elizabeth on one occasion declared, that no human power should ever persuade her to sign the warrant for Mary's execution; but in the mean time, the sentence against her had been made public. Leicester, Burghley, and Walsingham, advised her death. The people, alarmed by reports of the meditated invasion by Spain, and new plots against

[1] Lodge's Letters, vol. ii. (8vo edit.) p. 295. Master of Gray to Archibald Douglas, 9th Dec. 1586.

[2] 5th November. MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Keith to Davison, 5th Nov. 1586. London.

[3] Sir George Warrender MSS., B. fol. 341., Archibald Douglas to James, 8th Dec. 1586.

[4] MS. Warrender, B. fol. 333., Douglas to the Master of Gray, 22d Nov. 1586.

their Princess, became clamorous on the same subject; and James, agitated by the ill success of Keith, sent him new instructions, with a private letter written in passionate and threatening terms.[1] On communicating it to the English Queen, she broke into one of those sudden and tremendous paroxysms of rage, which sometimes shook the Council-room, and made the hearts of her ministers quail before her. It was with the greatest difficulty that she was prevented from chasing Keith, who had spoken with great boldness, from her presence. But Leicester her favourite at last appeased her; and, on the succeeding day, she dictated a more temperate reply to the young King. On his side also, James repented of his violence, and, unfortunately for his own honour, was induced to adopt a milder tone; to write an apologetic letter to Elizabeth; and to despatch the Master of Gray and Sir Robert Melvil, with instructions, to explain that his "meaning, in all that had hitherto been done," was modest and not menacing.[2] Nothing could be more selfish and pusillanimous than such conduct. The Scottish nation and the nobility were loud in their expressions of indignation. Eager to avenge the disgrace inflicted on their country, the nobles had already armed themselves, to break across the Border, and take the quarrel into their own hands; but the King, who had received a private communication from Walsingham,[3] was think-

[1] Warrender MSS., B. 341., Douglas to the King, 8th Dec. 1586.

[2] MS. Letter, Copy, Warrender MSS., B. fol. 336., King James to Elizabeth, 15th Dec. 1586.

[3] Warrender MSS., B. fol. 334. A Memorial of certain Heads to be communicated to the Lord Secretary of Scotland.

ing more about his succession to the English Crown than the peril of his parent: and, intimidated by the violence of Elizabeth, judged it better to conciliate than exasperate. It is difficult to believe that James had any very deep desire to save his mother's life, when he selected so base and unworthy an intercessor as the Master of Gray. The King must have known well that this man had already betrayed her, that he was a sworn adherent of Elizabeth, and that Mary's safety or return to power and influence brought danger to this envoy himself. So fully were these Gray's feelings, that, in a letter to his friend Archibald Douglas, written as far back as October 11th, he described "any good to Mary as a staff for their own heads;" and assured him, "he cared not although she were out of the way."[1] The result was exactly what might have been anticipated: Gray on his arrival at the English Court, (29th December,) in his public conferences with Elizabeth and her ministers, and in the open despatches intended for the eyes of the Scottish Council, exhibited great apparent activity and interest in the cause of the Scottish Queen.[2] But this was all unreal: for secretly he betrayed her; coöperated with Archibald Douglas in his enmity; whispered in Elizabeth's ear the significant proverb, "The dead don't bite;" persuaded her, that although there was much clamour, there was little sincerity in his master's

[1] Lodge, vol. ii. 8vo edition, p. 289. See also Murdin, pp. 573, 576.

[2] Robertson's Appendix, No. L. A Memorial for his Majesty, by the Master of Gray, 12th January, 1586-7.

remonstrances; and notwithstanding the honest endeavours of Sir Robert Melvil against his base efforts, encouraged her to proceed to those extremities which she was willing, yet afraid to perpetrate.[1]

In her first interview with these new Ambassadors, Elizabeth received their offers with her characteristic violence. They proposed, that Mary should demit her right of succession to the English Crown to her son. "How is that possible?" said the Queen; "she is declared 'inhabil' and can convey nothing." "If she have no rights," replied Gray, "your Majesty need not fear her; if she have, let her assign them to her son, in whom will then be placed the full title of succession to your Highness." "What," said Elizabeth, with a loud voice and great oath; "get rid of one, and have a worse in her place? Nay, then I put myself in a more miserable case than before. By God's Passion, that were to cut mine own throat; and for a duchy or an earldom to yourself, you, or such as you, would cause some of your desperate knaves to kill me. No, by God! your master shall never be in that place." Gray then craved, that Mary's life might at least be spared for fifteen days, to give them time to communicate with the King: but this she peremptorily refused. Melvil implored her to give a respite, were it only for eight days. "No," said Elizabeth, rising up, and impatiently flinging out of the apartment, "not for an hour."[2] After such a reception, it was impos-

[1] Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 533.

[2] Robertson's Appendix, No. L.: Memorial of the Master of Gray, 12th January, 1586-7.

sible not to anticipate the worst; and although, on a succeeding occasion, the Queen appeared somewhat mollified, the Ambassadors left her with the conviction, that fears for herself, and not any lingering feelings of mercy towards Mary, were the sole causes of her delay.

It was at this time that the Scottish King, having required the ministers of the Kirk to pray for his unhappy mother, then in the toils of her enemies and daily expecting death, received a peremptory refusal. This was the more extraordinary, since James had carefully worded his request so as to remove, as he thought, every possibility of opposition; but finding himself deceived, he directed Archbishop Adamson to offer up his prayers for the Queen, in the High Church of the capital. To his astonishment he found, on entering his seat, that one of the recusant ministers, named Cowper, had preoccupied the pulpit. The King addressed him from the gallery, told him that the place had been intended for another; but added, that if he would pray for his mother, he might remain where he was. To this, Cowper answered, that he would do as the Spirit of God directed him; a significant reply to all who knew the history of the times, and certainly amounting to a refusal. A scene of confusion ensued. James commanded Cowper to come down from the pulpit: he resisted. The royal guard sprang forward to pull out the intruder; and he descended, denouncing woe and wrath on all who held back; declaring too, that this hour would rise up in witness against the King, in the great day of the

Lord. Adamson then preached on the Christian duty of prayer for all men, with such pathetic eloquence, and so powerfully offered up his intercession for their unfortunate Queen, that the congregation separated in tears, lamenting the obstinacy of their pastors.[1]

Meanwhile, reports were circulated in England, which were artfully calculated to inflame the people, and to excuse severity towards Mary. It was said one day, that the Spaniards had landed at Milford Haven, and that the Catholics had joined them; the next, that Fotheringay Castle was attacked, and that the Queen of Scots had made her escape; then came rumours that the northern counties were already in rebellion, and that a new conspiracy was on foot to slay the Queen and set fire to London.[2]

Amidst these fictitious terrors, the Privy-council held repeated meetings, and pressed Elizabeth to give her warrant for the execution; Leicester, Burghley, and Walsingham, entreated, argued, and remonstrated, but she continued distracted and irresolute between the odium which must follow the deed and its necessity; at last, amid her half sentences and dark hints, they perceived that their mistress wished Mary to be put to death, but had conceived a hope they would spare her the cruelty of commanding it, and find some secret way of despatching her; she even seemed to think, that if their oath to "the association" for her protection did not lead to this, they had pro-

[1] Spottiswood, p. 334.

[2] Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 533. Ellis's Letters, 2d Series, vol. iii. pp. 106, 109.

mised much, but actually done nothing. From such an interpretation of their engagement however they all shrunk. The idea of private assassination was abhorrent, no doubt, to their feelings; but they suspected, also, that Elizabeth's only object was to shift the responsibility of Mary's death from her shoulders to theirs; and that nothing was more likely than that, the moment they had fulfilled her wishes, she should turn round, and accuse them of acting without orders. Meanwhile, she became hourly more unquiet, forsook her wonted amusements, courted solitude, and often was heard muttering to herself a Latin sentence taken from some of those books of Emblemata, or Aphorisms, which were the fashion of the day: *Aut fer aut feri; ne feriare, feri.*[1] This continued till the 1st of February, when the Queen sent for Mr Davison the secretary at ten in the morning. On arriving at the Palace, he found that the Lord Admiral Howard had been conversing with Elizabeth on the old point, the Scottish Queen's execution; and had received orders to send Secretary Davison to her with the warrant, which had already been drawn up by Burghley the Lord Treasurer,[2] and lay in his possession unsigned. Davison hasted to his chamber, and coming instantly back with it, and some other papers in his hand, was called in by Elizabeth, who, after some talk on indifferent topics, asked him what papers he had with him. He replied,

[1] Either strike or be stricken; strike lest thou be stricken. Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 534.

[2] Caligula, C. ix. fol. 470. For a minute and interesting account of the whole proceedings of Davison, see Sir Harris Nicolas' Life of Davison, pp. 79, 105.

divers warrants for her signature. She then inquired whether he had seen the Lord Admiral, and had brought the warrant for the Scottish Queen's execution. He declared he had, and delivered it into the Queen's hand; upon which she read it over, called for pen and ink, deliberately signed it, and then looking up asked him whether he was not heartily sorry she had done so. To this bantering question he replied gravely, that he preferred the death of the guilty before that of the innocent, and could not be sorry that her Majesty took the only course to protect her person from imminent danger. Elizabeth then commanded him to take the warrant to the Chancellor and have it sealed, with her orders that it should be used as secretly as possible; and by the way, said she, relapsing again into a jocular tone, "you may call on Walsingham and show it him: I fear the shock will kill him outright." She added that a public execution must be avoided. It should be done, she said, not in the open green or court of the castle, but in the hall. In conclusion, she forbade him absolutely to trouble her any farther or let her hear any more till it was done; she, for her part, having performed all that in law or reason could be required.[1]

The secretary now gathered up his papers, and was taking his leave, when Elizabeth stayed him for a short space; and complained of Paulet and others, who might have eased her of this burden. Even now, said she, it might be so done, that the blame might be removed from myself, would you and Walsingham

[1] Davison's Defence, drawn up by himself, in Caligula, C. ix. fol. 470, printed by Nicolas. Life of Davison, Appendix A.

write jointly, and sound Sir Amias and Sir Drew Drury upon it. To this Davison consented, promising to let Sir Amias know what she expected at his hands; and the Queen, having again repeated in an earnest tone, that the matter must be closely handled, dismissed him.[1]

All this took place on the morning of the 1st of February. In the afternoon of that day, Davison visited Walsingham, showed him the warrant with Elizabeth's signature, consulted with him on the horrid communication to be made to Paulet and Drury; and repairing to the Chancellor, had the Great Seal affixed to the warrant. The fatal paper was then left in the hands of that dignitary; and Walsingham and Davison the same evening wrote and despatched a letter to Fotheringay, recommending to her keepers, the secret assassination of their royal charge, at the Queen their mistress' special request. This letter, taken from an original found amongst Paulet's own papers,[2] was in these calm and measured terms:—

To Sir Amias Paulet.

"After our hearty commendations. We find by speech lately uttered by her Majesty, that she doth note in you both a lack of that care and zeal for her service, that she looketh for at your hands; in that you have not in all this time, of yourselves, (without other provocation,) found out some way to shorten the life of that Queen; considering the great peril she is subject unto hourly, so long as the said Queen shall live. Wherein, besides a lack of love towards her,

[1] Nicolas' Life of Davison, p. 84.

[2] Id., p. 85. Hearne's Robert of Gloucester, vol. ii. p. 676.

she noteth greatly, that you have not that care of your own particular safeties, or rather of the preservation of Religion, and the public good and prosperity of your country that reason and policy commandeth; especially, having so good a warrant and ground for the satisfaction of your consciences towards God, and the discharge of your credit and reputation towards the world, as the oath of "Association;" which you both have so solemnly taken and vowed; and especially the matter wherewith she standeth charged being so clearly and manifestly proved against her: and therefore she taketh it most unkindly that men, professing that love towards her that you do, should in any kind of sort, for lack of the discharge of your duties, cast the burden upon her; knowing, as you do, her indisposition to shed blood, especially of one of that sex and quality, and so near to her in blood as the said Queen is.

"These respects we find do greatly trouble her Majesty, who, we assure you, has sundry times protested, that if the regard of the danger of her good subjects and faithful servants did not more move her than her own peril, she would never be drawn to assent to the shedding her blood. We thought it very meet to acquaint you [with] these speeches lately passed from her Majesty, referring the same to your good judgments. And so we commit you to the protection of the Almighty. Your most assured friends,

"Francis Walsingham.
"William Davison.

"London, February 1st, 1586."[1]

[1] Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle, by Hearne, vol. ii. p. 674.

With the letter, Davison sent an earnest injunction that it should be committed to the flames; promising for his part to burn, or as he styled it, "make a heretic" of the answer. Cruel and morose, however, as Paulet had undoubtedly been to Mary, he was not the common murderer which Elizabeth took him to be, and refused, peremptorily, to have any hand in her horrid purpose. He received the letter on the 2d of February, at five in the afternoon, and at six the same evening, having communicated it to Drury, returned this answer to Walsingham.

"Your letters of yesterday, coming to my hands this present day at five in the afternoon, I would not fail, according to your directions, to return my answer with all possible speed; which [I] shall deliver unto you with great grief and bitterness of mind, in that I am so unhappy to have liven to see this unhappy day, in the which I am required, by direction from my most gracious Sovereign, to do an act which God and the law forbiddeth. My good livings and life are at her Majesty's disposition, and I am ready to lose them this next morrow, if it shall so please her: acknowledging that I hold them as of her mere and gracious favour. I do not desire them to enjoy them but with her Highness' good liking; but God forbid that I should make so foul a shipwrack of my conscience, or leave so great a blot to my poor posterity, to shed blood without law and warrant. Trusting that her Majesty, of her accustomed clemency, will take this my dutiful answer in good part."[1] * * *

[1] Hearne's Robert of Gloucester, vol. ii. p. 675.

This refusal, as we have seen, was written on the 2d February, in the evening, at Fotheringay; and, next morning, (the 3d, Friday,) Davison received an early and hasty summons from Elizabeth, who called him into her chamber, and inquired if he had been with the warrant to the Chancellor's. He said he had; and she asked sharply why he had made such haste. "I obeyed your Majesty's commands," was his reply; "and deemed it no matter to be dallied with."—"True," said she, "yet methinks the best and safest way would be to have it otherwise handled." He answered to this, that, if it was to be done at all, the honourable way was the safest;[1] and the Queen dismissed him. But by this time the warrant, with the royal signature, was in the hands of the Council; and on that day they addressed a letter, enclosing it, to the Earl of Shrewsbury. This letter was signed by Burghley the Lord Treasurer, Leicester, Hunsdon, Knollys, Walsingham, Derby, Howard, Cobham, Sir Christopher Hatton, and Davison himself.[2] Yet some fears as to the responsibility of sending it away without the Queen's knowledge, made them still hesitate to despatch it. In this interval, Paulet's answer arrived; and as Walsingham, to whom he had addressed it, was sick, (or, as some said, pretended illness,) the task of communicating it to Elizabeth fell on Davison. She read it with symptoms of great impatience; and, breaking out into passionate expressions, declared that she hated those dainty, nice, precise fellows, who

[1] Davison's Apology, in Nicolas' Life, Appendix A.
[2] Ellis's Letters, 2d series, vol. iii. pp. 111, 112.

promised much, but performed nothing: casting all the burden on her. But, she added, she would have it done without him, by Wingfield. Who this new assassin was, to whom the Queen alluded, does not appear.[1]

The Privy-council, meanwhile, had determined to take the responsibility of sending off the warrant for the execution upon themselves; and, for this purpose, intrusted it to Beal the clerk of the Council; who, on the evening of Saturday the 4th of February, arrived with it at the seat of the Earl of Kent; and, next day, being Sunday, proceeded to Fotheringay and communicated it to Sir Amias Paulet and Sir Drew Drury.[2] Intelligence was then sent to the Earl of Shrewsbury, Grand Marshal of England, who lived at no great distance from Fotheringay; and, on Tuesday morning, the 7th February, this nobleman and the Earl of Kent came to the castle with several persons who were to give directions or to be employed in the approaching tragedy. For some days before this, Mary's servants had suspected the worst; but the preparations which now took place, and the arrival of so many strangers, threw them into despair. On Tuesday after dinner, at two o'clock, the two Earls demanded an audience of the Queen of Scots, who sent word that she was indisposed and in bed; but if the matter were of consequence, she would rise and receive them. On their reply that it could brook no delay, they were admitted after a short interval; and Kent and Shrewsbury coming into the apartment,

[1] Davison's Defence; Nicolas' Life of Davison, p. 103; and Id. Appendix A.

[2] La Mort de la Royne D'Escosse, in Jebb, vol. ii. p. 512.

with Paulet, Drury, and Beal, found her seated at the bottom of her bed, her usual place, with her small work-table before her.[1] Near her stood her physician, Burgoin, and her women. When the Earls uncovered, she received them with her usual tranquil grace; and Shrewsbury, in few words, informed her that his royal mistress, Elizabeth, being overcome by the importunity of her subjects, had given orders for her execution; for which she would now be pleased to hear the warrant. Beal then read the commission; to which she listened unmoved and without interrupting him. On its conclusion she bowed her head, and, making the sign of the cross, thanked her gracious God that this welcome news had, at last, come; declaring how happy she should be to leave a world where she was of no use, and had suffered such continued affliction. She assured the lords that she regarded it as a signal happiness, that God had sent her death at this moment, after so many evils and sorrows endured for his Holy Catholic Church: "That Church," she continued, with great fervour of expression, "for which I have been ready, as I have often testified, to lay down my life, and to shed my blood drop by drop. Alas," she continued, "I did not think myself worthy of so happy a death as this; but I acknowledge it as a sign of the love of God, and humbly receive it as an earnest of my reception into the number of his servants. Long have I doubted and speculated for these eighteen or nineteen years, from day to day, upon all that was about to happen to me. Often have I

[1] La Mort de la Royne D'Escosse. Jebb, vol. ii. p. 612.

thought on the manner in which the English have acted to imprisoned princes; and, after my frequent escapes from such snares as have been laid for me, I have scarce ventured to hope for such a blessed end as this." She then spoke of her high rank, which had so little defended her from cruelty and injustice: born a Queen, the daughter of a King, the near relative of the Queen of England, the granddaughter of Henry the Seventh, once Queen of France, and still Queen-dowager of that kingdom; and yet, what had all this availed her? She had loved England; she had desired its prosperity, as the next heir to that Crown; and, as far as was permitted to a good Catholic, had laboured for its welfare. She had earnestly longed for the love and friendship of her good sister the Queen; had often informed her of coming dangers; had cherished, as the dearest wish of her heart, that for once she should meet her in person, and speak with her in confidence; being well assured that, had this ever happened, there would have been an end of all jealousies and dissensions. But all had been refused her; her enemies, who still lived and acted for their own interests, had kept them asunder. She had been treated with ignominy and injustice; imprisoned contrary to all faith and treaties; kept a captive for nineteen years; "and, at last," said she, laying her hand upon the New Testament which was on her table, "condemned by a tribunal which had no power over me, for a crime of which I here solemnly declare I am innocent.[1] I have neither

[1] La Mort de la Royne D'Escosse, p. 618.

invented, nor consented to, nor pursued any conspiracy for the death of the Queen of England." The Earl of Kent here hastily interrupted her, declaring that the translation of the Scriptures on which she had sworn was false, and the Roman Catholic version, which invalidated her oath. "It is the translation in which I believe," answered Mary, "as the version of our Holy Church. Does your lordship think my oath would be better if I swore on your translation, which I disbelieve?"

She then entreated to be allowed the services of her priest and almoner, who was in the castle, but had not been permitted to see her since her removal from Chartley. He would assist her, she said, in her preparations for death, and administer that spiritual consolation, which it would be sinful to receive from any one of a different faith. To the disgrace of the noblemen, the request was refused: nor was this to be attributed to any cruelty in Elizabeth, who had given no instructions upon the subject; but to the intolerant bigotry of the Earl of Kent, who, in a long theological discourse, attempted to convert her to his own opinions; offering her, in the place of her confessor, the services of the Protestant Dean of Peterborough, Dr Fletcher, whom they had brought with them. Mary expressed her astonishment at this last unexpected stroke of cruelty; but bore it meekly as she had done all the rest, although she peremptorily declined all assistance from the Dean. She then inquired what time she should die; and the Earls having answered "To-morrow at eight in the morning," made

their obeisance, and left the room. On their departure she called her women, and bade them hasten supper, that she might have time to arrange her affairs. Nothing could be more natural, or rather playful, than her manner at this moment. "Come, come," said she, "Jane Kennedy, cease weeping, and be busy. Did I not warn you, my children, that it would come to this? and now, blessed be God! it has come, and fear and sorrow are at an end. Weep not then, nor lament, but rejoice rather that you see your poor mistress so near the end of all her troubles. Dry your eyes, then, and let us pray together."

Her men-servants, who were in tears, then left the room, and Mary passed some time in devotion with her ladies. After which she occupied herself in counting the money which still remained in her Cabinet; dividing it into separate sums, which she intended for her servants; and then putting each sum into a little purse with a slip of paper, on which she wrote, with her own hand, the name of the person for whom it was destined. Supper was next brought in, of which she partook sparingly, as was usual with her; conversing from time to time with Burgoin her physician, who served her; and sometimes falling into a reverie, during which it was remarked that a sweet smile, as if she had heard some good news, would pass over her features, lighting them up with an expression of animated joy, which, much changed as she was by sorrow and ill health, recalled to her poor servants her days of beauty. It was with one of these looks that, turning to her physician, she said, "Did you remark,

Burgoin, what that Earl of Kent said in his talk with me: that my life would have been the death, as my death would be the life of their religion? Oh, how glad am I at that speech! Here comes the truth at last, and I pray you remark it. They told me I was to die, because I had plotted against the Queen; but then arrives this Kent, whom they sent hither to convert me, and what says he? I am to die for my religion."[1]

After supper, she called for her ladies, and asking for a cup of wine, drank to them all, begging them to pledge her; which they did on their knees, mingling their tears in the cup, and asking her forgiveness if they had ever offended her. This she readily gave them, bidding them farewell with much tenderness, entreating in her turn their pardon, and solemnly enjoining them to continue firm in their religion, and forget all their little jealousies, living in peace and love with each other. It would be easier to do so now, she added, since Nau, who had been so busy in creating dissensions, was no longer with them. This was the only subject on which she felt and expressed herself with something like keenness; repeating more than once, that he was the cause of her death, but adding that she forgave him. She next examined her wardrobe, and selected various dresses as presents to her servants, delivering them at the moment, with some kind expression to each. She then wrote to her almoner, lamenting that the cruelty of her enemies had refused her the consolation of his presence with

[1] Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 534. Mort de la Royne D'Escosse. Jebb, vol. ii. p. 625.

her in her last moments, imploring him to watch and pray with her that night, and to send her his absolution.[1] After this she made her will; and lastly, wrote to the king of France. By this time it was two in the morning, and finding herself fatigued, she lay down, having first washed her feet, whilst her women watched and read at her bedside. They observed that, though quite still and tranquil, she was not asleep, her lips moving, as if engaged in secret prayer. It was her custom to have her women read to her at night a portion of the "Lives of the Saints," a book she loved much; and this last night she would not omit it, but made Jane Kennedy choose a portion, for their usual devotions. She selected the life entitled, "The Good Thief," which treats of that beautiful and affecting example of dying faith and divine compassion. "Alas!" said Mary, "he was indeed a very great sinner, but not so great as I am. May my Saviour, in memory of His Passion, have mercy on me, as he had on him, at the hour of death."[2] At this moment she recollected that she would require a handkerchief to bind her eyes at her execution; and bidding them bring her several, she selected one of the finest, which was embroidered with gold, laying it carefully aside. Early in the morning she rose, observing that now she had but two hours to live; and having finished her toilet she came into her oratory, and kneeling with her women before the altar,

[1] The letters are preserved, and will be found printed in Jebb, vol. ii. pp. 627, 630.

[2] Mort de la Royne D'Escosse, Jebb, vol. ii. p. 631.

where they usually said mass, continued long in prayer. Her physician then, afraid of her being exhausted, begged her to take a little bread and wine; which she did cheerfully, thanking him, at the same time, for giving her her last meal.

A knock was now heard at the door, and a messenger came to say that the Lords waited for her. She begged to be allowed a short time to conclude her devotions. Soon after, a second summons arriving, the door was opened, and the sheriff alone, with his white wand, walked into the room, proceeded to the altar, where the Queen still knelt, and informed her that all was ready. She then rose, saying simply, "Let us go;" and Burgoin her physician, who assisted her to rise from her knees, asking her at this moment whether she would not wish to take with her the little cross and ivory crucifix which lay on the altar, she said: "Oh yes, yes; it was my intention to have done so: many, many thanks for putting me in mind!" She then received it, kissed it, and desired Annibal, one of her suite, to carry it before her. The sheriff, walking first, now conducted her to the door of the apartment; on reaching which, her servants, who had followed her thus far, were informed that they must now turn back, as a command had been given that they should not accompany their mistress to the scaffold. This stern and unnecessary order was received by them with loud remonstrances and tears; but Mary only observed, that it was hard not to suffer her poor servants to be present at her death. She then took the crucifix in her hand, and bade them affectionately

adieu; whilst they clung in tears to her robe, kissed her hand, and were with difficulty torn from her, and locked up in the apartment. The Queen after this proceeded alone down the great staircase, at the foot of which she was received by the Earls of Shrewsbury and Kent, who were struck with the perfect tranquillity and unaffected grace with which she met them. She was dressed in black satin, matronly, but richly; and with more studied care than she was commonly accustomed to bestow. She wore a long veil of white crape, and her usual high Italian ruff; an Agnus Dei was suspended by a pomander chain round her neck, and her beads of gold hung at her girdle. At the bottom of the staircase she found Sir Andrew Melvil, her old affectionate servant, and Master of her Household, waiting to take his last farewell. On seeing her he flung himself on his knees at her feet, and bitterly lamented it should have fallen on him to carry to Scotland the heart-rending news of his dear mistress' death. "Weep not, my good Melvil," said she, "but rather rejoice that an end has at last come to the sorrows of Mary Stuart. And carry this news with thee, that I die firm in my religion, true to Scotland, true to France. May God, who can alone judge the thoughts and actions of men, forgive those who have thirsted for my blood! He knows my heart; He knows my desire hath ever been, that Scotland and England should be united. Remember me to my son," she added. "Tell him I have done nothing that may prejudice his kingdom of Scotland. And now, good Melvil, my most faithful servant, once

more I bid thee farewell." She then earnestly entreated that her women might still be permitted to be with her at her death; but the Earl of Kent peremptorily refused, alleging that they would only disturb everything by their lamentations, and be guilty of something scandalous and superstitious; probably dipping their handkerchiefs in her blood. "Alas, poor souls!" said Mary, "I will give my word and promise they will do none of these things. It would do them good to bid me farewell; and I hope your mistress, who is a maiden Queen, hath not given you so strait a commission. She might grant me more than this, were I a far meaner person. And yet, my Lords, you know I am cousin to your Queen, descended from the blood of Henry the Seventh, a married Queen of France, and an anointed Queen of Scotland. Surely, surely they will not deny me this last little request: my poor girls wish only to see me die."[1] As she said this, a few tears were observed to fall, for the first time; and after some consultation, she was permitted to have two of her ladies and four of her gentlemen beside her. She then immediately chose Burgoin her physician, her almoner, surgeon, and apothecary, with Jane Kennedy and Elizabeth Curle. Followed by them, and by Melvil bearing her train, she entered the great hall, and walked to the scaffold, which had been erected at its upper end. It was a raised platform, about two feet in height, and twelve broad, surrounded by a rail, and covered with black. Upon it were placed a low chair and cushion, two other seats,

[1] La Mort de la Royne D'Escosse, Jebb, vol. ii. pp. 635, 636.

and the block. The Queen regarded it without the least change of countenance, cheerfully mounted the steps, and sat down with the same easy grace and dignity with which she would have occupied her throne. On her right were seated the Earls of Kent and Shrewsbury, on her left stood the Sheriffs, and before her the two executioners. The Earl of Kent, the Dean of Peterborough, Sir Amias Paulet, Sir Drew Drury, Beal the Clerk of the Privy-council, and others stood beside the scaffold; and these, with the guards, officers, attendants, and some of the neighbouring gentry, who had been permitted to be present, made up an assembly of about two hundred in all. Beal then read the warrant for her death, which she heard with apparent attention; but those near her could see, by the sweet and absent expression of her countenance, that her thoughts were far off.

When it was finished, she crossed herself, and addressed a few words to the persons round the scaffold. She spoke of her rights as a Sovereign Princess, which had been invaded and trampled on, and of her long sorrows and imprisonment; but expressed the deepest thankfulness to God, that, being now about to die for her religion, she was permitted, before this company, to testify that she died a Catholic, and innocent of having invented any plot, or consented to any practices against the Queen's life. "I will here," said she, "in my last moments, accuse no one; but when I am gone, much will be discovered that is now hid, and the objects of those who have procured my death be more clearly disclosed to the world."

Fletcher the Dean of Peterborough now came up upon the scaffold, and, with the Earl of Kent and Shrewsbury, made an ineffectual attempt to engage Mary in their devotions; but she repelled all their offers, at first mildly, and afterwards, when they insisted on her joining with them in prayer, in more peremptory terms. It was at this moment that Kent, in the excess of his Puritanism, observing her intensely regarding the crucifix, bade her renounce such antiquated superstitions: "Madam," said he, "that image of Christ serves to little purpose, if you have him not engraved upon your heart."—"Ah," said Mary, "there is nothing more becoming a dying Christian than to carry in his hands this remembrance of his redemption. How impossible is it to have such an object in our hands and keep the heart unmoved!"[1]

The Dean of Peterborough then prayed in English, being joined by the noblemen and gentlemen who were present; whilst Mary, kneeling apart, repeated portions of the Penitential Psalms in Latin,[2] and afterwards continued her prayers aloud in English. By this time, the Dean having concluded, there was a deep silence, so that every word was heard. Amid this stillness she recommended to God his afflicted

[1] Martyre de Marie Stuart, Royne D'Escosse. Jebb, vol. ii. pp. 47, 200, 307; and same volume, Mort de la Royne D'Escosse, 637.

[2] The psalms, as numbered in the reformed version, were xxxi. li. and xci. In the vulgate, Miserere mei Deus, In te, Domine, speravi, Qui habitat in adjutorio. Mort de la Royne D'Escosse, in Jebb, vol. ii. p. 638. Lingard, vol. viii. p. 248.

Church, her son the King of Scotland, and Queen Elizabeth. She declared that her whole hope rested on her Saviour; and, although she confessed that she was a great sinner, she humbly trusted that the blood of that immaculate Lamb, which had been shed for all sinners, would wash all her guilt away. She then invoked the blessed Virgin and all the saints, imploring them to grant her their prayers with God; and finally declared that she forgave all her enemies. It was impossible for any one to behold her at this moment without being deeply affected; on her knees, her hands clasped together and raised to Heaven, an expression of adoration and divine serenity lighting up her features, and upon her lips the words of forgiveness to her persecutors. As she finished her devotions she kissed the crucifix, and, making the sign of the cross, exclaimed in a clear, sweet voice, "As thine arms, O my God, were spread out upon the cross, so receive me within the arms of thy mercy: extend thy pity, and forgive my sins!"

She then cheerfully suffered herself to be undressed by her two women, Jane Kennedy and Elizabeth Curle, and gently admonished them not to distress her by their tears and lamentations; putting her finger on her lips, and bidding them remember that she had promised for them. On seeing the executioner come up to offer his assistance, she smiled, and playfully said she had neither been used to such grooms of the chamber, nor to undress before so many people. When all was ready she kissed her two women, and, giving them her last blessing, desired them to leave

her, one of them having first bound her eyes with the handkerchief which she had chosen for the purpose. She then sat down, and, clasping her hands together, held her neck firm and erect, expecting that she was to be beheaded in the French fashion, with a sword, and in a sitting attitude. Those who were present, and knew nothing of this misconception, wondered at this; and in the pause, Mary, still waiting for the blow, repeated the psalm, "In thee, O Lord, have I trusted: let me never be put to confusion."[1] On being made aware of her mistake she instantly knelt down, and, groping with her hands for the block, laid her neck upon it without the slightest mark of trembling or hesitation. Her last words were, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." At this moment the tears and emotions of the spectators had reached their height, and appear, unfortunately, to have shaken the nerves and disturbed the aim of the executioner, so that his first blow was ill directed, and only wounded his victim. She lay, however, perfectly still, and the next stroke severed the head from the body. The executioner then held the head up and called aloud, "God save the Queen!" "So let all Queen Elizabeth's enemies perish!" was the prayer of the Dean of Peterborough; but the spectators were dissolved in tears, and one deep voice only answered, Amen. It came from the Earl of Kent.[2]

[1] In te, Domine, confido: non confundar in æternum.

[2] Mort de la Royne D'Escosse, p. 641. Martyre de Marie Stuart. Jebb, vol. ii. p. 308. Camden in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 535. Ellis's Letters, 2d series, vol. iii. p. 117.

An affecting incident now occurred. On removing the dead body, and the clothes and mantle which lay beside it, Mary's favourite little dog, which had followed its mistress to the scaffold unperceived, was found nestling under them. No entreaty could prevail on it to quit the spot; and it remained lying beside the corpse, and stained in the blood, till forcibly carried away by the attendants.[1]

[1] Mort de la Royne D'Escosse, Jebb, vol. ii. p. 641. Ellis's Letters, 2d series, vol. iii. p. 117.