

CHAP. II.

JAMES THE SIXTH.

1590—1593.

CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.

<i>England.</i>	<i>France.</i>	<i>Germany.</i>	<i>Spain.</i>	<i>Portugal.</i>	<i>Popes.</i>
Elizabeth.	Henry III. Henry IV.	Rudolph II.	Philip II.	Philip II.	Sixtus V. Urban VII. Gregory XIV. Innocent IX. Clement VIII.

THE period which James passed in Denmark was one of unusual and extraordinary tranquillity in Scotland. Previous to his departure, the King had exerted himself to conciliate Elizabeth, and many circumstances in his conduct had concurred to please this Princess. His cordial coöperation against the Spanish King,—the readiness with which he had furnished her with a body of auxiliaries, commanded by the Laird of Wemyss,—his spirit and success in putting down the rebellion of the Catholic earls, and his sending out of his dominions a body of Spanish soldiers and mariners, whose vessels (part of the once formidable Armada) had been wrecked and stranded on the northern shores of Scotland,¹—all this had

¹ “To the number of 660 men, of whom 400 were serviceable, and the rest sick, miserable wretches.”—They were shipped from

been exceedingly agreeable to the Queen of England; and she repaid it by preserving the most friendly relations during the absence of the King. Nor was the peace of the country, in this brief and happy interval, broken by the usual sanguinary baronial feuds; although, as the result fully showed, they were silenced, not eradicated. Huntly, Errol, Crawford, Maxwell, and the great body of the Roman Catholic party, had too recently experienced the weight of the royal vengeance to think of active hostility for some time; and the judicious division of power between the Duke of Lennox, Lord Hamilton, and the Earl of Bothwell, balanced by the authority committed to Angus and Athol, Mar and Morton, with other great barons, produced the best effects, and put all upon their honour and good conduct. The Kirk, too, was in a state of tranquillity—rejoicing in the recent detection and discomfiture of Roman Catholic intrigue, looking forward in calm exultation to the utter extermination of prelatical principles, and anticipating no distant triumph to what it believed to be the truth.

On the return of the King, therefore, all at first appeared tranquil; but it needed no deep discernment to detect the existence of many latent causes of disturbance. The great struggle between the principles of the Reformation and the ancient faith was lulled only, not concluded.¹ The minor, but

Leith, 25th July, 1589. MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Ashby to Burghley, 28th July, 1589. Also, *Ibid.*, same to Walsingham, 22d July, 1589.

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Sir R. Bowes to Burghley, 16th

sometimes not less bitter contest between Prelacy and Presbyterianism, was merely suspended for a time. Amongst the nobles, the right of private war, the ties of manrent, the abuses of baronial jurisdictions, the existence of blood-feuds, which often from trifling quarrels depopulated whole districts and counties; and in the Isles, and remoter provinces of the north, the lawless and fierce habits of the petty chieftains and pirate adventurers, who assumed the state and independence of sea kings,—all these circumstances combined to threaten the public tranquillity, and to convince the King that the sky so clear on his arrival might soon be black with its wonted tempests.

Amid these elements of political strife and nascent revolution, two men were to be seen evidently destined, from their power and political position, to take the chief lead in State affairs. Both were well aware of the easy and indolent temper of the King; both had resolved to engross to themselves the supreme power in the Government: and for some years, the history of the country is little else than the conflicts of their intrigue and ambition. These were, Maitland of Thirlestane the Chancellor, James' favourite and prime minister, who had accompanied his royal master to Denmark; and Francis Stewart Earl of Bothwell, the King's near relative, and, perhaps, the most daring, powerful, and unprincipled of all the higher nobles. Maitland, born of an ancient family,

May, 1590. The Roman Catholic faction were called the "Confederates of the Brig of Dee."

but only the second son of a simple knight, (the blind poet Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington,) belonged to the body of the lesser barons; but he was connected with some of the greatest houses in the land. He had risen by his commanding talents to the highest legal office in the kingdom; and he was strong in the friendship of his Prince, and the respect of the Kirk and the great body of the middle classes—the rich burghers, merchants, and artisans. During his absence in Denmark with his royal master, they had held many grave consultations on the broken, disjointed, and miserable state of his kingdom. The extreme poverty of the Crown, the insolence and intolerable oppressions of the higher barons, who, strong in their hereditary power, dictated to the monarch on all the affairs of his Government, thrust themselves uncalled-for into his Councils, attended or absented themselves from Court at their pleasure, and derided alike the command of their Prince or the decisions of the laws;—all this was pointed out by the Chancellor to the King, and the absolute necessity of some speedy and efficient reformation insisted on. It was time, he said, that the monarch, who was now in the prime of his years and vigour, allied by marriage to a powerful Prince, the heir of a mighty kingdom, and able, from his position, to take a leading part in European politics, should no longer be bearded by every baron who chose to consider himself as a born councillor of the realm. It was time that those illegal coalitions of the nobles, whose object it had so often been to seize

the King's person, and compel him into an approval of all their atrocious designs, should be broken up, and for the future rendered impossible. To effect this, the Crown must strengthen itself in every possible way: it must support its judges and officers in the execution of their duty against baronial oppression and insolence; it must increase its revenues by a prudent economy and retrenchment of the superfluous offices in the royal household; it must save its escheats, its wardships, its fines, its rentals, and all the sources of its wealth, to form a fund for all emergencies, but especially for the support of a body of waged troops, who, by their constant readiness for service, and superior discipline, might overawe the nobles and their vassals. To effect this, would require some sacrifices on the part of the Prince. Amongst these, a more rigid and practical attention to business, a correction of the mischievous habit of granting every petition without inquiry, and a resolution to hold himself more distant and dignified to his nobility, were absolutely necessary; but if ready to consent to these, it would not, he said, be difficult to effect a thorough reformation; and he the Chancellor, for his part, was ready to back the King to the utmost of his power to accomplish it. To this end, he represented to James the wisdom of keeping up the present friendly relations with England, and the necessity of watching the motions of Huntly and the Roman Catholic party, who, though apparently subdued and silent, were still powerful in the kingdom, busy in their intrigues with Spain, and ready to seize any oppor-

tunity for a new effort.¹ Nor was there any reason why this large and powerful body of men should despair of success, but rather the contrary. Ample proof of this may be found in a remarkable paper in the hand of Lord Burghley, written shortly before James' arrival from Denmark, and drawn up apparently for his own guidance, which brings forward, in clear contrast, the comparative strength of the Catholic and Protestant parties in Scotland. From it we learn, that all the northern part of the kingdom, including the counties of Inverness, Caithness, Sutherland, and Aberdeen, with Moray, and the Sheriffdoms of Buchan, of Angus, of Wigtown, and of Nithsdale, were either wholly, or for the greater part, in the interest of the Roman Catholic party, commanded mostly by noblemen who secretly adhered to that faith, and directed in their movements by Jesuits and Priests, who were concealed in various parts of the country, especially in Angus. On the other hand, the counties of Perth and Stirling, the populous shire of Fife, and the counties of Lanark, Dumbarton, and Renfrew, including the rich district of Clydesdale, were, with few exceptions, Protestant; whilst the counties of Ayr and Linlithgow were dubious, and could not be truly ranged either on one side or the other.² Are we to be surprised that, in a country thus divided, and with a Prince so little able to adopt a

¹ MS. St. P. Off., Sir R. Bowes to Lord Burghley, 16th May, 1590.

² MS. St. P. Off. Names of the Towns and Noblemen in Scotland, and how they are Affected. 1589.

firm and determined line of policy as James then was, the struggle between the two parties should long be kept up with increasing obstinacy and asperity? But it is necessary to leave these general remarks and resume our narrative.

In the end of May, the Danish commissioners and nobles, who had accompanied their young Princess to Scotland, took leave of the Scottish monarch, and returned to Denmark. It had been arranged between James and his chief minister Maitland, that no attempt at reformation should be made till these strangers had left the country; but scarcely had they embarked, when the King exhibited an unusual courage and activity, by making an effort to seize, with his own hand, the Laird of Niddry, a baron who had been guilty of a foul murder, and was protected by Bothwell. This energy, although unsuccessful at the moment, (for the culprit, receiving warning, escaped,) had a good effect in convincing the country that he was in earnest; and about the same time the strictest regulations as to audience were enforced at the palace. Of this an instance occurred soon after, which made some noise. Lord Hamilton, the first nobleman in the country, and heir-apparent to the throne, sought, as usual, to enter the King's presence-chamber, but was stopped at the door by Sandilands, one of the royal suite, who told him the King was quiet, and would see no one. "I was sent for," said Hamilton; "I am ready to serve my Prince, and thought to have access freely as I was wont; but you may tell the King, that this new order will

offend more than me." He then left the palace in a high fume, and would have ridden home had he not been better advised. James afterwards good humouredly appeased him; observing, that it ill became the heir-apparent to be angry with the *old laird*, meaning himself. Bowes, however, who was at Court, and told the anecdote to Burghley, observed, that such new restrictions gave deep offence in Scotland, and caused much murmuring with a proud nobility long accustomed to have the freest access to their sovereign.¹

Such discontent, however small in its beginning, soon spread widely; and unknown evils and reforms being generally magnified in anticipation, the King's intentions created an alarm, which showed itself in a coalition between those who hitherto had been in constant and bitter collision—the Catholic faction, known by the name of the Confederates of the Brig of Dee, and the Protestant associates of the Enterprise at Stirling. The Earls of Huntly, Errol, Bothwell, and Montrose, began to league together; and James had at first resolved to attempt a stroke of State policy, by committing them to ward, bringing them to trial for their former offences, and at once destroying so dangerous a combination. But the attempt was deemed too hazardous; and it was judged more prudent to temporize, and keep up the two factions, balancing the one against the other.²

A Convention of the nobles was appointed to be held early in June. "The King, (said Bowes to

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., 23d May, 1590, Bowes to Burghley.

² Ibid.

Burghley, alluding to his projected improvements,) according to his public promise in Edinburgh, and solemn protestations to some noblemen, ministers, and well-affected, is resolved to reform his house, Council, and Sessions, and to banish all Jesuits and Papists. He purposeth, further, to resume into his hands sundry of his own possessions now in the holding of others. To advance his revenues with some portions of ecclesiastical livings, and to draw to due obedience all persons attainted at horn, excommunicated, or otherwise disobedient. In the execution of which things," continued the Ambassador, "he will find no little difficulty: for I have heard that many intend to seek to defeat and stay the King's course herein; and that sundry of the Sessions will stand in law to hold their places, notwithstanding any charge to be given to avoid them."¹

James, for some time, was active and serious in these reforms. His household was greatly reduced in its expenditure. After a general dismissal of officers, which occasioned many murmurs, the gentlemen personally attendant on royalty were cut down from thirty to four, with two pages; and the monarch drew up, in his own hand, some principal matters relative to domestic and foreign policy, upon which he required the immediate advice of his Privy Council. They must consider, he said, the state of the strengths and munitions, and the necessary provision to be made for the defence of the kingdom, in case of foreign invasion; the treaties required to be entered

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., 31st May, 1590, Bowes to Burghley.

into, for the preservation of foreign amity; the best measures to be adopted for the procuring secret foreign intelligence; the "grievs of the nobility and people, as well against the King as the government of his councillors; the necessity of a rigid investigation into the true state of the realm;" the "ettling"¹ and disposition of the nobility, and other persons of power and credit: they must discover who were well affected to the true religion, who carried away by the persuasion of Jesuits and Papists; what was the best medicine to cure diversities in religion, and heal the bloody wounds occasioned by feuds and family quarrels; what were the true causes of the decay of the rents of the Crown; and lastly, they must point out the best method to enforce obedience to the acts of the last Parliament, and declare what properly belonged to every office of the estate. Such were the grave and weighty matters which the King now brought before his Council.²

But these were not all: the monarch had resolved to exert his utmost efforts to heal the wounds, not of Scotland only, but of Europe, by establishing a peace between England and Spain. To effect this, he despatched Colonel Stewart and Sir John Skene on a mission to the Princes of Germany, to persuade the Palsgrave, the Duke of Saxony, the Marquess of Brandenburg, and the rest of these potentates, of the absolute

¹ The "ettling," the "aim." To ettle, to aim. The aim and leading objects of the nobles.

² MS. St. P. Off. Heads for our Privy Council, May, 1590. Set down by the King of Scots.

necessity of interfering between these two mighty powers; and to recommend them to send ambassadors to England, France, and Spain, who might remonstrate on the miserable consequences of the continuance of the war. If Spain were obstinate, a general league was to be concluded amongst the Princes for the preservation of "the common cause of true religion, and their ports were to be shut against Philip till he was reduced to reason."¹

These great designs the King communicated to Elizabeth by Sir John Carmichael, whom he sent to the English Court with a copy of the Instructions furnished to his German ambassadors; and, as his exchequer was at this time utterly impoverished, he requested that Princess to lend him sufficient to defray the expenses of their voyage; declaring his readiness, in return, to place upon his Privy Council any nobleman whom she recommended, and to exert his utmost strength in crushing the Roman Catholic faction, who were renewing their intrigues with Spain.² The "Band" or Covenant, which united Huntly, Errol, and their associates, in their recent treasonable enterprise, had been traced to the hands of the Laird of Auchendown, and Maitland the Chancellor insisted on its being produced; assuring Elizabeth, with whom he was then in great favour, that the association should be broken up or Huntly wrecked for ever.³

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Bowes to Burghley, 4th June, 1590.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 9th June, 1590.

³ MS. St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 4th June, 1590. It was about this time that Bowes placed in James' hands a letter

To confirm the monarch in such good purposes, the Queen of England sent him the Garter by the Earl of Worcester, who arrived in Edinburgh during the sitting of that Convention from which such important reformations were to have proceeded. James accepted the Queen's presents and letter in excellent part; congratulated himself on having so worthy a knight-companion as the French King, (Henry had just been chosen a knight of the order;) and held some merry talk with Worcester on the cause of the Scottish Queen's invisibility, her Majesty being then in the family way, and pretending it was only the tooth-ache.¹ But, on proceeding from these lighter subjects to speak of the intended reformations, it was evident, even to the superficial observation of a stranger like Worcester, that the course of improvements would be beset with difficulties. When reformation of justice was debated, the Lords of Session professed, indeed, the utmost readiness to amend all; and two of their

writ by her Majesty's own hand. It alluded to his great design for the reëstablishment of peace; and was more free from the involution and pedantry which mark her private letters than many of her epistles. It assured him that she was happy to find him so grateful a King, that she highly approved of his purpose, and that nothing could equal the careful thoughts for him and his realm which had occupied her since his peregrination. "And so," said she, "I leave scribbling, but never end to love you and assist you with my friendship, care, and prayer to the living God to send you all prosperous success, and his Holy Spirit for guide."¹

¹ MS. St. P. Off., Earl of Worcester to Burghley, Edinburgh, 15th June, 1590.

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Royal Letters, Scotland. Elizabeth to James.

number, Mr David Mackgill and Mr John Graham, indulged very freely and bitterly in mutual accusations of bribery and corruption; but the rest pleaded their privilege, granted by Act of Parliament, to "try themselves." With regard to the Kirk, when its leaders insisted that every parish should be provided with a minister, and every minister with a stipend, no objection was made by the nobles to the proposal, in general; but "the possessors of the Church lands declared their determination not to surrender any portion of their tacks and leases unless the remainder should be secured to them in fee-simple for ever."¹

In the end, however, some points were gained, which pleased both James and the English Queen, who now acted together with much cordiality. The choice of the King's Secret Council was left to his own will, and Elizabeth knew she would be chiefly consulted. The monarch, strengthened by the approval of the wisest sort, led by the Chancellor, held the Roman Catholic faction in awe; restrained the insolence of Bothwell; insisted on the appearance and delivery of all "at the horn," who had hitherto defied the law; took steps for the speedy and amicable settlement of all Border causes; adopted measures to amend the coin which had been much debased; and, whilst he continued his favour towards the Kirk, did not scruple to silence some of the wilder sort of the brethren who, in their public sermons, had attacked the Queen of England for her recent

¹ MS. St. P. Off., Worcester to Burghley, 15th June, 1590.

severity to the English Puritans. On this last subject, the excesses of the Puritans, Elizabeth felt keenly; and her far-sighted glance had already detected the dangers of a sect then only in their infancy, but professing principles which she deemed inconsistent with the safety of any well-governed State. Worcester had received pointed instructions in the matter;¹ and the Queen herself, when she dismissed Sir John Carmichael the Scottish Ambassador, enforced her wishes in a private letter to James, which is too characteristic to be omitted. It is as follows:—

“Greater promises, more affection, and grants of more acknowledgings of received good turns, my dear brother, none can better remember than this gentleman, by your charge, hath made me understand; whereby I think all my endeavours well recompensed, that see them so well acknowledged; and do trust that my counsels, if they so much content you, will serve for memorials to turn your actions to serve the turn of your safe government, and make the lookers-on honour your worth, and reverence such a ruler.

“And lest fair semblances, that easily may beguile, do not breed your ignorance of such persons as either pretend religion or dissemble devotion, let me warn you that there is risen, both in your realm and mine, a sect of perilous consequence, such as would have no Kings, but a presbytery; and take our place, while they enjoy our privilege, with a shade of God’s Word, which none is judged to follow right, without by

¹ MS. St. P. Off., 1590. Memorial of sundry things moved to the King of Scots by the Ambassador of England.

their censure they be so deemed. Yea, look we well unto them. When they have made in our people's hearts a doubt of our religion—and that we err, if they say so—what perilous issue this may make I rather think than mind to write. *Sapienti pauca*. I pray you stop the mouths, or make shorter the tongues of such ministers as dare presume to make *oraisons* in their pulpits for the persecuted in England for the gospel. Suppose you, my dear brother, that I can tolerate such scandāls of my sincere government? No: I hope, however you be pleased to bear with their audacity towards yourself, yet you will not suffer a strange king receive that indignity at such caterpillers' hands, that instead of fruit I am afraid will stuff your realm with venom: of this I have particularized more to this bearer, together with other answers to his charge; beseeching you to hear them, and not to give more harbour to vagabond traitors and seditious inventors, but to return them to me, or banish them your land. And thus, with my many thanks for your honourable entertainment of my ambassador, [she means here the Earl of Worcester,] I commit you to God; who ever preserve you from all evil counsels, and send you grace to follow the best!"¹ To these wishes of Elizabeth both James and his Prime Minister, the Chancellor Maitland, responded with the utmost readiness. Indeed, the Queen could scarcely resent the excesses

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Royal Letters. Copy of the time, indorsed 6th July, 1590. Copy of her Majestie's letter, written to the King of Scots, with her own hand, and sent by Sir John Carmichael.

of the Puritan clergy more violently than her brother Prince; although, from their influence over the people, he was compelled sometimes to temporize. The ministers, accordingly, were commanded to forbear prayer in their sermons for the persecuted in England;¹ and equal activity was shown against the intrigues of the Spaniards and the Catholic faction. When O'Rourke, an Irish chieftain, was detected in Glasgow, secretly beating up for recruits against the English, the King of Scots scrupled not to have him seized and delivered to Elizabeth. "I would to God," said he, writing to the queen, "your greatest enemies were in my hands; if it were the King of Spain himself, he should not be long undelivered to you: for that course have I taken me to, and will profess it till I die, that all your foes shall be common enemies to us both, in spite of the Pope, the King of Spain, and all the leaguers, my cousins not excepted, and the devil their master."²

In return for this devotion to her wishes, Elizabeth, forgetting her economy, transmitted, at various intervals, large sums to the King, complimented the young Queen with presents, and flattered her by letters; whilst the Chancellor, who had now consolidated his power, and could bid defiance to his opponents, entered into a cordial correspondence with Burghley. He reminded him of the "old familiar

¹ MS. St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 14th August, 1590.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Royal Letters. Indorsed, The King of Scots' letter to the Queen's Majesty, by Roger Ashton, 22d March, 1590-1.

acquaintance and strict amity" which had subsisted between him and his late brother, the well-known Lethington; and declared his readiness and anxiety to show himself worthy of the Lord Treasurer's friendly dealing and gentle messages sent recently by Carmichael. Speaking modestly of his own inferiority, he yet hoped that their mutual exertions would be followed by the best effects. "If," said he, "this microcosme of Britain, separate from the Continent world, naturally joined in situation and language, and, most happily, by religion, shall be, by the indissoluble amity of the two princes, sincerely conserved in union, the Antichristian confederates shall never be able to effect their bloody and godless measures." In conclusion, he promised, that whilst Burghley, by his large experience and wisdom, held the Roman Catholic party in check, to "the benefit of all sincerely professing Christ in Europe," he would himself keep a watchful eye over their proceedings in Scotland;¹ and so rigidly did he fulfil this, that, before the end of the year, watchfulness was turned into persecution, and the Catholics in vain petitioned for liberty of conscience, and pleaded the cruelty of being compelled to subscribe the Protestant Articles of religion.² Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that their intrigues with Spain and the Continent should have continued; and that, although Bowes, the Amba-

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Lord Thirlstane to the Lord High Treasurer, 13th August, 1590.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 7th Nov., 1590.

sador, informed Burghley that the state of Scotland had been brought to great quietness, it was that deceitful calm which not unfrequently precedes the tempest.¹

For a while, however, all went on smoothly; and the King found leisure to become exceedingly active and agitated upon a subject which forms a melancholy and mysterious chapter in the history of the human mind—that of witchcraft. That many unfortunate and miserable beings, driven by poverty and want, by suspicion and persecution, by the desire of vengeance, the love of power, or a daring curiosity after forbidden knowledge, had renounced their baptismal vows, and entered, as they believed, into a compact with the author of all evil, cannot be doubted. The difficulty is, to discover whether they were the victims of their own imagination, the dupes of impostors, or, which is not to be rejected as impossible or incredible, the subjects and recipients of diabolic influence and agency. During the summer of this year, the young Laird of Wardhouse had been seized with a mortal sickness which had carried him to the grave; and it was discovered that several witches had formed his image in wax, which having “roasted at a slow fire, the gentleman,” it was said, “pined away insensibly, but surely, till he died.”² This was alarming enough; but in the winter still darker deeds came to light, involving higher culprits

¹ MS. St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 22d July, 1590.

and more daring transactions. Agnes Sampson, a woman, as Spottiswood says, "not of the base or ignorant sort of witches, but matronlike, grave, and settled in her answers," accused Bothwell of consulting her as to the probable continuance of the King's life; and Richard Graham, a notorious sorcerer, averred that the Earl had sought him on the same errand. Agnes declared, when questioned by the judges, that "she had a familiar spirit, who upon her call, appeared in a visible form, and resolved her of any doubtful matters, especially concerning life and death. The mode in which she summoned him was by calling out "Holla, Master!" an invocation which he had taught her himself. She added, that he had undertaken to make away with the King, but had failed; pronouncing him, (when challenged by her for his want of success,) to be invulnerable to his incantations, and muttering, in a language which she did not understand, but which turned out to be respectable French, "*Il est homme de Dieu.*"¹ Of James' labours with this miserable woman, who was condemned and burnt, Bowes wrote to Burghley. The King, he said, by his own especial travel, had drawn Sampson, the great witch, to confess plainly her wicked estate and doings, and to discover sundry things touching his own life; how the witches sought to have had his shirt, or other linen about him, for the execution of their charms. In these doings the Lord Claud's name was implicated, and sundry other noble

¹ Spottiswood, p. 383.

personages evil spoken of. The number of the witches known, were (he added) about thirty; but many others were accused of acts filthy, lewd, and fantastical.¹ On a future occasion, the royal curiosity and acuteness were rewarded by the discovery of more particulars involving the guilt of Bothwell. They came out in an examination to which James subjected the wizard Richard Graham, who, upon some hope held out of pardon, confessed that Bothwell sought to draw him to devise some means to hasten the King's death, alleging that he was driven to this to avoid his own; since a necromancer in Italy had predicted to him that he should become great in power and temporal possession, kill two men, fall into trouble with the King for two capital crimes, be pardoned for the first and suffer for the second. The three first events, he averred, had taken place as foretold him: he had become a mighty baron, had killed Sir William Stewart, and *Davie the Devil*, meaning David Hume of Manderston; been once pardoned; and now he or the King must go. Graham agreed to assist him; and James had the satisfaction of hearing some particulars of the incantation. An image of the royal person was formed of wax, and hung up between a *tod* or fox, over which some spells had been muttered, and the head of a young calf, newly killed. It was added that all this was well known to Jely Duncan, who is described by Bowes as a kind of whipper-in to the witches, being accus-

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 7th Dec., 1590.

tomed to scour the country and collect together all the Satanic fraternity and sisterhood. But although she admitted, at first, their dealings with Bothwell, she afterwards denied all; and, as these unfortunate wretches were so severely tortured that one of them died under the rack, it is impossible to receive their evidence without the utmost suspicion.¹ Bothwell, however, amid loud asseverations of innocence, was seized and sent to prison, and an early Convention of the Estates called for his trial. But the evidence, by the King's own admission, was slender; the nobles seemed unwilling to countenance any violent proceedings against him; and the matter was so long delayed, that his fierce temper would endure confinement no longer; and breaking his prison, he buried himself amongst his friends and fastnesses in the Borders.²

This result greatly irritated the King, who consoled himself by bringing to trial one of the leading witches, named Barbara Napier, a woman well connected, and of whose conviction he entertained no doubt. To his astonishment, the jury did not conceive the evidence sufficient, and acquitted her. The verdict threw James into the greatest rage; yet it was difficult to know what was now to be done. An assize of error, as it was called, was a proceeding known and practised by the law of England, but it had never been introduced into Scotland; nor had it been heard of

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 15th April, 1591.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 5th May, 1591. Also, *Ibid.*, same to same, 22d June, 1591.

for centuries, that the King should sit in person as a judge in any criminal matter. James, however, shut his eyes to all difficulties, and determined to bring the refractory jurors to justice.¹ Accordingly, on the 7th of June, repairing from Falkland, he sat in person on the trial of the delinquents. All of them pleaded guilty, and put themselves, as it was then termed, in the King's will, so that there was little scope given to the exercise of regal acuteness. He made an oration, however, some sentences of which give a good picture of the style of his oratory; often pedantic and tedious, but not unfrequently epigrammatic and sententious. Alluding to the shocking state of the country and the prevalence of crimes, "I must advertise you," said he, "what it is that makes great crimes to be so rife in this country; namely, that all men set themselves more for friend than for justice and obedience to the laws. This corruption here *bairns suck at the pap*; and let a man commit the most filthy crimes that can be, yet his friends take his part; and first keep him from apprehension, and after, by fead or favor, by false assize, or some way or other, they find moyen of his escape. The experience hereof we have in Niddry. I will not speak how I am charged with this fault in court and choir, from prince and pulpit; yet this I say, that howsoever matters have gone against my will, I am innocent of all injustice in these behalfs. My con-

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 9th May, 1591. Ibid., same to same, 21st May.

science doth set me clear, as did the conscience of Samuel; and I call you to be judges herein. And suppose I be your King, yet I submit myself to the accusations of you, my subjects, in this behalf; and let any one say what I have done. And as I have this begun, so purpose I to go forward; not because I am James Stuard, and can command so many thousands of men, but because God hath made me a King and judge, to judge righteous judgment.

“For witchcraft, which is a thing grown very common among us, I know it to be a most abominable sin; and I have been occupied these three quarters of a year for the sifting out of them that are guilty herein. We are taught by the laws, both of God and man, that this sin is most odious; and by God’s law punishable by death. By man’s law it is called *Maleficium* or *Veneficium*, an ill deed, or a poisonable deed, and punishable likewise by death. Now, if it be death as practised against any of the people, I must needs think it to be (at least) the like if it be against the King. Not that I fear death; for I thank God I dare in a good cause abide hazard.” * *
 “As for them,” he concluded, “who think these witchcrafts to be but fantasies, I remit them to be catechised and instructed in these most evident points.”¹

James, perhaps, felt somewhat doubtful upon the subject of his personal courage, and was aware

¹ MS. St. P. Off. The inquest which first went upon Barbara Nep., called before the King in the Tolbooth, 7th June, 1591.

that his subjects shared in his apprehensions; but he was little aware how soon his courage and determination were to be put to the test, by the frightful state of the country and the frequent attacks upon the royal person. So, however, it happened. Between private feuds, the continuance of Catholic intrigues, the active and indignant counter-movements of the Kirk, and the open rebellion of Bothwell, whose power and reckless bravery made him formidable to all parties, the whole land was thrown into a deplorable state of tumult and insecurity. In the Highlands, the Earl of Huntly and the Earl of Murray, two of the greatest houses in the North, engaged in a deadly quarrel, which drew in the lairds of Grant, Calder, Macintosh, and others, and made the fairest districts a prey to indiscriminate havoc and murder.¹ At Court all was commotion and apprehension from the rivalry of the Master of Glamis, who began to be a favourite of the King, and Chancellor Thirlstane, who would brook no rival in power.² On the Borders, Bothwell welcomed every broken man and cruel murderer who chose to ride under his banner. Some time previous to the trials of the witches, this daring chief had invaded the Supreme Court, and carried off a witness from the bar, who was about to give evidence against one of his retainers, whilst the King, although in the next room, did not dare to interfere.³ After his

¹ MS. St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 7th Dec., 1590. Ibid., Lord Thirlstane to Burghley, 7th Dec., 1590.

² MS. St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 20th Nov., 1590.

³ MS. St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 25th Jan., 1590-1.

escape and triumph, his fierce temper impelled him to still greater excesses; and attacking the Palace of Holyrood at the head of his desperate followers, he had nearly surprised and made prisoners both the King and the Chancellor. Douglas of Spot, however, one of the principal leaders in this attack, lost time, by attempting to set at liberty some of his men who were imprisoned in the Palace. An alarm was given: the King took refuge in one of the turrets; the Chancellor barricaded his room, and bravely beat off the assailants; whilst the citizens of Edinburgh, headed by their Provost, rushed into the outer court of the Palace, and cutting their way through the outer ranks of the Borderers, compelled Bothwell to a precipitate flight.¹ He soon, however, became as formidable as ever; entered into a secret correspondence with England; leagued with the Duke of Lennox, who had quarrelled with Thirlstane; procured the countenance of the Kirk, by professing the most determined hostility to Huntly and the Catholic faction; and flattered himself, not without good grounds, that his next attack would be successful.

Meanwhile a tragedy occurred, which, even in that age, familiar with scenes of feudal atrocity, occasioned unusual horror. The reader may perhaps remember the utter destruction brought by the Regent Murray upon the great Earl of Huntly; his execution, and that of one of his sons, the forfeiture of his immense

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Roger Ashton to Bowes, 28th Dec., 1591. Also, *Ibid.*, Bowes to Burghley, 31st Dec., 1591.

estates, and the almost entire overthrow of his house.¹ It was now thirty years since that miserable event: the favour of the King had restored the family of Gordon to its estates and its honours, and Huntly's ambition might have been satisfied; but the deep principle of feudal vengeance demanded blood for blood; and there was not a retainer of the house of Huntly, from the belted knight that sat at his master's right hand to the serving-man behind his chair, who did not acknowledge the sacred necessity of revenge. Time, which softens or dilutes most feelings, only added intensity to this; and now when the hour of repayment was come, the debt was exacted with fearful interest. The then Earl of Murray, a Stewart, and representative of the famous Regent, was one of the bravest and handsomest men of his time; a favourite at Court, and dear to the people and the Kirk, who still looked fondly back to the days of his great ancestor. In deeds of arms and personal prowess, an old chronicle describes him as a sort of Amadis; "comely, gentle, brave, and of a great stature and strength of body."² This young nobleman had princely possessions in the North, and for some years deadly feud had raged between him and Huntly; but Lord Ochiltree, a Stewart, a firm friend of Murray's, was at this time exerting himself to bring about an agreement between the two barons; and had so far succeeded, that Murray, with a slender retinue, left

¹ See *supra*, vol. vi. p. 308-313.

² *Historic of James the Sext*, p. 246.

his northern fastnesses, and came to his mother's castle of Dunibristle, a short distance from the Queensferry. Huntly, his enemy, was then at Court in constant attendance upon the King; and Ochiltree, who had communicated with him, and informed him of Murray's wishes for a reconciliation, took horse and rode to Queensferry, intending to pass to Dunibristle and arrange an amicable meeting between the rival Earls. To his surprise, he found that a royal order had been sent, interdicting any boats from plying that day between Fife and the opposite coast. But little suspicion was occasioned: he believed it some measure connected with the hot pursuit then going on against Bothwell, and was satisfied to abandon his journey to Dunibristle. This proved the destruction of his poor friend. That very day, the 7th of February, the King hunted; and Huntly, giving out that he meant to accompany the royal cavalcade, assembled his followers to the number of forty horse. Suddenly he pretended that certain news had reached him of the retreat of Bothwell; extorted from the King permission to ride against this traitor; and passing the ferry, beset the house of Dunibristle, and summoned Murray to surrender. This was refused; and, in spite of the great disparity in numbers, the Stewarts resisted till nightfall, when Huntly, collecting the corn-stacks, or ricks, in the neighbouring fields, piled them up against the walls, commanded the house to be set on fire, and compelled its unhappy inmates to make a desperate sally that they might escape being burnt alive. In this outbreak the

Sheriff of Murray was slain; but the young Earl, aided by his great stature and strength, rushed forth all burned and blackened, with his long and beautiful tresses on fire and streaming behind him, threw himself with irresistible fury on his assailants, broke through the toils like a lion,¹ and escaped by speed of foot to the sea shore. Here, unfortunately, his hair and the silken plume of his helmet blazed through the darkness; and his fell pursuers, tracing him by the trail of light, ran him into a cave, where they cruelly murdered him. His mortal wound, it was said, was given by Gordon of Buckie, who, with the ferocity of the times, seeing Huntly drawing back, cursed him as afraid to go as far as his followers, and called upon him to stab his fallen enemy with his dagger, and become art and part of the slaughter, as he had been of the conspiracy. Huntly, thus threatened, struck the dying man in the face with his weapon, who, with a bitter smile, upbraided him "with having spoilt a better face than his own."²

The outcry against this atrocious murder was deep and universal. Ochiltree, who had been deceived by Huntly and the Chancellor, became loud in his clamours for revenge. In the North, Lord Forbes, an attached friend of Murray, carried his bloody shirt on a spear's head; and marching with the ghastly banner through his territories, incited his

¹ The simile is Ashton's, in a letter to Bowes.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Roger Ashton to Bowes, 8th Feb., 1591-2. Also, *Ibid.*, same to same, 9th Feb., 1591-2.

followers to revenge. In the capital, the Lady Doune, mother of the murdered Earl, who with her daughters had narrowly escaped death at Dunibristle, exhibited the mangled corpses of her son and his faithful follower the Sheriff of Murray in the church at Leith; and Huntly, followed everywhere by a yell of public execration, fled first to Ravensheugh, a castle of Sinclair Baron of Roslin, and afterwards to his own country in the North.

Amid all this tumult and ardent demands for instant justice and vengeance, the King exhibited such indifference, that strange suspicions arose, not only against James, but his great adviser the Chancellor, between whom and Huntly there had arisen, for some time before Murray's murder, a suspicious familiarity. Huntly pleaded a royal commission for everything he had done. It was known that the King had been deeply incensed against Murray by a report that he had abetted Bothwell in his late attempt, and had even been seen with him in the palace on the night of the attack. It was remembered that Ochiltree had been prevented, as was alleged, by a royal order sent through the Chancellor, from passing the ferry on the day of the murder; and the gossip of the Court went even so far as to say, that the young Queen's favour for Murray had roused the royal jealousy. All this was confirmed, as may well be believed, when Huntly, being summoned to deliver himself up and take his trial, obeyed with alacrity; entered into ward in Blackness castle; and after a

trifling investigation was dismissed and pardoned.¹ Against this gross partiality, Ochiltree, Lennox, Athol, and the whole friends of the murdered lord, loudly remonstrated. Bothwell, a Stewart, and cousin-german to Murray, availing himself of this favourable contingency, united his whole strength with theirs. The Kirk, indignant at the King's favour for Huntly, the head of the Roman Catholics, threw all its weight into the same scale; and James soon found that Murray's death, slightly as he regarded it at first, drew after it fatal and alarming effects. In the North, the Earl of Athol, with the Lairds of Macintosh, Grant, Lovat, and their followers, carried fire and sword into Huntly's country, and kindled throughout that region innumerable lesser feuds and quarrels, which, like the moor-burning of their own savage districts, spread from glen to glen, and mountain to mountain, till half the land seemed in a blaze.² In the South, the Chancellor Maitland was no longer able to guide the Government with his usual steady and determined hand. Hitherto he had defied all Court storms, and made a bold head against his enemies; but his implication as a conspirator with Huntly in the murder of Murray, at first only suspected, but now, from some recent discoveries, absolutely certain, raised against him a universal detesta-

¹ Historie of James the Sext, p. 248.

² Moyse's Memoirs, p. 98. MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 1st Jan. 1592-3. Also, Ibid., Bowes to Burghley, 21st Nov., 1592.

tion; the hatred of the people added new strength to his opponents, and he was driven from Court.¹

This retreat of his chief adviser weakened James. Elizabeth's coldness also annoyed him; and his uneasiness was changed into indignation, when he discovered that she looked favourably upon Bothwell; and that this traitorous subject, who had so lately invaded and dishonoured him, was in correspondence with her ministers. It was necessary, however, to dissemble his feelings, as the difficulties which now surrounded him were of a complicated kind. It had recently been his policy to balance the two great factions which divided the country, the Catholic and Protestant, as equally as possible: so that into whichever scale he threw the weight of his own authority it might preponderate. This mode of government, borrowed from Elizabeth, was more difficult to be carried through with success in Scotland than in the neighbouring country, not only from the superiority in vigour and intellect possessed by that Princess over James, but from the greater feudal strength of the nobility of Scotland, and the greater weakness of the royal prerogative in that kingdom. In England various causes had concurred to destroy the greater barons; the wars of the two Roses were especially fatal to them; and it is well known that the reign of Henry the Eighth had been the grave of many of those potent families who, before that time, were in the habit of dictating to the Crown. But

¹ Moyse's Memoirs, p. 97. MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 17th Dec., 1592.

in Scotland not only were the feudal prerogatives more large, but the arm of the law was weaker; and the great houses, such as Hamilton, Argyll, Mar, Huntly, Douglas, and Stewart, were fresh and in vigour. Of all this the King was so well aware, that when Bowes the English Ambassador on one occasion complained to him, that his reforms were ever *in fieri* not *in posse*, James answered, that to reform such nobles as he had, would require the lives of three Kings.¹

There can be no doubt, however, that James, although clearly foreseeing the difficulties he was likely to encounter, had determined to weaken and suppress, as far as possible, the greater barons; and had resolved, by every means in his power, to strengthen the Crown, raise up the middle classes and the lesser barons; and so balance and equalize the various powers of the constitution, that he should be able to hold the reins with a firm hand. There is a passage of a letter of Hudson's, one of the King's favourites, and a gentleman of his Court, which points to this, and shows that, although James greatly favoured the Chancellor, he was more his own minister than has been believed. Elizabeth, it appears, alarmed by some recent favours shown to Huntly, had instructed Hudson to gain this high officer, hoping through him to influence the King; to which Hudson replied to Burghley, that the common opinion that James followed Maitland's guidance was an error; that the King was "himself the very centre of the

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 25th Jan., 1590-1.

Government, and moved the Chancellor and all the rest as he turned, minions and all. Although (he continued) he bestow favour in great measure upon sundries, it doth not follow that he is directed by them. The Chancellor is a great councillor, and the King seeth that his gifts merit his place; but he followeth directly his Majesty's course in all."¹

Acting along with this able minister, James had hitherto been able to hold in check the power of the higher nobles, and to keep the country in something like tranquillity. But the murder of Murray, the implication of the Chancellor and suspected connivance of the King in this foul transaction; the compulsory retirement of Maitland, and the formidable combination which had taken place between the majority of the higher nobles and the Earl of Bothwell, threw the monarch into alarm, and forced him upon some measures which, under other circumstances, he would scarcely have adopted. His late favour to Huntly had damaged him in the affections of the Kirk: he now resolved to court its aid and to flatter it by unwonted concessions. These it is important to notice, as they led to no less a measure than the establishment of Presbytery by a Prince to whom this form of ecclesiastical government appears to have been especially obnoxious. The acts passed in the parliament 1584, against the discipline and privileges of the Kirk, had long been a thorn in the side of the ministers; and they now, in an Assembly held some time previous to the meeting of Parliament, resolved

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Hudson to Burghley, 7th Dec., 1591.

to petition the King, not only for the abolition of these obnoxious statutes, but for a solemn legislative establishment of the Presbyterian system of church government.

Accordingly, Parliament having assembled in June 1592, the Assembly presented the four following articles or requests to the King:—

1. That the acts of Parliament made in the year 1584 against the discipline and liberty of the Kirk, should be repealed, and the present discipline be ratified.

2. That the act of Annexation should be abolished, and the patrimony of the Kirk restored.

3. That Abbots, Priors, and other Prelates pretending to ecclesiastical authority, and giving their vote in matters without any delegated power from the Kirk, should not be hereafter permitted to vote in Parliament or other Convention; and lastly,

4. That the land, which was polluted by fearful idolatry and bloodshed, should be purged.¹

The first article, which went to rescind the acts of 1584, was long and keenly debated: for James was acute enough to detect the increased power which this must give to the ministers; and it is certain that no change had taken place in the mind of the monarch as to the dangers to be apprehended from the turbulence and independence of these bold and able men. The republican principles, the austere morality, and the extreme pulpit license of the Kirk, were

¹ Calderwood, pp. 267, 268.

wholly opposed to all his ideas of ecclesiastical polity or civil government; but Maitland, who had now resumed his influence, though still absent from Court, was solicitous to conciliate the friends of the murdered Murray, and to appease the people; and assisting the Kirk at this moment with the full weight of his influence and advice, the King, more from policy than affection, assented to the proposal. An act, accordingly, was passed, which is still regarded as the "Charter of the Liberties of the Kirk."

It ratified its system of government by General Assemblies, provincial Synods, Presbyteries, and particular Sessions. It affirmed such courts, with the jurisdiction and discipline belonging to them, to be just, good, and godly; defined their powers, appointed the time and manner of their meeting, and declared that the acts passed in 1584 should be in no ways prejudicial to the privileges of the office-bearers in the Kirk in determining heads of religion, matters of heresy, questions of excommunication, appointment and deprivation of ministers; that another act of the same Parliament granting commissions to Bishops to receive the royal presentations to bishoprics, and to give collation, should be rescinded; and that all presentations should be directed to their particular presbyteries, with full power to give collation and decide all ecclesiastical causes within their bounds, under the proviso that they admitted such ministers as were presented by the King or other lay patrons.¹

¹ M'Crie's *Life of Melvil*, p. 403. Aikman's *Translation of*

Had the Kirk contented itself with these triumphs, and rested satisfied in the King's present dispositions, which appeared wholly in its favour, all things might have remained quiet: for the Catholics, convinced of the madness of their projects, were ready to abstain from all practices inimical to the religion of the State, on the single condition that they should not be persecuted for their adherence to the ancient faith. But the Kirk were not disposed to take this quiet course. The principle of toleration, divine as it assuredly is in its origin, yet so late in its recognition even amongst the best men, was then utterly unknown to either party, Reformed or Catholic. The permission even of a single case of Catholic worship, however secret,—the attendance of a solitary individual at a single mass, in the remotest district of the land, at the dead hour of night, in the most secluded chamber, and where none could come but such as knelt before the altar for conscience' sake, and in all sincerity of soul,—such worship, and its permission for an hour, was considered an open encouragement of Antichrist and Idolatry. To extinguish the Mass for ever, to compel its supporters to embrace what the Kirk considered to be the purity of Presbyterian truth, and this under the penalties of life and limb, or in its mildest form of treason, banishment, and forfeiture, was considered not merely praiseworthy but a point of high religious duty; and the whole apparatus of the Kirk, the whole

inquisitorial machinery of detection and persecution, was brought to bear upon the accomplishment of these great ends. Are we to wonder that, under such a state of things, the intrigues of the Catholics for the overturn of a government which sanctioned such a system continued; that when they knew, or suspected that the King himself was averse to persecution, they were encouraged to renew their intercourse with Spain; and to hope that a new outbreak, if properly directed, might lead either to the destruction of a rival faith, or to the establishment of liberty of conscience.

A discovery which occurred at this time corroborates these remarks, and drew after it important consequences. The Kirk, in the course of its inquisitions, in which it was assisted by Sir Robert Bowes, the resident English Ambassador, received certain information that George Ker, a Catholic gentleman and brother of the Abbot of Newbottle, was secretly passing into Spain with important letters. Upon this, Mr Andrew Knox minister of Paisley, setting off with a body of armed men furnished by Lord Ross, traced Ker to Glasgow, and thence to the little isles of the Cumrays in the mouth of the Clyde, where they seized him in the night, immediately after he had got on board the ship which was to carry him to the Continent; his luggage was then searched, the packets of letters found, and he himself hurried a prisoner to Edinburgh; where the Provost and the citizens, alarmed by the reports which had already reached them, received him with shouts of triumph and exe-

eration. The unfortunate man at first attempted to deny all, and as he had many friends in the Council who opposed severity, was likely to escape; but at the King's special command he was put to the torture,¹ and on the second stroke of the boots confessed the conspiracy; the main branch of which was to secure and hasten the descent of a Spanish force upon the coast of Scotland. This army was to be joined by the Earls of Huntly, Errol, and Angus, with Sir Patrick Gordon of Auchendown, uncle to Huntly, and other Catholic barons. Amongst the letters seized, and which appeared to be written by Scottish Jesuits and seminary priests to their brethren on the Continent, there were found several signatures of the Earls of Huntly, Errol, and Angus. These were written at the bottom of blank sheets of paper, with the seals of these noblemen attached to them; from which circumstance the plot received the name of the "Spanish Blanks." It was at first suspected by Bowes, who was familiar with all the *arcana* of conspiracy, that the blanks were written over with ink

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 6th February, 1592-3. Bowes, writing to Burghley, says, "Commission is given to Justice-Clerk, Blantyre, and George Young, to offer him the torture this day. But many think that he shall suffer the torment without confession."

It appears by a letter of Bowes to the Queen of England, 21st January, 1592-3, that Mr Andrew Knox received an assurance from Elizabeth, that "good disposition and regard should be had of his labours, charges, perils, and services;" whereupon Mr Andrew returned into his country to search out the haunts of the English Catholics lurking in those parts.

of white vitriol, prepared ;¹ but it turned out that they were to be filled up afterwards by Ker, according to verbal instructions, and to be delivered to the King of Spain.² It may well be imagined that this discovery—serious enough, certainly, in its known features, and around which there was that air of mystery which gave ample scope for all kinds of terror and exaggeration—was enough to throw the Kirk and the people into a state of high excitement. The Council, having examined the letters, had no doubt of their authenticity. Sir John Carmichael and Sir George Hume were sent to the King, who was at Stirling, to entreat his immediate presence. Angus, then at Edinburgh, and recently returned from an expedition to the North, was committed to the castle of Edinburgh; and proclamation made that all Jesuits, seminary priests, and excommunicates, should, within three hours, depart the city on pain of death.³ A Convention of the nobility and Protestant gentry was forthwith held, and, headed by the ministers, presented themselves at the palace, and insisted on the instant prosecution and punishment of the traitors; declaring their readiness to hazard life and property in the service. The Queen of Scotland, and the powerful house of the Setons, earnestly

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 1st January, 1592-3.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 13th January, 1592-3.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 3d January, 1592-3.

interceded for Ker,¹ who in the end escaped; but Graham of Fintry, found to be deeply implicated, was imprisoned; and Angus' trial and forfeiture was considered so certain, that the courtiers, wolf-like, began to smell the prey; and Sir George Hume wrote pressingly to Lord Hume, requiring him to come speedily to Court that he might have his share in the spoils.²

James' conduct at this crisis was both wise and spirited. He had received information, much about the same time when the Spanish conspiracy came to light, that his traitorous subject Bothwell, who had twice invaded his palace and attempted to seize his person, was received in England and regarded with favour by Elizabeth. Now was the time, he felt, to put down Bothwell for ever. He was well aware that this fierce and formidable insurgent was favoured secretly by the Kirk, and by many of those nobles who now insisted upon the instant pursuit of the Popish earls. He was aware, too, that Elizabeth's alarm on the discovery of the Spanish Blanks would prompt her to advise the most severe measures against the delinquents, and he ably availed himself of all this. To the Kirk and the Protestant barons he gave the most friendly reception; spoke loudly of Angus' instant forfeiture; and not only agreed to the pursuit of Huntly, Errol, and their associates, but declared that he would lead the army in person and seize them in their northern strongholds. Nor were these mere

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. 13th January, 1592-3.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 13th January, 1592-3.

words. Huntly, Errol, and Auchendown, were commanded to enter themselves in ward at St Andrews, before the 5th February; public proclamation was made that all men should be ready, on the 25th of the same month, with armour and weapons, to march with the King in person against the traitors if they failed to deliver themselves; and various committees were appointed for the examination of all suspected persons, belonging either to the nobility, barons, burgesses, or clergy.¹

All this was most gratifying to the Kirk, and the Protestant leaders amongst the nobility. But, in return for this, the King demanded as cordial a coöperation on their side for the attack and destruction of Bothwell, whose treasons, though of a different nature, were even more flagrant than those of the Catholic earls; and this they were not in a situation to refuse. Having thus secured the coöperation of the Kirk and the Protestant lords against Bothwell, James gave audience to Bowes, who was little prepared for the violence with which he was to be received. The Ambassador had recently found himself in a difficult situation. He had been familiar with all the plots of Bothwell, and looked upon them with no unfavourable eye, although he took care not directly to implicate himself. He had repeatedly applied to Burghley to receive instructions and understand the Queen's wishes: but Elizabeth was too cautious to commit herself; whilst Bowes

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 19th January, 1592-3.

knew for certain that she encouraged Bothwell secretly, and expressed the highest scorn and contempt for Huntly and the Spanish faction, whom she branded as base traitors who had sold their country. On this subject Elizabeth, shortly before this,¹ had sent a letter to James, part of which, relating to the Spanish faction, from its vigour, is worthy of preservation:—

“Advance not,” said she, “such as hang their hopes on other strings than you may tune. Them that gold can corrupt, think not your gifts can assure. Who once have made shipwreck of their country, let them never enjoy it. Weed out the weeds, lest the best corn fester. Never arm with power such whose bitterness must follow after you; nor trust not their trust that under any colour will thrall their own soil.

“I may not, nor will I, conceal overtures that of late full amply have been made me, how you may plainly know all the combiners against your State, and how you may entrap them and so assure your kingdom. Consider, if this actor doth deserve surety of life—not of land, but such as may preserve breath, to spend where best it shall please you. When I see the day, I will impart my advice to whom it most appertains.

“Now bethink, my dear brother, what farther you will have me do. In meanwhile, beware to give the reins into the hands of any, lest it be too late to revoke such actions done. Let no one of the Spanish faction in your absence, yea, when you are present,

¹ On the 4th December, 1592.

receive strength or countenance. You know, but for you, all of them be alike for me, for my particular. Yet I may not deny, without spot or wrinkle, but I abhor such as set their country to sale. And thus, committing you to God's tuition, I shall remain the faithful holder of my vowed amity,

“Your most affectionate Sister and Cousin.¹”

What was James' reply to this obscure epigrammatic epistle is not known; but very shortly after it was written, the Spanish conspiracy came to light, and the Scottish King at the same time discovered the favour shown to Bothwell in England with the full countenance of the Queen. Mr Lock, an agent of Burghley and a near relative of the notorious intriguer John Colvile, brother to the Laird of Easter Wemyss, had been sent down to Scotland with instructions to form a faction with the Kirk and the Protestant barons for Bothwell's restoration; and their plots had proceeded so far, that the attack upon the palace, which afterwards occurred in the autumn of this year, would probably have been enterprised sooner, but for the discovery of the Spanish Blanks.² Of all these English intrigues James was now aware; and when Bowes was admitted to an audience, the monarch broke into a violent passion. The Queen of England, he declared, did him foul injustice in

¹ Warrender MS., vol. B, p. 361. Indorsed, Delivered by Mr Bowes, 4th December, 1592.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 27th December, 1592.

countenancing a rebel and traitor like Bothwell. Her subjects received and harboured him, and they pleaded her warrant to do so. If so, he must account it done to his scorn and dishonour. However, he should investigate the matter closely; and should it turn out so, (this he said loudly, and in the hearing of many about him,) there was an end to his amity with the Queen, and with every man in England.

So unwonted a storm had never yet broken the serene tenor of James' temper; and Bowes found it difficult to appease it even by the most earnest assurances of Elizabeth's innocence.¹ In a subsequent interview, however, he was somewhat more successful. The Queen of England despatched a letter written wholly in her own hand, in a strain of so much conciliation, and fraught with so much sound advice, that the monarch was recovered; showed the epistle, with many expressions of admiration, to his confidential counsellors and some of the chief ministers, who reiterated their exhortations to proceed roundly against the Catholic lords. There were some difficulties, however, in the way. Huntly solemnly declared his innocence, and affirmed that the blanks were not signed by him. If he, Errol, and Angus, delivered themselves by the appointed day, and were once secured in prison, there was little doubt of the issue; but if, as suspected, they fled and raised their feudal strength, the King must march against them; and, with an impoverished Exchequer, who was to pay his

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. 19th January, 1592-3.

troops? Elizabeth's bounty, he said, had flowed in a far more niggard stream than had been promised. He had looked to have five thousand a-year, the sum allowed by Henry the Eighth to the Queen herself when Princess; but she had only given him three thousand.¹ As to that occasion of which she reminded him, when one year's charges for his behoof had come to nine thousand pounds, and six thousand men been kept in readiness for his service, he protested that by no effort could he recall such things to memory; but never would he press her for money unless at a time of extreme need like the present. But to explain all more fully, he meant (as he assured Bowes) to send her an ambassador—Sir Robert Melvil, or some other confidential councillor.²

Meantime, before any such resolution could be acted on, Elizabeth's anxiety and the alarming confessions of Ker prompted her to despatch Lord Burgh with a message to the King, and instructions to press on the trials of the Spanish lords by every possible method. What had been fully expected by all who knew these bold insurgents had now occurred. Instead of a surrender of their persons on the day appointed, Huntly, Errol, Auchendown, and their associates, kept themselves within their strongholds in the North. Angus escaped from the castle of Edinburgh, letting himself down the walls by a rope, and joined his friends in the Highlands; and the King's

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 27th January, 1592-3.

² *Id. Ibid.*

Council, with the higher nobles, became cold and inactive. But the monarch himself was roused by this opposition into unwonted energy. He alone had conducted the examination of Ker, had advocated the use of torture against the advice of his ministers, and by this horrible expedient had extorted a confession. He now hurried forward the trial of Graham of Fintry, had him found guilty, and instantly executed; and having requested the prayers of the Kirk for success in his expedition, and appointed the Earl of Morton to be Lieutenant-general in his absence, he placed himself at the head of his army and proceeded against the rebels.¹ To this extraordinary vigour of the King against the Spanish faction, Bowes, in his letter to Burghley, bore ample evidence. After mentioning that Fintry had offered fifty thousand pounds Scots to save his life, the Ambassador observes,—“the King in this hath remained resolute; and alone, without the assistance of any of his council, prosecuted the cause. And now, he saith, that as alone he hath drawn his sword against his rebels, without the Council’s aid or allowance of his nobility, so he will proceed, with the help of God, to punish and prosecute the traitors in these high treasons, by all the means in his power; and with the assistance of his barons, burghs, and Kirk, whom he findeth ready to aid him therein. He was occasioned to stay his journey two days beyond his diet for the trial and execution of

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 14th February, 1592-3. Same to same, 15th February, 1592-3. Same to same, 21st February, 1592-3.

Fintry, and for some wants which are yet slenderly supplied: nevertheless, he is ready and determined to enter into his *rode* to-morrow, wherein he shall be well strengthened with his barons; but few noblemen shall attend upon him.”¹

On the 24th of February, Lord Burgh, Elizabeth's Ambassador, arrived in Edinburgh; and on his heels came intelligence of the success of the Scottish King.² James had advanced without a check to Aberdeen. Huntly and Errol, finding it impossible to make head against the royal forces, had fled, slenderly accompanied, to Caithness; and the Earl of Athol, who joined the King with twelve hundred foot and nine hundred horse, was appointed Lieutenant-general beyond Spey, to reduce those unquiet regions and prevent their again falling under the power of the rebels.³ Meanwhile, the Catholic earls were declared forfeited, and their estates seized by the Crown; but, from some circumstances, it was augured that the King meant to deal leniently, and not utterly wreck them. Strathbogie castle, belonging to Huntly, was given to Archibald Carmichael, with sixteen of the royal guard for a garrison; but the Countess of Huntly, sister to the Duke of Lennox, was allowed to retain, for her winter residence, the Bog of Gicht, his greatest castle

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 15th February, 1592-3.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Lord Burgh to Burghley, 26th Feb. 1592-3.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Lord Burgh to Burghley, 6th March, 1592-3.

and estate. Athol received the rest of his lands, not in gift, but to hold them as factor for the Crown. Errol's father-in-law, the Earl Marshal, bought his son's escheat for a thousand marks, with the keeping of his castle of Slanes: his mother held his other house of Logie-Almond for her jointure; and Athol, whose sister he had married for his second wife, became factor of his other possessions. Angus was more severely dealt with, not being saved by any connexion or relationship with men in power.¹ His house and castle of Tantallon were delivered to the keeping of the Laird of Pollard; Bonkle and Preston to William Hume, brother of the King's favourite, Sir George Hume; Douglasdale, and the rest of his lands, seized for debt. On the whole, however, the rebel lords, considering their crimes, were leniently dealt with. Their persons were safe in the fastnesses of Caithness; their patrimonial interest, and rights of succession, were considered to be still entire, till an act of Parliament had confirmed the forfeitures; and part of their estates were placed in friendly hands. So evident was all this, that Lord Burgh wrote to

¹ Angus' mother was a Graham, daughter of the Laird of Morphy. He married the eldest daughter of the Lord Oliphant. MS. St. P. Off., 1st July, 1592. A Catalogue of the Nobility in Scotland. The original indorsement had been simply "Of the nobility in Scotland." Burghley has prefixed the words "A catalogue." I mention this minute circumstance to prove the authenticity of the paper, which is a highly valuable document, showing the ages, matrimonial descent, and marriages, of the whole body of the Scottish nobility at the period, 1st July, 1592.

Burghley, that the King “dissembled a confiscation,” and would leave the rebels in full strength.¹

On his return from his northern expedition, James gave audience to Lord Burgh, and expressed himself gratified by the message and advice of Elizabeth. “It was her interest,” he said, “to coöperate heartily with him in all his present actions, and assist him to her utmost. Was she not as deeply concerned to hinder the Spaniard setting his foot in Scotland as in France or the Low Countries? At this moment money was imperatively called for; an armed force of large extent must be kept up; he needed troops to guard his person, exposed to hourly danger from the plots of his nobles, and the snares of the arch-traitor Bothwell, with whose daring character she was too well acquainted:—he needed them to overawe the districts still favourable to the Catholic lords—to garrison their houses, which, according to his good sister’s advice, he had seized—to watch the coast where the Spaniards were likeliest to land—to repulse them, if they effected a descent. The cause was common to both; and he looked not only for sympathy and counsel, but for hard coin and brave men. On one point he assured Burgh, that the message which he took back must be peremptory. “Bothwell,” said he, “that vile traitor, whose offences against me are unpardonable, and such as, for example’s sake, should make him to be abhorred by all sovereign Princes, is harboured in England: let my sister expel him,

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Lord Burgh to Burghley, 5th March, 1592-3.

or deliver him up, as she tenders her own honour and my contentment. Should he henceforth be comforted or concealed in her dominions, I must roundly assure her, not only that our amity is at an end, but that I shall be enforced to join in friendship with her greatest enemies for my own safety."¹

This spirited remonstrance was not out of place; for at this moment Elizabeth, pursuing her old policy of weakening Scotland, by destroying its tranquillity and keeping up its internal commotions, was encouraging Bothwell to a new and more desperate attempt against the King and his government. Lord Burgh had received secret instructions to entertain this fierce and lawless man. To discover his strength and means, and increase his faction at Court and with the ministers of the Kirk, was the secret part of this Ambassador's mission; and when James expressed to Bowes his admiration of the eloquence, grace, and courtly manners of this nobleman, he little knew the hidden mine which he was digging under his feet. Yet so it was. Bothwell had offered his services to the English Queen; had written to Lord Burghley; had received an answer of encouragement, though cautiously worded; and had been ordered by the High Treasurer to write secretly to the Queen.² It will immediately

¹ Answers for the Lord Burgh, concerning Bothwell. MS. wholly in James' hand. Warrender MSS. Book B, p. 401.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bothwell to Thomas Musgrave, whom he styles his "Loving brother, Captain of Bewcastle," 7th March, 1592-3. MS. St. P. Off., Mr Lock's Instructions, 10th February, 1592-3, wholly in Lord Burghley's hand.

appear how rapidly this new conspiracy came to maturity, and how suddenly it burst upon the King. Meanwhile, the various factions and family feuds amongst the nobility had increased to such a degree, that the whole cares of the government fell upon the monarch; and James, naturally indolent and fond of his pastimes, began to languish for the return of the Chancellor Maitland. This powerful minister had been driven from Court by the antipathy of the Queen of Scots, the Duke of Lennox, and the whole faction of the Stewarts, who held him as their mortal enemy, and had repeatedly plotted against his life. The exact cause of the Queen's "heavy wrath" against Maitland, appears to have been a mystery alike to the King and to Bowes; but it was deeply rooted, and nearly touched her honour. He was at deadly feud also with the Master of Glamis, and hated by Bothwell, who regarded him as the author of all his calamities, and the forger of that accusation of witchcraft, under the imputation of which he was now a banished and broken man. It was difficult for the King to recall to power a minister who lay under such a load of enmity; and, for the present, he was contented to visit him in his retreat at Lethington, and consult him upon the affairs of Government.¹ All, however, looked to his probable restora-

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 6th Feb. 1592-3. Also, *Ibid.*, 7th April, 1593. "Occurrents in Scotland" brought by the Lord Burgh who came to the Court 14th April. This indorsation is by Burghley. Also, *Ibid.*, Bowes to Burghley, 19th April, 1593.

tion to power; and the bare idea of it occasioned the utmost jealousy and heart-burning in Court.

Nothing, at this moment, could be more deplorable than the torn and distracted state of the Scottish nobility. The Duke of Lennox and the Lord Hamilton, the two first noblemen in the realm, were at mortal feud; the subject of their quarrel being an attempt, on the part of Lennox, to get himself declared the next in succession to the Crown, to the exclusion of the prior right of the family of Hamilton.¹ Huntly again, and all those barons who supported him, were at feud with the potent Earl of Athol, and the whole race of Stewart; the cause of their enmity being an unquenchable thirst of revenge for the murder of the Earl of Murray. Argyll, Ochiltree, and all the barons who adhered to them, were at feud with Lord Thirlstane the Chancellor, Lord Hume, Lord Fleming, and their faction and allies; in which course they were urged forward by the enmity of the Queen of Scots.² It is difficult, by any general expressions, to convey a picture of the miserable state of a country torn by such feuds as these. Nor were these the sole causes of disquiet: Huntly, Angus, and Errol, although declared traitors, were at large in the North; Bothwell, whom the King justly regarded as his mortal enemy, was also at liberty, harboured sometimes on the Borders, sometimes in England, and even daring to enter the capital in disguise and hold secret intercourse with the noblemen about the King's

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burchley, 20th May, 1593.

² MS. St. P. Off. Occurrents of Scotland, 7th April, 1593.

person. The intrigues of the Catholics, although checked by the late discoveries, were not at an end; and the ministers of the Kirk, utterly dissatisfied with the leniency which James had exhibited to the rebel earls, began to attack his conduct in the pulpit, and to throw out surmises of his secret inclinations to Popery. Is it a subject of wonder that James, thus surrounded with danger and disquietude, without a minister whom he could trust, or a nobility on whose loyalty and affections he could for a moment depend, should have been driven into measures which may often appear inconsistent and capricious? The sole party on whom he could depend was that of the ministers of the Kirk, with the lesser barons and the burghs;¹ and their support was only to be bought at the price of the utter destruction of the Catholic earls, and the entire extirpation of the Catholic faith.

To this sweeping act of persecution the monarch would not consent. At this moment thirteen of the nobility of Scotland were Catholics;² and, in the northern counties, a large proportion of the people were attached to the same faith. It was insisted on, by the leading ministers of the Kirk, in a Convention of the Estates which the King summoned at this time,³ that the strictest investigation should be made for the discovery and imprisonment of all

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Lord Burgh to Burghley, 30th March, 1593.

² MS. St. P. Off., Catalogue of the Nobility of Scotland, 1st July, 1592.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., 19th April, 1593., Bowes to Burghley.

suspected of heresy; and that, under the penalties of forfeiture and banishment, they should be compelled to recant, and embrace the Reformed religion. The severity and intolerance of such demands will be best understood by quoting the words of the original. The Kirk represented that, "Seeing the increase of Papistry daily within this realm," it was craved of his Majesty, with his Council and nobility at that time assembled, "that all Papists within the same may be punished according to the laws of God and of the realm. That the Act of Parliament might, *ipso facto*, strike upon all manner of men, landed or unlanded, in office or not, as it at present strikes against beneficed persons. That a declaration be made against all Jesuits, seminary priests, and trafficking Papists, pronouncing them guilty of treason; and that the penalties of the Act may be enforced against all persons who conceal or harbour them, not for three days, as it now stands, but for any time whatsoever. That all such persons as the Kirk had found to be Papists, although they be not excommunicated, should be debarred from occupying any office within the realm, as also from access to his Majesty's company, or enjoying any benefit of the laws. That upon this declaration, the pains of 'horning' and other civil pains should follow, as upon the sentence of excommunication; and that an Act of Council should be passed to this effect, which in the next Parliament should be made law." If the King agreed to these demands, the Convention promised, for their part, that "their bodies, goods, friends, allies, ser-

vants, and possessions, should be wholly at his service, in any way he was pleased to employ them." During the whole pursuit of this cause, (the utter destruction of all Papistry within the realm,) they declared, that not only their whole numbers should be, at all times, a guard to the royal person, but that the King might select from them any force he pleased as a daily body guard; the pay of which, however, they prudently added, ought to be levied from the possessions of the Catholics; and if this were not enough, they would themselves make up the difference.¹

To these sweeping and severe penalties James would by no means consent; and the Kirk, irritated by his refusal, withdrew that assistance and coöperation which it had hitherto lent him in preserving peace and good order. The effects of this were soon apparent. Instead of the happy tranquillity which had reigned during his absence in Denmark, and which he had mainly ascribed to the efforts of the ministers, the capital, as the time of the Parliament approached, presented almost daily scenes of outrage and confusion. The security and sanctity of domestic life were invaded and despised; ruffians, under the command, and openly protected by the nobles, tore honourable maidens from the bosom of their families, and carried them off in open day. James Gray, a brother of the

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Humble petition of the General Assembly of the Kirk, craved of his Majesty's Council and nobility presently convened. Fra Dundee, this Lord's day, 29th April, 1593. Also, MS. St. P. Off., "The Effects of the Answers of this Convention to the Articles proponed by the King's Majesty."

notorious Master of Gray, seized a young lady named Carnegie, an heiress, and then living under her father's roof; carried her forcibly down a narrow close, or street, to the North Loch, a lake which then surrounded the castle; delivered her to a party of armed men, who dragged her into a boat, her hair hanging about her face, and her clothes almost torn from her person; whilst Gray's associate, Lord Hume, kept the streets with his retainers, beat off the Provost who attempted a rescue, and slew some of the citizens who had presumed to interfere. Next day, the chief magistrate carried his complaint in person before the King. "Do you see here any of my nobles whom you can accuse?" said James. At that moment Hume was standing beside James; but when the unhappy Provost encountered his fierce eye, the impeachment stuck in his throat from terror, and he retired silent and abashed.¹ The outrage was the more shameful, as Gray was a gentleman of the King's suite, and had been assisted by Sir James Sandilands and other courtiers; whilst the Duke of Lennox and the Earl of Mar were playing tennis hard by, and abstained from all interference. So atrocious an insult upon the laws, and the miserable weakness exhibited by the King, appear to have made a deep impression on Burghley, who has written on the margin of Bowes' letter this pithy note—"A miserable State, that may cause us to bless ours, and our Governess."² It was

¹ MS. Calderwood, Brit. Mus., Ayscough, 4738, fol. 1137. MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 10th June, 1593.

² Id. Ibid.

not long after this that a day of law, as it was termed, was to be kept for the trial of Campbell of Ardkinglass, accused of the murder of the Laird of Caddell, a gentleman of the name of Campbell, who had himself been a principal actor in the tragedy of the Earl of Murray. Ardkinglass was a relative and favourite of Argyll, who assembled his friends, and on the day of trial entered the capital with a formidable force. The accused was about to be married to a natural daughter of Lord John Hamilton, which occasioned the muster of the whole power of that house; and the Chancellor Thirlstane, esteeming the opportunity a favourable one to exhibit his strength, and prepare the way for his return to Court, rode from his retirement into the city, attended by Arbroath, Montrose, Seton, Livingston, Glencairn, Eglinton, and other powerful friends.¹ This again was sufficient to rouse the fears of his enemies, the party of the Queen; who assembled in great strength, led by the Duke of Lennox, and numbering in their ranks, Mar, Morton, Hume, the Master of Glamis, Sir George Hume, Lord Spiny, and Sir James Sandilands. The Border barons too, Lord Maxwell and Cessford, were on their march; the Lords of Session, who had to try the criminal, and trembled for their lives, had resolved to raise a body of a hundred men to protect them; and the townsmen were, in the meantime, kept day and night under arms. All this was most formidable to the King, who found

¹ MS. St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 17th June, 1593. Also, *Ibid.*, same to same, 20th June, 1593.

himself almost alone amid his difficulties.¹ The danger, too, was increased by the sudden apparition, amid the darkness, of a meteor which had ever indicated perplexity and change. Captain James Stewart, once the formidable and haughty Earl of Arran, had been seen lately in the palace. It was known he had been favourably received by James in several secret interviews; the Queen and the Duke were his friends; his misfortunes had neither tamed his pride, nor quelled that fierce energy and unscrupulous daring which had prompted him to destroy the Regent Morton; and at this crisis, when all were anticipating the return of the Chancellor to power, it was suspected that the enemies of Maitland had determined to recall Stewart, and employ him for the destruction of this minister.² He had already pulled down one far mightier from his palmy state: what, said the Queen and Lennox, was to prevent him from being successful against another?

Amid these complicated distresses James had scarcely one councillor on whom he could rely. With his capital bristling with steel-clad barons, each feeling himself superior to the throne or the law; the streets in possession of tumultuous bodies of retainers and feudal banditti, armed to the teeth and commanded by men at mortal feud with each other; his court and palace divided by the intrigues of the several rival factions; diffident even of the gentlemen who waited on his person; distracted by reports that

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burglley, 17th June, 1593.

² Ibid., 20th June, 1593.

troopers had been seen hovering in the neighbourhood, completely armed and disguised;¹ deserted for the time by the Kirk; uncertain as yet of the success of the embassy of Sir Robert Melvil, whom he had lately sent to Elizabeth; and tormented by hourly reports of undefined but urgent dangers and mysterious conspiracies; the wonder is, that a prince of James' indolent and timid temper should not have sunk under such a state of things. But the emergency seemed to rouse him; and by an unusual exertion of firmness and good sense, he succeeded in warding off the dangers, persuaded the barons to dismiss their followers, and brought about a reconciliation between the Queen's faction, led by the Duke, and their powerful enemy the Chancellor Thirlstane. It had long been evident to the King that, in the present state of the country, no hand but that of Maitland could save the Government from absolute wreck and disruption; and it was agreed, that on the conclusion of the Parliament, which was now on the eve of meeting, this minister should return to Court, and be reinstated in his high office.²

Scarce, however, was this danger averted than the city was thrown into a new state of excitement by the shrieks and lamentations of a troop of miserable women, who had travelled from the Borders, the victims and survivors of a recent raid conducted by

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 19th June, 1593.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., ut supra. Also, Ibid., Bowes to Burghley, 22d June, 1593. Also, Ibid., same to same, 28th June, 1593.

the Laird of Johnston. Their purpose was to throw themselves before the King, and demand justice for the slaughter of their sons and husbands, whose bloody shirts they held above their heads, exhibiting them to the people as they marched through the streets, and imprecating vengeance upon their murderers. It was a sight which, in any other country, might well have roused both pity and indignation; but though the people murmured, the ghastly procession passed on without further notice, and neither King nor noble condescended to interfere.¹

The Parliament now assembled; but its proceedings were delayed by a quarrel between the higher nobles for the precedency in bearing the honours. At length it was arranged that Lennox should carry the crown, Argyll the sceptre, and Morton the sword; and that, in the absence of the Chancellor Maitland, Alexander Seton, President of the Session, should fill his place, and conduct the proceedings.² Bothwell was then forfeited, and proclaimed a traitor at the Cross; and the Queen's jointure, which had been settled at her marriage, and regarding which some difficulties had arisen, was confirmed. To conciliate the Kirk, an act was passed exempting ministers' stipends from taxation; another statute was introduced against the Mass; and a strict inquisition ordered to be made for all Papists and seminary priests: but on the great subject for which it was

¹ MS. Calderwood, Ayscough, 4738, fol. 1138-39.]

² MS. Brit. Mus., Caligula, D II. 128. Bowes to Burghley, July 16th, 1593.

understood Parliament had met—the prosecution and forfeiture of the Popish earls—the party of the Kirk were miserably disappointed, or rather, all their gloomiest expectations were fulfilled. Huntly, Errol, Angus, and Auchendown, escaped forfeiture. It had been secretly resolved by the King, that no extreme proceedings should be adopted against these noblemen, who had a numerous and powerful party on their side,¹ till Sir Robert Melvil, then at the English Court, had brought an answer from Elizabeth; and although the Earl of Argyll, Lord Forbes, Lord Lindsay, and the Protestant faction, anxiously urged the most severe measures, James was resolute. Mr David Makgill, the King's advocate, a man of extraordinary talent, but who had often opposed the Kirk, declared that the summonses were informal, the evidence of traitorous designs and correspondence with Spain insufficient; and that it was impossible for any act of attainder to pass in the present meeting of the Estates.²

This for the time settled the matter: but the Kirk were deeply indignant; and their champion, Mr John Davison, denounced the proceedings, and attacked the sovereign in the pulpit on the Sunday which succeeded their close. "It was a black Parliament," he said; "for iniquity was seated in the High Court of Justice, and had trodden equity under foot. It was a black Parliament: for the arch-traitors had escaped

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 20th June, 1593.

² MS. Letter, B.M., Caligula, D II., Bowes to Burghley, 8th July; also, 10th July, and 14th July, 1593.

—escaped, did he say! no: they were absolved; and now all good men might prepare themselves for darker days: trials were at hand: it had ever been seen that the absolving of the wicked imported the persecution of the righteous. Let us pray," said he, in conclusion "that the King, by some sanctified plagues, may be turned again to God."¹

Such plagues as Davison thus prayed for, were nearer at hand than many imagined: for Elizabeth, according to her favourite policy, had more than one plot now carrying forward in Scotland. Her accredited Ambassador, Sir Robert Bowes, was indeed instructed to keep up the most friendly assurances, and to promise the King of Scots her cordial assistance in defeating Bothwell, and destroying the Roman Catholic faction: yet at this moment she had sent Mr Henry Lock into Scotland, who with his brother-in-law, the notorious Mr John Colvil, and Bothwell himself, met secretly in Edinburgh, and organized a formidable confederacy,² the object of which was to bring in Bothwell, take possession of the King's person, overwhelm the Chancellor Maitland who was on the eve of being recalled to power, and render the Kirk triumphant over its enemies. To this plot the Duke of Lennox, the Earl of Mar, the Earl of Athol, Lord Ochiltree, and the whole noblemen and barons of the name and race of Stewart were parties; and they chose this meeting of the three Estates, when the King was surrounded by many of their faction, to carry their

¹ MS. Calderwood, Ayscough, 4738, fol. 1139.

² MS. St. P. Off. B.C., John Carey to Burghley, 1st Aug. 1593.

purpose into execution. The Parliament was now about to terminate, when, on the night of the 23d of July, Bothwell was secretly conveyed into the house of Lady Gowrie, which adjoined the palace of Holyrood. This lady's daughter was the Countess of Athol, to whose courage and ingenuity the success of the plot was principally owing. Early in the morning of the 24th of July, she smuggled Bothwell and Mr John Colvil, by a back passage, into the anteroom adjoining the King's bedchamber, hid them behind the arras, removed the weapons of the guard, and locked the door of the Queen's bedchamber, through which the King might have escaped. The gates of the palace were then occupied by the Duke and Athol, who placed a guard upon them. All this time James was asleep; but he awoke at nine, and calling for one of the gentlemen of his bedchamber, got up and threw his nightgown about him. An alarm now suddenly rose in the next room; and the King rushing out with his hose about his heels, and his under-garments in his hands, confronted Bothwell, who had glided from behind the hangings, and stood with his drawn sword in his hand, Colvil being beside him. James shouted "Treason!" and ran to the door of the Queen's bedroom; but it was found locked: and nothing remained but to face his enemy, which, when driven to it, he did with unwonted spirit, and his usual voluble eloquence. "Come on," said he, "Francis: you seek my life, and I know I am wholly in your power. Take your King's life: I am ready to die. Better to die with honour than live in captivity and shame.

Nay, kneel not, man," he continued, (by this time the Duke and Athol had come in, and Bothwell and Colvil had thrown themselves on their knees;) "kneel not, and add hypocrisy to treason. You protest, forsooth, you only come to sue for pardon, to submit yourself to your trial for witchcraft, to be cleansed by your peers of the foul imputations which lie heavy on you. Does this violent manner of repair look like a suppliant? Is it not dishonourable to me, and disgraceful to my servants who have allowed it? What do you take me for? Am I not your anointed King, twenty-seven years old, and no longer a boy or a minor, when every faction could make me their property? But you have plotted my death, and I call upon you now to execute your purpose: for I will not live a prisoner and dishonoured." As he said this, the King sat calmly down, as if prepared for the worst; but Bothwell, still on his knees, loudly disclaimed all such murderous intentions, and kissing the hilt of his sword, took it by the point, delivered it to his sovereign, and placing his head beneath James' foot, bared his neck of its long tresses, (then the fashion of the young gallants of the day,) and called upon him to strike it off if he believed that he ever harboured a thought against his royal person.¹ The Duke of Lennox, Athol and Ochiltree, now vehemently interceded for the Earl; and James, raising him from the ground, retired into a window recess to talk apart; when an uproar arose below in

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, Aug. 18, 1593. Melvil's Memoirs, Bannat. edit., pp. 414, 415.

the streets, and the citizens of Edinburgh, who had heard a rumour of the enterprise, rushed tumultuously into the palace-yard, headed by their Provost, Alexander Hume, who loudly called to the King, then standing at the open casement, that, on a single word from him, they would force the doors and rid him of the traitors about him. James, however, who dreaded to be slain, or torn in pieces, if the two factions came to blows, commanded the citizens to disperse; and taking refuge in that dissimulation of which he was so great a master, pretended to be reconciled to Bothwell, fixed a near day for his trial, and simply stipulated that, till he was acquitted, he should retire from Court. To all this the Earl agreed. Next day his peace was proclaimed by the heralds at the Cross. The people, of whom he was a great favourite, crowded round him; and not only his own faction, which was very strong, but the ministers of the Kirk showed themselves highly gratified at his return.¹

Having settled this, Bothwell left the capital; and attended only by two servants, rode to Berwick, where he had an interview with Mr John Carey, the son of Lord Hunsdon, and Governor of that Border town; showed him the commission under the King of Scots' hand assuring him of pardon; professed the utmost devotion to Elizabeth; and declared that, within a brief season, he expected to be made "Lieutenant-general of the whole country."² He then

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 25th July, 1593. Ibid. Another letter, same day, same to the same.

² MS. St. P. Off. B.C., John Carey to Burghley, 1st Aug., 1593.

proceeded to Durham, on his road, as he said, to the English Court, to confer with her Majesty "what course it would please her to direct for his guidance;" and on reaching that city, insisted on thrusting himself into the confidence and becoming the guest of Dr Toby Mathews, the Dean, one of the Council of the North; who vehemently declined his explanations, professed his ignorance of "Scottish causes," and advised him to address himself to Burghley, Lord Hunsdon, or Sir Robert Bowes. All was in vain, however. The Scottish Earl settled himself on the venerable dignitary, and "putting him to silence," ran over the story of his whole courses, and ended with his late seizure of the King. Mathews, who had no mind to be made a party in such violent matters, did not permit his eyelids to slumber till he had written an account of it all to Burghley. His letter, which is dated at midnight, on the 2d August, gives us an excellent account of the interview. "This day," says he, "about three of the clock afternoon, came hither to my house the Earl Bothwell, thereunto moved, as he protested, as well by some good opinion of me conceived, as for that he understands I am one of her Majesty's Council established in the North. * * And, albeit, I was very loath to enter into any speech of the Scottish affairs, especially of State, wishing him to write thereof to your Lordship, or to the Lord President; or, if he so thought good, to negotiate his business with her Majesty's Ambassador resident in Scotland,—yet could I not avoid it; but he would needs acquaint me

with somewhat thereof. * * Wherewith, putting me, as it were, to silence, he began, with exceeding amplifications, to acknowledge himself most bounden to her Majesty, for the permission he hath enjoyed in Northumberland and thereabouts, notwithstanding the King's importunity and practice of his enemies to the contrary; and to protest, with all solemnity, before the Majesty of God, that her Highness, in regard thereof, shall ever have him a loyal and most faithful *Englishman* hereafter: albeit, heretofore, he were thought never in opinion a Papist, yet in affection and faction a *Spaniard*. 'Well done once, my lord,' quoth I, 'is double well said;' which word, although he took somewhat displeasantly, yet did it occasion him to affirm and confirm the same, over and over again, so far as possibly may stand with the amity of both the Princes, and the perpetual conservation of religion now openly professed both in England and Scotland.

"Then began he to discourse the manner and means of his late enterprise, and entrance to the King's presence; * * which, to mine understanding, was a plain surprise of the King in his bedchamber, made by the Earl and another gentleman, in the sight of the Duke, the Earls of Mar and Athol, with others his friends purposely assembled: his sword in his hand, drawn; the King fearfully offering to withdraw himself into the Queen's chamber, which before was devised to be kept shut against him. Howbeit, as upon short conference between the King and the Earl a little apart, they soon grew to an accord. * *

So he confessed to me, that immediately after this pacification, the King used all means rough and smooth, to sound and pierce him thoroughly: what favours had been done him; what sums of money sent him; what promises made him; what advice or direction given him from her Majesty or Council, or other English, to get access in Court to possess the King. Whereunto the Earl made answer by utter denial, saving that her Highness had a princely commiseration of his distressed estate, so far only as to yield him to take the benefit of the air of her country for preservation of his liberty and life, so narrowly sought by the King; so directly and cruelly by his adversaries. * * The King, with marvellous vehemency, insisted long upon that point, and eftsoons conjured him, ‘by all the faith he bare him, by all the allegiance he owed him, by all the love he professed to him, by all the favour he hoped for ever to find of him, that he should not conceal Elizabeth’s dealings from him; being,’ as he said, ‘a matter so manifest.’ But,” continued Dr Toby to Burghley, “the more violently the King sought to sift him, the more resolute was the Earl, not only peremptorily to disclaim every particular thereof, but in sort, as he could, to charge the King with much unkindness and unthankfulness causelessly to carry such jealousy and suspicion of her Majesty, who had hitherto been so gracious a lady, yea a very mother unto him; and, under the providence of God, the only supporter of his estate that ever he found, or is like to find upon earth.—‘Now hear,

O Francis!' quoth the King, 'and have you then so soon forgotten my dear mother's death?'—'In good faith,' quoth the Earl, as he saith, 'if you, my liege, have forgiven it so long since, why should not I forget it so long after; the time of revenge being by your own means, and not mine, so far gone by. A fault can but have amends, which her Majesty hath made you many ways; and so hath she made me amends of all amisses, this once for all. To whom, with your pardon, Sir, I will ascribe not only my lands and living, but my life, with liberty and honour, which is most of all, not only as freely bestowed upon myself, but extended to all mine and my posterity: so as it shall never be seen or heard that ever Earl Bothwell, for all the crowns of France, for all the ducats in Spain, for all the siller and gold in the Indies East and West, for all the kingdoms in Europe, Africa, and Asia, shall utter one word in Council, or bear arms in field, against the amity of the two realms and princes, and the religion now by them authorized. And farther, I make God a vow,' quoth he to the King, 'that if ye, King Jamie, yourself, shall ever prove false to your religion and faith to your God, as they say the French King hath done to his shame and confusion, I shall be one of the first to withdraw from your Majesty, and to adhere to the Queen of England, the most gracious instrument of God, and the ornament of the Christian world.' From this he proceeded to the deposition of the Chancellor Maitland, upon whom he bestowed many an ill word and many a bad name: and an-

swered the objection of subrogating Stewart in his room (who is not as yet, but is likely to be;) undertaking confidently to assure, that whatsoever he had done heretofore, he should henceforth concur with her Highness, as well as himself, in all things lawfully to be commanded. What party they are, as well the Duke and Earls as other lords and lairds of most commandment, he saith your Lordship shall from him receive, in a catalogue subscribed with their own hands, by Mr Lock, whom these two days he hath looked for and mervaileth not a little at his uncoming. The Earl doth purpose to follow him soon after that he shall have undergone his trial for the witchcraft, which is now instant. The considerations whereof are, as he pretendeth, the only cause of absenting himself out of Scotland until the very day; lest, having now the King in his power, it should hereafter be objected, that in the proceedings thereof, he had done what himself listed. His Lordship did earnestly require me, moreover, because Mr Lock was not yet come, to remember your Lordship to take order that the union intended by her Majesty between the Popish and Protestant parties in Scotland be not overhastily prosecuted, lest the multitude of the one may in time, and that soon, wreck the other, being fewer in number, and so become rulers of the King. * * His Lordship acknowledged he hath now in Edinburgh and Holyrood House, of his own pay, a thousand soldiers, whereof the greater part are good musketeers, besides fifty horse to attend the King's person. * * * He maketh no question

but by her Majesty's assistance, whereupon he seemeth willing wholly to depend, he shall be, with his friends and followers, sufficiently able to manage the estate about the King, to the peace of both realms, against all the forces and frauds of Spain. * * *

"This nobleman," so the Dean concluded his letter to Burghley, "hath a wonderful wit, and as wonderful a volubility of tongue as ability and agility of body on horse and foot; competently learned in the Latin; well languaged in the French and Italian; much delighted in poetry; and of a very resolute disposition both to do and to suffer; nothing dainty to discover his humour or any good quality he hath. Now, as your Lordship is like to hear of all these and many other particulars more at large, as the King's affection to the Lady Morton's daughter, and a strange letter written to some such effect, with some good assurance taken to bring a greater estate there into their association, and unto her Majesty's devotion: so, since I was importuned thus far to lend him mine ear, and to relate his discourse to your Lordship with what fidelity and celerity I could, I am most humbly to beseech your Lordship, that in case it be not lawful (as in mine own poor opinion it is nothing convenient) for me to have talk with him or any from him, your Lordship will vouchsafe so much to signify unto me by your 'honourable letter,' or otherwise, with expedition; lest by him, or some of his, I be driven to this pressure in a manner, whether I will or no."¹

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C., Dr Tobias Mathew to Burghley, 2d August, 1593.

Immediately after this visit of Bothwell to the Dean, Mr Lock, the Envoy of Elizabeth, who had organized the conspiracy which had thus placed James in the power of his enemies, arrived from Scotland; and by him Bothwell sent the following letter to the English Queen.

“MOST RENOWNED EMPRESS,—The gracious usage of so clement a Princess towards me in my greatest extremity should most justly accuse me of ingratitude, if (being in the place wherein a little more than before I might) I should not perform those offices which then I did promise. So have I directed the bearer hereof to impart the same unto your Majesty with more certainty than before; to whom, as I have [promised,] so did I move my associates in all points to ratify my speeches; and, by their oaths in his presence, confirm the same. So, fearing to offend your most royal ears, having in this, so in all other things, imparted my full mind to this bearer, whom I doubt not your Highness will credit, my most humble and dutiful service being remembered, and your Highness committed in the protection of the Eternal, after most humble kissing of your most heavenly hands, most humbly I take my leave.”¹

Having despatched this superlative effusion of flattery to his renowned Empress, Bothwell addressed a few lines to the grave Burghley, thanking him

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Earl of Bothwell to the Queen. Indorsed in Burghley's hand, *Earl Bothwell to the Q. Maj. by Lock*, 4th August, 1593.

for his "Fatherly advices;" promising all grateful obedience, and signing himself his loving son.¹ He then collected from his friends on the Border six couple of hounds and some excellent horses, as a conciliatory present to the Scottish King,² and returned to stand his trial for witchcraft, which had been fixed for the 10th of August.

Meanwhile, the royal captive had not been idle. Although surrounded by his enemies and strictly watched, he contrived to receive messages from Huntly, who was mustering a large force in the North; and secretly communicated with Lord Hume and the Master of Glamis on the best way of making his escape. He was assisted in this by three gentlemen of the house of Erskine, who had been permitted to remain about his person. They employed two others of his attendants, named Lesley and Ogilvy; and it was resolved that a rescue should be attempted immediately after the trial of Bothwell, when the King was to pass over the Forth from Holyrood to Falkland. A fleet horse was to be ready at the park gate; James, eluding his guards, was to mount and gallop to Lochleven; whilst Hume, with all his forces, making an onset on the opposite faction, who had been assembled for the trial in the capital, hoped either to seize their leaders or put them to death.³ All

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bothwell to Burghley, Aug., 1593.

² MS. St. P. Off. B.C., John Carey to Burghley, 1st August, 1593. Also, Ibid. B.C., Sir William Reid to Burghley, 11th August, 1593; and Ibid. B.C., Sir John Foster to Burghley, 20th August, 1593.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, Aug. 11, 1593.

these preparations were managed by the King with such accomplished dissimulation, that he completely blinded Bothwell and his associates.

The trial now came on, and lasted from one in the forenoon till ten at night. In the indictment the Earl was accused, on the evidence of several depositions made by Richard Graham, who had been burnt for witchcraft, of three several attempts against the King's life and estate: one by poison; another by fabricating a waxen image in the likeness of the monarch; and the last, by enchantments to prevent his ever returning out of Denmark. The poison was compounded, according to the declaration of the wizard, of adders' skins, toads' skins, and the *hippomanes* in the head of a young foal; and was to be placed where it might ooze down upon the King's head where he usually sat, a single drop being of such devilish and pestilent strength as to cause instant death. The defence of the Earl was conducted by Craig the famous feudal lawyer, who contended that Graham's various depositions were not only inconsistent and contradictory in themselves, but refuted by the declarations of his miserable sisters in sorcery—Sampson, Macalzean, and Napier; whilst he proved, by unexceptionable evidence, that Graham had been induced to accuse Bothwell under a promise of pardon signed by the King's Council, and from the terror of being tortured. The Earl also defended himself with much spirit and eloquence; and the result was, his triumphant acquittal; which, considering the strength of his party at this moment, would probably

have been the issue had he been as guilty as he really appears to have been innocent.¹

All this took place on the 10th. On the 11th, the plot laid for the King's escape was to be carried into effect; and at three in the morning of that day, everything was in readiness. William Lesley, one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber, carrying with him the King's ring and a letter for Lord Hume, was passing as silently as he could through the court-yard; when Bothwell, who slept in the palace, was awakened by the watch, who suspected some secret practice, and rushing down seized the messenger, found on his person the King's letter and signet, and discovered the whole. The rest of the gentlemen were then arrested and delivered to the guard; and the Earl, repairing to the King, who was by this time making ready to take horse, interdicted the journey, and charged him with his breach of promise. A stormy interview ensued. James insisted that he would ride to Falkland. Bothwell assured him that he should not leave the palace till the country was more settled. "You and your fellows," said James, "have broken your promises, imprisoned my servants, and now think to hold me a captive. Where are the three Erskines? where is Gilbert Ogilvy? where the faithful Lesley? Did ye not swear that I should return, after the trial, to Falkland; and that you, Bothwell, should withdraw from my company as soon as you were cleared by an assize?"—"And so we shall,"

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C., Mr John Carey to Burghley, 12th August, 1593.

replied the Earl. "But first, my liege, we must be relaxed from the horn, restored to our lands and offices, and see the foul murder of the Earl of Murray punished. They who slew him are known; they, too, who signed the warrant for the slaughter, the Chancellor Maitland, Sir George Hume, and Sir Robert Melvil."—"Tush, tush," said the King; "a better man than you, Bothwell, shall answer for Sir Robert."—"I deny that," insolently retorted Bothwell; "unless the man you mean is your Majesty himself." This was a home-thrust, for it had been long suspected that the King was indirectly implicated in the fate of Murray; and when the Earl proceeded to charge the Erskines with the conspiracy for escape, nothing could equal James' indignation, and all hopes of a reconciliation seemed at an end.¹ It was in vain that the ministers of the Kirk were summoned to promote peace: they prevailed nothing; and, as a last resource, Bowes the English Ambassador was called in. With matchless effrontery he declared his mistress' astonishment at the enterprise of Bothwell; regretted the facility with which so treasonable an invasion had been pardoned; and expressed her anxiety for the safety of the King's person, and the preservation of the country from rebellion. James answered, that it was not for him to answer for the enterprise of Bothwell. He was no accomplice, but its victim; and for the traitors who now kept him, they had forsworn themselves, and broken every promise. Was he not prevented from free access to his own palace of Falkland? Had they

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 16th August, 1593.

not imprisoned five of his servants, and demanded the trial of the Chancellor, the Master of Glamis, and Sir George Hume? and when he asked why, insolently answered—that they might be hanged.¹ But let them look to themselves. He might seem in a helpless state; but he was their King: and sooner would he suffer his hand to be cut from his wrist than sign any letter of remission at their imperious bidding; sooner endure the extremity of death, than consent to live a captive, and in dishonour. Bowes assured him of his mistress' sympathy; advised an amicable settlement; and at last, after two days' labour, with the assistance of some mediators selected from the ministers, the judges of the Session, and the chief magistrates of the city, succeeded in bringing the parties to an agreement.

During the whole of these conferences, the King appears to have behaved with such unwonted spirit and resolution, that it is evident he must have been assured of a large party, and of near and speedy succour. He declared, in sharp terms, to the ministers of the Kirk, that he would either be once more a free monarch and released from these traitors, or proclaim himself a captive: and he charged them, on their allegiance, to let his mind be known to his people; to exhort them to procure his delivery by force; and to assure them he would hazard his life to attain it.² When Athol proposed himself to be appointed Lieutenant-governor in the North, with full power

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 16th Aug. 1593.

² Id. Ibid.

against Huntly, and Bothwell claimed the same high office in the South, James, almost with contempt, refused both the one and the other; but he consented to pardon Bothwell and his associates, for all his attempts against his person; and agreed that Lord Hume, the Chancellor Thirlstane, the Master of Glamis, and Sir George Hume, should not repair to Court till the conclusion of the Parliament, which was to meet within a month or six weeks, at Stirling.¹ Nothing, however, was farther from the King's intention than the fulfilment of these promises, which he knew he could at any future time disregard and pronounce invalid, as extorted by force; and before such time arrived, he hoped to be able to muster a party which might defy his enemies, and secure that revenge which was only to prove the deeper, because it was dissembled and deferred. Meanwhile, with that elasticity and levity with which he could cover his gravest purposes, he resumed his gaiety, partook of a banquet at Bothwell's house in Leith, appeared wholly bent on his pastime, and rode to Inchmurrin to hunt fallow-deer.²

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Accord betwixt the King of Scots, and Earl Bothwell, 14th Aug., 1593.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 16th Aug., 1593.