

CHAP. VII.

JAMES THE SIXTH.

1600—1603.

 CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.

<i>England.</i>	<i>France.</i>	<i>Germany.</i>	<i>Spain.</i>	<i>Portugal.</i>	<i>Pope.</i>
Elizabeth.	Henry IV.	Rudolph II.	Philip III.	Philip III.	Clement VIII.

THE general gratulation manifested at the escape of the King from the treason of Gowrie, was not without its alloy. Though almost all believed in the reality of the conspiracy, a section of the Kirk demurred and doubted; and as the death of both the brothers had involved the particulars of the plot in extreme obscurity, the ministers not only declared it questionable that any treason had been intended, but, after a while, started the extravagant theory that the plot was a conspiracy of the King against Gowrie, not of Gowrie against the King. To examine or refute this hypothesis, after the facts which have been given, would be worse than idle; and we are not to be surprised that the incredulity of the Kirk should have incensed the King. But James adopted an unwise mode of refutation. Instead of simply insisting on the great features of the story, on the leading facts which were indisputably proved by

the evidence of Lennox, Mar, Erskine, and Ramsay, and throwing aside all minor matters and apparent contradictions, which, considering the rapidity, terror, and tumult accompanying the event, confirmed rather than weakened the proof; he forgot his dignity; held repeated conferences with the recusant ministers; argued, cavilled, remonstrated, and attempted in vain to explain and reconcile every minute particular. The effect of all this was precisely what might have been anticipated: Mr Robert Bruce, and his little sceptical conclave of brethren, were quite as ingenious in their special pleading as the King; and not only obstinately refused to accuse Gowrie in their pulpits of any plot against the royal person, but insolently insinuated that their two favourites had been murdered. James, finding them immoveable, banished them from the capital; and interdicted them, under pain of death, from preaching in any part of Scotland.

This severity brought four of the recusants, Balcanquel, Watson, Hall, and Balfour, to reason; and they declared themselves thoroughly satisfied of the truth of Gowrie's treason. But Bruce was inexorable. He considered that the question involved not only the truth of the conspiracy, but the spiritual independence of the Kirk; peremptorily refused to exculpate the King, or believe in his report; and was banished to France.¹ Extreme measures were then adopted against the family of Ruthven; and in a Parliament which assembled in the succeeding month of November, the revolting spectacle was exhibited

¹ Spottiswood, p. 461.

of the trial for treason of the livid corpses of these unhappy brothers; which, after the doom of forfeiture had been pronounced, were hauled to the gibbet, hanged and quartered. Their quarters were then exposed in the most conspicuous places of Perth, Stirling, and Dundee, and their heads fixed on the top of the prison in Edinburgh. Nor was the ignominy heaped upon the dead greater than the severity against the living. An attempt was made, on the very night of the catastrophe, to seize the two younger brothers of the house, who, at the time, were living with their unhappy mother at Dunkeld; but a vague report of danger had reached her, and they had escaped in disguise, accompanied by their tutor, who brought them in safety to Berwick.¹ On the King's return to Falkland, on the night of the 5th of August, the sister of Gowrie, Mrs Beatrix Ruthven, who was maid of honour to the Queen, was dismissed and banished from Court. By an Act of the same Parliament which inflicted the forfeiture, the very name of Ruthven was abolished; and the brethren and posterity of the house of Gowrie declared to be for ever incapable of enjoying inheritance, place, or dignity, in Scotland. Such was the avidity with which the favourites of the Court sought, for their own profit, to hunt down this ill-fated family, and fulfil the stern wishes of the King, that but for the generous protection of England, not a male of the house of Ruthven would have been left.

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., B.C., Scrope to Sir R. Cecil, 11th August, 1600. Ibid., same to the same, 15th August, 1600.

The relations between Elizabeth and James, previous to the conspiracy, had been, we have seen, far from friendly; and this connivance of the Queen at the concealment of the young Ruthvens, with other suspicious reports which arose immediately after the catastrophe, created a strong impression in the mind of the King that the plot had been fostered in England. It was remembered that Gowrie had been admitted, immediately previous to the attempt, into the most intimate confidence of the English Queen; it was observed that Rhynd, Gowrie's tutor, had been found destroying letters at the moment he was apprehended; it was reported that Nicolson, the English resident at Edinburgh, had been seen waiting, early on the morning of the 6th of August, on the shore at Leith, and had whispered to a friend who had betrayed his secret, that he was expecting strange news from the other side of the water. The Earl of Mar accused Lord Wylloughby, the Governor of Berwick, to the King, as being privy to the plot; but his only evidence seems to have been Wylloughby's intimacy with Gowrie at the Court of England; and this high-minded and brave soldier deeming his character far above such suspicion, did not condescend to confute the charge.¹ All these things, however, made an impression. When Nicolson assured the King of his devout thankfulness for his escape, the only answer he received, was an incredulous smile from James;

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Nicolson to Cecil, 6th August, 1600. Id. Ibid., 11th August, 1600. MS. Letter, St. P. Off., B.C., Lord Wylloughby to Cecil.

and many of the highest rank in Scotland, and best entitled to credit, persisted in tracing the whole conspiracy to England. Many, on the other hand, insisted on the total want of all direct evidence of Gowrie's guilt; and as the letters of Logan of Restalrig had not then come to light, it was difficult to confute such sceptics. Cranston, Craigengelt, and Baron, all of them servants of Gowrie, who were executed for their participation in the enterprise, had been examined by torture; and both in the agony of the "boots," and afterwards on the scaffold, confessed nothing which could implicate their unhappy master or themselves; and the letters of Nicolson, Lord Scrope, and Sir William Bowes, made little scruple of throwing the chief guilt upon the King.

Amid all this obscurity, recrimination, and conjecture, James despatched Captain Preston to carry an account of his escape to Elizabeth; and she, in her turn, sent down Sir Harry Bruncker with a singular letter, written wholly in her own hand, which began with congratulations, and concluded in a tone of mingled menace and reproach. Her anger had been raised on a subject which never failed to produce in her mind unusual excitement—James' intrigues as to the succession; and after a few lines on her joy at his escape, she attacked him in the following bitter terms on his impatience for her death, and the indecent haste of his preparations:—

“And tho a King I be, yet hath my funerals been prepared, as I hear, long ere, I suppose, their labour shall be needful; and do hear too much of that daily,

as I may have a good memorial that I am mortal: and withall so be they, too, that make such preparation aforehand; whereat I smile, supposing that such facts may make them readier for it than I.

“Think not but how wilily soever things be carried, they are so well known that they may do more harm to *others* than to me. Of this my pen hath run farther than at first I meant, when the memory of a prince’s end made me call to mind such usage, which too many countries talks of, and I cannot stop my ears from. If you will needs know what I mean, I have been pleased to impart to this my servant some part thereof; to whom I will refer me; and will pray God to give you grace to know what best becomes you.

“Your loving Sister and Cousin.”¹

What Elizabeth here alluded to by the memory of a prince’s end is somewhat obscure; and her Ambassador’s explanation, to which she referred him, does not appear: but the subjects which had especially excited her wrath, were James’ correspondence with the Earl of Essex, and his recent reception of Sir Edmund Ashfield,—the same knight who had been so unceremoniously kidnapped by Bowes and Guevara, and Lord Wylloughby. It was mortifying enough to a princess clinging, as still she did, to the last remnant of life and glory, to know that

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Royal Letters, Scotland. Copy of her Majesty’s letter to the King of Scots, written with her own hand, and sent by Sir Henry Bruncker, 21st August, 1600.

her subjects (as she bitterly said) "were looking to the rising sun;" but to find them in the very act of worship, chafed her to the quick; and perhaps nothing weighed heavier against Essex, than his suspected favour for James. There is a remarkable paper preserved, in which Ashfield gave his opinion to the Scottish King on the best mode of accomplishing his great object; and although no letters between James and Essex have been discovered, there seems to be little doubt that this unfortunate nobleman, now a prisoner in the Tower, had engaged to support the claim of the Scottish monarch with the whole weight of his influence. In his advices, Ashfield complimented James on the wisdom and judgment which had distinguished his policy towards the State and people of England. It was a great matter, he observed, that none feared his future government, or had taken offence at his person. He instructed him to employ every effort to gain the common lawyers, who possessed the "gainfullest" offices; were rich and politic men; more feared than beloved by the people, yet very powerful in the State. He ought next, he said, to secure the clergy, who possessed the greatest influence in the universities; were rich; and had most of the people, and many of the nobility and gentry, at their devotion. He should assure them that he had no intention of altering the state of religion, or their livings; which, according to the then computation of the parishes in England, amounted to nine thousand seven hundred and twenty-seven. And if (Ashfield added) the

King declared his inclination to exempt them from the heavy taxes which they now paid, it would go far to bring over the whole body to his service. He also advised the King to have letters ready, at the time of Elizabeth's death, to some one or two of the chiefest "men of command" in every shire and corporation, and promised to procure him a list, not only of the names of such, but also of the collectors and tellers of the Crown rents in England, to whom he might give speedy and special directions, by gracious letters, and win them to his service. His last remark related to the "citizens of London," a body of men whom he described as rich, strong, and well governed; who would stand firm to the preservation of their wealth, and keep themselves neutral till they saw which of the competitors was likely to prove the strongest, and how the game would go.¹

Immediately after the meeting of that Parliament, in November, in which the forfeiture of the Gowries took place, some unhappy differences broke out between the King and his Queen; this Princess having shown a deeper commiseration for the Ruthven family than James approved of. Amongst the innumerable reports which had arisen, after the catastrophe, it had been whispered that jealousy had lent its sting to the royal wrath. But although Anne of Denmark was sufficiently gay and thoughtless to give some ground for the imputation, the common story of her passion for the Master of Ruthven, seems

¹ MS. Brit. Mus., Julius, F. vi. 133.

to rest on nothing more than the merest rumour. She imprudently had given her countenance to that party at Court, which opposed the extreme severity of the King. It was reported that she had secretly sent for Beatrix Ruthven, and favoured her with a midnight interview in the palace. She suspected that intrigues were carrying on against her; and, on one occasion, if we may believe Nicolson the Envoy of Elizabeth, was so far overcome by passion, that she openly upbraided James with a plot for her imprisonment; and warned him that he would not find her so easy a prey as an Earl of Gowrie. The probability, however, is, that all this was much exaggerated by the gossiping propensities of Nicolson: for the royal couple, whom he represented as on very evil terms on the 31st of October, had been described in a letter, written only two days before, as exceedingly loving, and almost ultra-uxorious.¹ In the midst of this alternate matrimonial shade and sunshine, Anne gave birth to a prince, afterwards the unfortunate Charles the First; whose baptism was held, with great state and pageantry, on the 30th of December.²

Captain Preston, James' ambassador, now returned from the Court of England, and brought a more amicable letter from the Queen than her former ironical epistle. In speaking of Gowrie's treason, she declared her fervent wishes, that "the

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Nicolson to Cecil, 28th October, 1600. Also, *Ibid.*, same to same, 31st October, 1600.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Nicolson to Cecil, 30th Dec., 1600.

bottom of such a cankered malady should be fathomed to the uttermost;" and in alluding to the sorceries of the Earl, and the familiar spirits who were said to wait on his will, expressed her conviction, that "none were left in Hell," so detestable was the treason; but this, she concluded, ought to increase his gratitude to that Almighty Power under whose wings no infernal assaults could reach him, as it gave greater fervency to the *Amen* with which she accompanied her thanksgiving.¹ However involved or pedantic, there was no such obscurity in this letter as in the former; no dark hints or menaces: and its conciliatory tone was met by James with every friendly and grateful offer of assistance against her enemies. He revealed to her all the secret intelligence he had received from Spain, and promised his utmost efforts to raise a force of two thousand Highland soldiers, to act as auxiliaries with the English army in Ireland.² When this proposal, however, afterwards came before the Convention of the three Estates, many of the Highlanders and Islesmen sternly refused to bear arms against the Irish; a race to whom they were linked, they said, by common descent, and a common language; whilst the Saxons, or English, whose battles they were to fight, had long been the bitter enemies, both of themselves and their Irish ancestors. What impression

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Royal Letters. Draft copy of her Majesty's letter to the King of Scots, sent by his Ambassador, Mr Preston, 14th September, 1600.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Nicolson to Cecil, 4th July, 1602.

English gold might have made on these patriotic scruples is not certain; for, before the muster could be made, a signal victory of the Deputy, Lord Mountjoy, over the united forces of Tyrone and the Spaniards, rendered all foreign assistance unnecessary.¹

The fate of Essex, who now lay a condemned prisoner in the Tower, was a subject of deep interest to James. What negotiations had passed between this unfortunate nobleman and the King of Scots, it is extremely difficult to discover. No letters from Essex to James, or from the King to Essex, have been preserved; at least none have been discovered: and the assertion of Rapin, which has been more or less copied by all succeeding English historians, that James was actually a fellow conspirator with him in his insane project for the seizure of the Queen's person, and that it was a part of their plot to dethrone Elizabeth and crown James, is utterly improbable, and supported by no evidence whatever. That the King, in common with all who knew him best, esteemed and admired Essex, and that Essex had written to James after his return from Ireland, is, however, certain; nor is it at all improbable that the English earl had laboured to estrange the Scottish monarch from Cecil, and to persuade him that the Secretary was an enemy to his claim, and favoured the title of the Infanta. There undoubtedly was a time, as we learn from James' secret

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Nicolson to Cecil, 3d Jan., 1601-2. Ibid., same to the same, 6th February, 1601-2.

instructions to Burlie,¹ (whom he despatched in 1601 to the Grand Duke of Tuscany,) when the Scottish King hesitated whether it would be best to secure the aid of the party of Essex or of Cecil in his secret negotiations with England; but the defeat and imprisonment of this unfortunate nobleman convinced him that his case was desperate; and there is an expression in one of James' memoranda, from which we may infer, that to conciliate Elizabeth he had meanly sent her one of Essex's letters to himself.

However this may be, the Scottish King, some time before the trial of Essex, had determined to communicate with Elizabeth, on some points wherein he found himself aggrieved; and he now, with the view of interceding for his gallant and unfortunate friend, despatched to London two Ambassadors, the Earl of Mar, one of his highest and most trusted nobles, and Mr Edward Bruce Abbot of Kinloss, a person of great judgment and experience. They set off towards the middle of February 1601,² with a gallant suite of more than forty persons; and on their arrival at Berwick, were received by the Governor, Lord Wylloughby; who gathered from them, in the course of their brief intercourse, that the chief object of their mission was to congratulate the English Queen on her escape from the treason of Essex, and

¹ Hailes' Cecil Correspondence, p. 112.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Nicolson to Cecil, 15th Feb., 1600-1. Written on the day Nicolson communicated to James the intelligence of the determination to execute Essex. Certain news of his death were brought on 4th March, 1600-1.

to remonstrate against the reception and relief of Gowrie's brothers in England.¹ In their conversations with this nobleman, they appear to have avoided any allusion to the probable fate of Essex; yet that James had directed them to intercede for his friend cannot be doubted. His compassion, however, came too late; for Essex was beheaded before the Ambassadors reached London. The original instructions for their mission have not been preserved; but a letter of their royal master to Mar and Kinloss, written soon after their arrival, opens up to us much of its secret history. The real purpose for which they went, was to feel the pulse of the English nobility and people on the great subject of the succession; to secure friends; to discover and undermine opponents; to conciliate the Queen, and, if possible, procure from her a more distinct recognition of James' title to the throne: above all, to gain Secretary Cecil, who was now at the head of the English Government, and on whose friendly disposition James had long believed that everything depended. Many others had been forward in offering their assistance; and to all he prudently gave a cordial reception; but to Cecil alone he looked as the man who had the game in his hand, and whom he described in his letter of instructions as "King there in effect."²

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., B.C., Lord Wyloughby to Cecil, 22d Feb., 1601, following the Scottish computation: 1600 the English.

² Secret Correspondence of Sir R. Cecil, by Lord Hailes, p. 12. From a MS. Letter, St. P. Off., James Hudson to Cecil, 7th March, 1600-1, it appears the Ambassadors arrived in London early in

On the first audience of Mar and Kinloss, however, all seemed likely to miscarry. From the coldness and jealousy of Elizabeth, she appeared to resent some expressions in the King's sealed letter, written wholly in his own hand, and expostulating with her, in very decided terms, against her too easy belief of the unjust imputations so generally circulated against him. He declared that he was impelled by their long friendship and her own example, to unbosom his griefs, and not to suffer any misconstrued thoughts against her actions to take harbour in his heart; for which purpose, having already experienced the mischief which both had suffered from the employment of inferior diplomatic agents, he had now sent one of his highest nobles, the Earl of Mar, and one of his wisest councillors, the Abbot of Kinloss; both of them men of known and constant affection to the continuance of the amity between the two nations and their sovereigns; and whom he had fully instructed to deal with all "that honest plainness which was the un-disseverable companion of true friendship."¹

Their plainness, however, seems to have been rather too much for the temper of Elizabeth, which, at no time very amiable, was now fretted and broken by her increasing infirmities. "Her Majesty," said Cecil to Nicolson, "gave the Earl of Mar nothing but negative answers; the matters being of so sour a

March. Their audience seems to have been on the 22d of March. MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Hudson to Cecil, 21st March, 1600-1.

¹ St. P. Off., Royal Letters, Scotland, James to Elizabeth, wholly in the King's own hand, 10th February, 1601.

nature to the Queen, who loves neither importunity nor expostulation. When the Ambassadors explained the great pecuniary embarrassments of their royal master, and his hopes that, having done so much to assist her against their common enemies, he now expected some return in current coin, she met the proposal with a haughty denial. She would give, she said, no ready money; but, if he continued to deserve it, his pension should be augmented; and in the meantime, it would be well if he, who boasted of his services against the common enemy, would cease all traffic with Spain, and receive less frequent messages from Rome. As to Lady Lennox's lands, which he claimed so confidently, he should not receive a fraction of their rents; his title to them, she thought, was still *in nubibus*; and till he made it out more clearly, the estates were in safe hands. For the other matters on which they had shown themselves so importunate, they were of too delicate and important a nature to be suddenly handled; and she wondered, she said, at the boldness and perseverance with which they had pressed upon her, and dared to broach to her Council, so forbidding a subject.¹ This, of course, alluded to the succession; which, reminding her of the probability of her near dissolution, proved unpalatable in the extreme: so that the Ambassadors wrote to the King in the lowest spirits, and strongly remonstrated with Secretary Cecil on their strange reception. Nothing in the world, they said, in addressing this minister, but their

¹ MS. Letter, British Museum, Titus, C vii. f. 124, Elizabeth to James, 11th May, 1601.

uncomfortable experience, could have persuaded them that his royal mistress would have treated the offers which regarded her own safety, and the welfare of her people, with so little regard; whilst, on the other hand, she gave so ready an ear to the enemies of their master, and the vile slanders which had been circulated against him. They must make bold to tell him, that there was a great difference between vigilancy and credulity; and that it formed no part of wisdom, "*ponere rumores ante salutem.*"¹

It is interesting to attend to the directions which this unpromising state of things drew from the Scottish King. The Ambassadors, it would appear, had sought his instructions as to the terms in which they ought to leave the English Queen, if she continued in this unpropitious and distant temper. "As to your doubt," said he, "in what sort to leave there,² it must be according to the answer you receive to the former demands: for if ye be well satisfied therein, then must ye have a sweet and kind parting; but if ye get nothing but a flat and obstinate denial, which I do surely look for, then are ye, in both the parts of your commission, to behave yourself thus:—

"First, ye must be the more careful, since ye come so little speed in your public employment with the Queen, to set forward so much the more your *private* negotiation with the country; and if ye see that the people be not in the highest point of discontentment,

¹ MS. Letter, British Museum, Caligula, D ii. f. 470, Earl of Mar and Mr Bruce Abbot of Kinloss to Secretary Cecil, 29th April, 1601.

² To leave there, *i.e.*, in what terms you take your leave.

(whereof I already spake,) then must ye, by your labours with them, make your voyage at least not all utterly unprofitable; which doth consist in these points: *First*, to obtain all the certainty ye can of the town of London, that in due time they will favour the right; *Next*, to renew and confirm your acquaintance with the Lieutenant of the Tower; *Thirdly*, to obtain as great a certainty as ye can of the fleet, by the means of Lord Henry Howard's nephew, and of some sea-ports; *Fourthly*, to secure the hearts of as many noblemen and knights as ye can get dealing with, and to be resolved what every one of their parts shall be at the great day; *Fifthly*, to foresee anent¹ armour for every shire, that against that day my enemies have not the whole commandment of the armour, and my friends only be unarmed; *Sixthly*, that, as ye have written, ye may distribute good seminaries² through every shire, that may never leave working in the harvest until the day of reaping come; and generally to leave all things in such certainty and order, as the enemies be not able, in the meantime, to lay such bars in my way as shall make things remediless, when the time shall come.

“Now, as to the terms ye shall leave in with the Queen, in case of the foresaid flat denial, let your behaviour ever be with all honour, respect, and love to her person; but, at your parting, ye shall plainly declare unto her, that she cannot use me so hardly as it shall be able to make me forget any part of that love that I owe to her as to my nearest kinswoman; and

¹ *i. e.* Regarding.

² Secret agents.

that the greatest revenge I shall ever take of her shall be to pray to God to open her eyes and to let her see how far she is wronged by such base instruments about her, as abuse her ears; and that although I shall never give her occasion of grief in her time, yet the day may come when I shall crave an account at them of their presumption, when there will be no bar betwixt me and them."¹

Nothing could be more manly and judicious than this advice to his Ambassadors; nothing was more fitted to raise his character in the eyes of the Queen herself, than a line of conduct at once affectionate and firm. Nor were his sentiments and instructions less sound with regard to Secretary Cecil, and those other powerful nobles whom he, at this time, suspected of hostility to his claim, and from whom he had expected better things.

"You shall plainly declare," said he, "to Mr Secretary and his followers, that since now, when they are in their kingdom, they will thus misknow *me*, when the chance shall turn I shall cast a deaf ear to *their* requests: and whereas now I would have been content to have given them, by your means, a preassurance of my favour, if at this time they had pressed to deserve the same; so now they, contemning it, may be assured never hereafter to be heard, but all the Queen's hard usage of me to be hereafter craved at their hands."²

This last menace, however, was wholly unnecessary. Cecil, whose prudence had led him, for some

¹ Hailes' Secret Correspondence of Sir R. Cecil, p. 9.

² Ibid., pp. 8, 9, 10.

years past, to keep aloof from the King of Scots, and to conciliate the favour of his royal mistress, by turning a deaf ear to all proposals from that suspected quarter, was too acute a courtier, and too keenly alive to his own interest, not to discern the exact moment when perseverance in this principle would have been visited with the total ruin of his power. That moment had now arrived. Elizabeth's health was completely shattered; and however earnestly she struggled to conceal the truth from herself, or to assume her usual gaiety before her people, it was but too evident that after her long and proud walk of glory and strength, her feet were beginning to stumble upon the dark mountain, and that the time could not be very far distant when the silver cord must be loosed and the golden bowl be broken. With this prospect before him, Cecil opened, with extraordinary caution, and the most solemn injunctions and oaths of concealment,¹ a negotiation with Mar and Kinloss; and James, who had hitherto suspected him, not only welcomed the advances, but soon gave him his full confidence, and intrusted everything to his management and address. How all this was effected, what were the steps which led from distrust to reconciliation, and from this to undoubting and almost exclusive confidence, cannot be ascertained; but two facts are certain and full of meaning: the first, that Cecil, as appears by a paper preserved at Hatfield, advanced ten thousand pounds out of his own pocket

¹ Hailes' Secret Correspondence of Sir R. Cecil, pp. 190, 191; also, pp. 202, 203.

to James, which was never repaid; the second, that this able diplomatist, from being first minister to Elizabeth, upon the death of his mistress stepped at once, without question or opposition, into the same high office under James.

Meanwhile the Scottish Ambassadors profited by this secret influence; and acting under the instructions of one who had the deepest insight into the character of the Queen and the state of the country, were able to follow out their instructions with infinitely greater success than on their first arrival. After a residence of three months in England,¹ they returned to James in the beginning of June; and although all had not succeeded to the extent of his wishes, the assurances which they brought from Elizabeth were friendly and encouraging. She expressed her astonishment, indeed, that the King should have again pressed upon her the same disagreeable matter, on which she had hoped he was already satisfied. It was a bold thing, she said, for any subject of hers to communicate with the King of Scots on so great a cause, without her privity; and he had done well to address her openly: for he might assure himself that she alone could do him good: all *byways* would turn to dust and smoke. As to his griefs, to which he alluded in his letter, her conscience acquitted her of every action which should give him the slightest annoyance; yet she took it kindly that he had unbosomed them, and had sent her so "well-chosen a couple" as Mar and Kinloss. Her letter concluded with this warn-

¹ From about February 20th till June 2d, 1601.

ing, embodied in her usual style of mystery and inuendo :

“Let not shades deceive you, which may take away best substance. * * * An upright demeanour bears ever more poise than all disguised shows of good can do. Remember, that a bird of the air, if no other instrument, to an honest King shall stand instead of many feigned practices, to utter aught that may any wise touch him. And so leaving my scribbles, with my best wishes that you scan what works becometh best a King, and what in end will best avail him, (I rest) your loving sister, that longs to see you deal as kindly as I mean.”¹

Elizabeth's last Parliament met (October 27;) and the Queen, although utterly unable for the exertion, insisted on opening it in person, and with unusual pomp; but she fainted under the weight of the royal robes, and would have fallen to the ground, if some gentlemen at hand had not caught her in their arms.² The Irish war, and the necessity of a large subsidy to support it, formed the great business for which Parliament had assembled; and the Queen had determined to avail herself of James' recent offer, to send her a body of Highland auxiliaries from the Isles. Lord Mountjoy, the Deputy, was still surrounded by difficulties. He had to hold out, not only against the

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Royal Letters, Scotland. Indorsed, Copy of Her Majesty's letter to the King of Scots, written with her own hand. See, also, her public letter under the Privy Seal, delivered to the Ambassadors on their return, MS. Brit. Mus., Titus, C. vii., fol. 124, dated 11th May, 1601.

² Hailes' Secret Correspondence of Sir R. Cecil, p. 26.

native Irish, led by O'Neill, but against a force of four thousand Spaniards, who had effected a landing at Kinsale, under Don Juan D'Aguilar. To these dangers, threatening England from without, was added the deep discontent of the people at home; who were groaning under that monstrous and oppressive system of monopolies, which had raised the prices of all the necessaries of life to an exorbitant amount. By a monopoly we are to understand a royal patent, which conveyed to some individual the right of exclusively selling any particular commodity; and the power of granting such, the Queen claimed, and justly, as a part of her royal prerogative. But she had now carried the practice to a grinding and ruinous extent. The patentee, if he did not exercise the privilege himself, disposed of it to another; and, in either case, all inferior venders, whether in wholesale or retail, were compelled to pay him a high yearly premium, which, of course, fell eventually on the consumer. This abuse had gone on increasing since the seventeenth year of the Queen's reign; who had found it a convenient way of paying a debt, or satisfying an importunate courtier or creditor, without drawing upon her own privy purse, or risking her popularity by direct taxation.¹ It was to the deep and general discontent occasioned by this, that King James had alluded in his secret instructions to Mar and Kinloss, when he advised them to discover whether the impatience and disgust of the country had increased to such a height that they were un-

¹ Lingard's History of England, vol. viii. p. 380.

willing to keep on terms any longer with Prince or State. In which case, he observed, it would be a pity not to declare himself openly in their favour, or to suffer them to be overthrown for lack of good backing:¹ a sentence, by the way, which proves that Elizabeth had good ground for her jealousy of the intrigues of the Scottish King with her subjects. But on the arrival of Mar and Kinloss, they soon discovered that the execrations of the people were directed rather against the Minister Cecil and the Government, than against the Queen herself; and when Parliament met, and the subject of the Irish war was brought before the Commons, it was soon seen that they knew perfectly how to make this distinction. The safety of the country and the honour of the Queen demanded that they should make every sacrifice to bring the Irish war to a speedy and successful termination; and for this purpose they agreed to one of the largest grants that had been given during this long reign; voting at once four subsidies, and eight tenths and fifteenths, for the expense of the war:² but on the odious grievance of monopolies they were firm. Cecil's coach, in going to parliament, had been surrounded by an infuriated mob, which assailed him with curses, and threatened to tear him to pieces. It was time, therefore, to take the alarm; and the Queen, who, however obstinate with her ministers, never struggled beyond the proper point with her people, sent for the speaker of the Commons, and declared her resolution to abolish the

¹ Hailes' Secret Correspondence, pp. 2, 3.

² Ibid., p. 25.

whole system.¹ This announcement was received with the utmost joy; the Queen regained her popularity; and soon after this, the total defeat of Tyrone and his Spanish auxiliaries, the successful termination of the war in Ireland, and the destruction of the Spanish galleys, under Spinola, by a combined squadron of the English and Dutch, shed a farewell ray of glory over the last year of her reign. It was now no longer necessary for Elizabeth to court the assistance of James, or to keep in pay the hardy mercenaries of the Scottish Isles: her kingdom was at peace; and resuming her progresses and her gaieties, she struggled to overcome or defy her increasing infirmities; rode to the chase; had country dances in the Privy Chamber; selected a new favourite, in the young Earl of Clanricard; and seemed wholly given up to disport, at a time when it was apparent to every one that her hours had been far better spent in retirement from the world, and preparation for that last scene, which the greatest Prince, as well as the meanest subject, must act alone.²

There had been some expectation in Scotland that the question of the succession was to have been agitated in the late Parliament; and the arrival of James' favourite, the Duke of Lennox, at the Court of England, at the moment of its being assembled, seems to have excited the suspicions of the Queen;³

¹ Lingard, vol. viii. pp. 380, 381.

² Lord Henry Howard to the Earl of Mar, Sept., 1602, Hailes' Cecil Correspondence, pp. 231, 233.

³ Lord Henry Howard to the Earl of Mar, Nov., 22, 1601, Hailes' Correspondence of Sir R. Cecil, p. 16.

but this nobleman, although certainly sent by the King of Scots chiefly to watch over his interests and confirm those secret friendships with which he was strengthening himself, acted with much prudence, paid his court effectually to the English Queen, and lulled all resentment by his frank offer to lead the Scottish auxiliaries against the Spaniards and the Irish. New and alarming reports of the continued preparations of Philip the Third having recently reached the Queen, she was particularly gratified by the secret information which James had transmitted her on the subject, and by the readiness with which he had permitted Lennox to volunteer his services. These, however, she declined; declaring that she would never consent to hazard so valuable a life in so perilous an enterprise, and dismissing him with the most flattering marks of her approbation.¹

During the Duke's residence in England, his chief care seems to have been to conciliate that party in the State which was opposed to Cecil, and whom this crafty minister represented as inimical to James. It was led by the Earl of Northumberland, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Lord Cobham. Lord Henry Howard, the agent of Cecil, in his secret correspondence with the King of Scots, laboured to persuade that monarch that this faction were little to be trusted, without weight in the country, and altogether desperate, false, and reckless men. The great object of Cecil and Howard was to exalt their own power and

¹ MS. St. P. Off., Copy of the time. Royal Letters, Scotland, Elizabeth to James, 2d December, 1601.

services, and to depreciate every other instrument to whom James might deem himself indebted; and never was there a more revolting picture than that presented by the secret correspondence of these two politicians with their future sovereign. To the King himself, Lord Henry's flattery almost borders upon blasphemy.¹ On all others, except Cecil and his confidants, he pours out an unceasing flood of abuse, slander, bitterness, and contempt; and to that great Princess whom they had idolized in her palmy days, and whose sun was now sinking in sorrow, there is not given a single sigh of regret, not a solitary glance of sympathy. It has been attempted to defend Cecil from being participant in these intrigues, by asserting that the correspondence is not his, and that he is not responsible for the letters of Lord Henry Howard; but the argument will not bear examination. It is true, indeed, that he neither signed nor indited the letters; but he dictated them: he read and approved of them; he despatched them; he was present when the answers were received; he opened the packet which contained them; and King James, when he replies, either in his own person or through

¹ He is the apple of the Eternal eye; the most "inestimable King James, whom neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, shall separate from the affection and vows they have, next to the sovereign possessor, vowed to him; the redoubted monarch, of whose matchless mind Lord Henry thinks, as God's lieutenant on earth, with the same reverence and awe which he owes to God himself when he is on his knees."—Hailes' *Secret Correspondence of Sir Robert Cecil*, pp. 154, 168, 170, 194, 233.

Mr Bruce his late ambassador, addresses Howard as the mere organ of Cecil. To have written in his own person, or to have given Lord Henry Howard any unlimited commission which should have made Cecil responsible for every sentiment uttered by this prince of flatterers, would have been far too bungling and dangerous an expedient for so profound a politician, so accomplished a lover of mystery and intelligence as this Statesman. But every letter in the correspondence shows that a finer system was adopted, which insured safety to the minister in the event of detection, and yet interfered with none of the advantages of success; by which Howard, although fully instructed beforehand by Cecil, expressed himself as if he acted alone, and at his own risk. It has been said, also, that the real letters of Cecil to James are preserved at Hatfield, amongst the archives of his noble descendant, and contain nothing discreditable to the Secretary. But these, probably, were letters of mere ceremony and general goodwill, which Cecil despatched by the common opportunities, and cared not who should intercept or read; nay, it is quite possible that, in the intricate spirit of the diplomacy of these times, they were written to be intercepted, and for the purpose of lulling suspicion by the innocence of their contents. At all events, nothing could be more secretly or adroitly managed than the whole correspondence between Howard, Cecil, and the Scottish King. No one had the least suspicion of the secret understanding that existed between the trio. In England, the Secretary appeared wholly en-

grossed with public affairs, and so exclusively devoted to his royal mistress, that many wondered at his indifference to James, whilst he was in truth his sole adviser. When the subject of the succession was openly canvassed; when all were looking to Scotland, and Cecil seemed to stand aloof, and, if the subject were forced upon him, spoke of the King of Scots with a coldness and indifference which blinded the most acute: James, on the other hand, acted his part with admirable dexterity; praised Cecil for his fidelity to his royal mistress; and affected great doubt whether he would eventually turn out his friend or his opponent.

On one point, however, Sir Robert and Lord Henry mistook the character of their royal correspondent. To enhance their own services and destroy their rivals, they insisted on the absolute necessity of the King following out the precise plan which they had sketched out for him, and declining all offers of assistance but what came through themselves. Northumberland, Raleigh, Shrewsbury, Cobham, were, according to their representations, utterly unworthy of credit; and were secretly engaged in courses which proved them to be bitterly opposed to his claim. To write to them, or to encourage any persons whatever who were not pointed out by his worthy and faithful Cecil, would, according to Lord Henry's opinion, be the extremity of folly, and might in a moment overthrow all the fair fabric of their hopes. Nay, they had the boldness to proceed farther; and not only attempted to work on the fears

and suspicions of the Scottish King, by warning him of his enemies in England, but threw out dark and mysterious hints of treasonable intrigues in his own Court, and even presumed to tutor him as to his conduct to his Queen. Anne of Denmark, they hinted, was a worthy Princess, yet a *woman*, and easily deceived by flatterers, who, for their own ends, were doing all they could to thwart the only measures which could guide him, under the pilotage of his worthy Cecil, to the haven where he would be. James, however, was not to be so cozened. He detected the selfishness of such conduct; called upon them, if they really knew of any plots against his life or his rights, to speak out with the manly openness of truth, and have done with dark inuendoes. Following his own judgment, he treated with contempt their prohibition as to "secret correspondents;" wrote to Northumberland, accepting with warmth and gratitude his offers of service; welcomed with courtesy and goodwill all who made advances to him; and took care that Lord Henry Howard should know that he considered the language used regarding his Queen as a personal insult to himself. The two cunning statesmen, who had outwitted themselves in their desire to monopolize power and destroy their competitors, were astounded; and Lord Henry's apology to his inestimable King James, was as abject as his object had been mean and selfish.

James' greatest difficulty was with the Catholics, a powerful party in England; yet regarded by the Queen, and the Protestant body of her sub-

jects, with so much suspicion, that it was almost equally dangerous to his hopes to conciliate, or to practise severity. But, happily for this Prince, they were at this moment weakened by divisions; and the great question of the "succession," which had been keenly debated amongst the English Catholic exiles abroad, had eventually split them into two parties: the Spanish faction led by the celebrated Father Persons, the author of the famous Treatise on the Succession, published under the fictitious name of Doleman; and their opponent faction led by Paget. The first party had espoused the cause of the Infanta. It was to support her claim, as descended from John of Gaunt, son of Edward the Third, that the book on the succession had been written: and as long as this Princess continued single, and there was a chance of her marrying the King of Scots, or some English nobleman, it was thought not impossible that the English people might be reconciled to her accession. Her marriage, however, with the Archduke Albert, rendered the prospect desperate; and Persons, her champion, who had now deserted the Court of Spain, and removed to Rome, abandoned her cause, and confined his efforts, and those of his party, to the succession of a Catholic Prince.¹ Who this should be, he declared was a matter, to him, of indifference; but many of his supporters in England looked to Arabella Stewart, the cousin-german of James; and had formed a visionary project for her

¹ Lingard's Hist. of England, vol. viii., fourth edition, p. 388. Letter of Father Persons to the Earl of Angus, 4th Jan., 1600.

conversion to Rome, and her marriage with the Cardinal Farnese, also a descendant of John of Gaunt.¹ It was, perhaps, to this wild scheme that the Scottish King alluded, when he lamented that Arabella had been lately moved, by the persuasion of Jesuits, to change her religion:² but there is no evidence that Persons, who had much influence with his party in England, ever believed it practicable; and the publication of James' "Basilicon Doron," appears to have given a new turn to the ideas of this devoted Catholic, and to have persuaded him, that a Prince who could express himself with so much catholicity on some points, would, in time, "suffer himself to be guided to the truth on all." There is a remarkable letter still preserved, in which Persons, writing from Rome, describes his having read some passages of the "Basilicon" to the Pope, who, he says, could scarcely refrain from shedding tears of joy, in hearing them. "May Christ Jesus," exclaimed Persons, "make him a Catholic! for he would be a mirror to all Princes of Christendom."³

All this rendered the Spanish faction far less bitter than before in their feelings towards the Scottish King; whilst their opponents, the English Catholic exiles, who were led by Paget, having all

¹ Lingard's Hist. of England, vol. viii., fourth edition, p. 489. Letter of Father Persons to the Earl of Angus, 4th Jan., 1600.

² Hailes' Secret Correspondence of Sir Robert Cecil, p. 118.

³ MS. Brit. Mus., Julius, F. vi., f. 142. Persons to T. M., from Rome.

along contended that Mary Queen of Scots was the rightful heir of the English Crown, considered, as a matter of course, that her title vested, after her death, in her son. To him, therefore, they professed their readiness, on the death of Elizabeth, to transfer their allegiance: from him they looked, in return, for some alleviation of their sufferings, some toleration of their religion. And so keen were their feelings against the Spanish faction, that at the time Persons advocated the cause of the Infanta, he and his supporters met with no more determined enemies than the English Catholic exiles.¹ So far did they carry this hostility, that they entered into a secret correspondence with their own government, and lowered themselves by becoming spies and informers against their brethren.²

It was the anxious desire of the King of Scots to conciliate both these parties. One great argument in Persons' "Conference on the Succession," which contended that heresy must be considered an insurmountable ground of exclusion, was evidently directed against him; and had formerly given rise to a mission of Pourie Ogilvy, a Catholic baron, whom he sent, in 1595, into Italy and Spain. At Venice, and at Rome, this Envoy, acting, as he asserted, by the secret instructions of the King of Scots, represented his royal master as ready to be instructed in the Catholic faith, and to give a favourable and candid hearing to its expounders.

¹ Lingard's Hist. of England, vol. viii., fourth ed., pp. 390, 391.

² Lingard, Id. Ibid.

On proceeding into Spain, Ogilvy's flight was bolder, and the promises held out more tempting and decided. The King of Scots, he said, was determined to revenge the injuries and insults offered him by the Queen of England, and eagerly desired the coöperation of Philip. Why then should their majesties not enter into a treaty? His master, for his part, would become Catholic, establish the true faith in his dominions, and send his son, as a hostage for his sincerity, to be educated at the Court of Spain. In return, he required from Philip a renunciation of his claims upon the English Crown, an advance of 500,000 ducats, and an auxiliary force of 12,000 men. Philip, however, looked with suspicion on the Ambassador, who had been observed to haunt with Paget and his friends in the Low Countries. His veracity, his credentials, even his religion, were disputed; and although treated with outward courtesy by the Spanish monarch, he received little encouragement.

But James, who had a strong predilection for these mysterious missions, was not cast down; and returned to the attack. In September 1596, a second Envoy, named Drummond, who alleged that he was employed by James, repaired to the Papal Court, and carried with him a letter from the King to Clement the Eighth, in which he suggested that the residence of a Scottish Minister at the Court of Rome would have the best effects; and proposed that Drummond Bishop of Vaison, a Scotsman by birth, should be selected for that purpose. The Ambassador proposed

also, in the King's name, that the young Prince Henry, his eldest son, should be brought up in the Catholic faith, and offered to place his castle of Edinburgh in the hands of the Catholics.¹ It is extremely difficult to discover how much, or how little truth there was in these alleged intrigues of the Scottish King. Ogilvy, undoubtedly, acted not only as an Envoy of James, but a spy of Cecil; and James, when challenged by Elizabeth's Ambassador, Sir Henry Bruncker, as to his letter to Clement, declared in the most pointed and solemn manner, that he never wrote, or transmitted, such a document to Rome. The letter, however, was subsequently produced, and published by Cardinal Bellarmine. It undoubtedly bore the King's signature; and, after a rigid inquiry, Lord Balmerino, the Scottish Secretary of State, a Catholic, and near relative of the Bishop of Vaison, confessed that he had smuggled in the obnoxious epistle amongst a crowd of other papers; and that the King, believing it to be a matter of form, like the rest, had signed it without glancing at its contents. This story, however, did not itself obtain belief. It was alleged that Balmerino had consented to become the scape-goat, that he might shelter his royal master; and the leniency of his punishment, for so daring an act, confirmed the suspicion. But, on whatever side the truth may be, this secret intercourse produced a favourable feeling in the great body of the Catholics towards the King of Scots. The impression in his favour was universal amongst all parties in Eng-

¹ Hailes' Secret Correspondence of Sir R. Cecil, pp. 157, 158.

land; and Howard assured the Earl of Mar, in a letter written in the summer of 1602, that all men spoke as freely and certainly of the succession of the King of Scots, as if they were about to take the oath of allegiance to him in his own capital.¹

It remained only for James to take heed that no storms or commotions at home, should disturb this fair weather in England. And here, too, his happy star prevailed; and his efforts to extinguish those dreadful dissensions amongst his nobility, which, for many years, had exposed the country to all the horrors of private war, were at last successful. The Earls of Argyll and Huntly were reconciled, and their friendship cemented by the betrothment of Argyll's daughter to Huntly's son.² The Duke of Lennox, and the party of the Scottish Queen, were induced to forget their deadly differences with the Earl of Mar; and, last of all, that obstinate and far-ramifying blood-feud between the great houses of Murray and Huntly, which had now, for more than forty years, torn and depopulated some of the fairest portions of the country, was brought to an end by the firm and judicious arbitration of James. This success, and the extraordinary calm with which it was accompanied, occasioned the utmost joy throughout the country; and Nicolson, the English resident, informed Cecil that nothing was now heard at Court but the voice of festivity and gratulation; the nobility feasting each other, consorting like brethren, and all united

¹ Hailes' Secret Correspondence of Sir Robert Cecil, p. 127.

² MS. St. P. Off., Nicolson to Cecil, 1st February, 1602.

in one loving bond for the surety and service of the King.¹

Amid these happy reconcilements, the King of Spain intimated to James his desire to send him an Ambassador; and Drummond Bishop of Vaison, solicited permission to visit his native country. The King of France, also, in great secrecy, proposed a new league with Scotland, with the object of strengthening himself against Spain; but as Henry added nothing as to including England, the Scottish King seized the opportunity to convince Elizabeth of his fair dealing. He accordingly despatched Roger Ashton with a full account of all his foreign negotiations; made her participant of his secret intelligence from Spain; communicated the private offers of Henry the Fourth; and, expressing his deep gratitude for her steady friendship, requested her advice regarding the answers he should send to France and Spain.² The Queen, in reply, cautioned him against putting implicit trust in the promises of the French King, whose sincerity she doubted. "Let others promise," said she, "and I will do as much with truth as others with wiles." However, it would do little harm, she observed, to put Henry to the test; and for her part she would make one of any league that was proposed. As to secrecy and taciturnity, he might thoroughly depend upon her: her head might fail, but her tongue

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Nicolson to Sir Robert Cecil, 1st February, 1602.

² MS. Letters, St. P. Off., Royal Letters, Scotland, Elizabeth to James, 4th July, 1602.

never.¹ It was on this proposal of Philip, which came somewhat suspiciously about the same time as the Bishop of Vaison's offered visit, that Elizabeth addressed, in the beginning of January 1602-3, her last confidential letter to James. It was written entirely with her own hand, now so tremulous from age as to make the characters almost illegible; but there was nothing of weakness or irresolution in the sentiments. It is here given entire: dated the 5th January, 1603, eleven weeks before her death; which makes it probable that it was amongst the last letters of importance she ever wrote:—

“MY VERY GOOD BROTHER,—It pleaseth me not a little that my true intents, without gloses or guiles, are by you so gratefully taken; for I am nothing of the vile disposition of such as, while their neighbours' houses is, or likely to be a-fire, will not only not help, but not afford them water to quench the same. If any such you have heard of towards me, God grant he remember it not too well for them! For the Archduke: alas, poor man, he mistaketh everybody like himself, (except his bonds,) which, without his brother's help, he will soon repent.

“I suppose, considering whose apert² enemy the King of Spain is, you will not neglect your own honour so much to the world (though you had no particular love to me) as to permit his Embassador in your land, that so causelessly prosecutes such a Princess as never harmed him; yea, such a one as

¹ Elizabeth to James, Royal Letters, St. P. Off., 4th July, 1602.

² “Apert,” open.

(if his deceased father had been rightly informed) did better merit at his hands than any Prince on earth ever did to other. For where hath there been an example that any one King hath ever denied so fair a present, as the whole seventeen provinces of the Low Countries? yea, who not only would not have denied them, but sent a dozen gentlemen to warn him of their sliding from him, with offer of keeping them from the near neighbours' hands, and sent treasure to stay the shaking towns from lapse.—Deserved I such a recompense as many a complot both for my life and kingdom? Ought not I to defend and bereave him of such weapons as might invade myself? He will say, I help Holland and Zealand from his hands. No. If either his father or himself would observe such oath, as the Emperor Charles obliged himself, and so in sequel his son,—I would not [have] dealt with others' territories; but they hold these by such covenants, as not observing, by their own grants they are no longer bound unto them. But though all this were not unknown to me, yet I cast such right reasons over my shoulder, and regarded their good, and have never defended them in a wicked quarrel; and, had he not mixed that Government, contrary to his own law, with the rule of Spaniards, all this had not needed.

“Now for the warning the French gave you of Veson's embassy. To you, methinks, the King (your good brother) hath given you a *caveat*, that being a King he supposes by that measure you would deny such offers. And since you will have my coun-

sel, I can hardly believe that (being warned) your own subject shall be suffered to come into your realm, from such a place, to such intent. Such a Prelate (if he came) should be taught a better lesson than play so presumptuous and bold a part, afore he know your good liking thereof, which I hope is far from your intent: so will his coming verify to much good Mr Symple's asseverations at Rome, of which you have or [ere] now been warned enough.

“ Thus you see how to fulfill your trust reposed in me, which to infringe I never mind, I have sincerely made patent my sincerity; and though not fraught with much wisdom, yet stuffed with great good will. I hope you will bear with my molesting you too long with my *scrattinge* hand, as proceeding from a heart that shall be ever filled with the sure affection of

“ Your loving and friendly Sister.”¹

Nothing, certainly, could be more friendly than this advice; and James, who was convinced that everything was now prepared for his pacific succession, and that he had no longer anything to dread, either from aspirants abroad or intrigue and conspiracy at home, waited quietly for the event which should put him in possession of his hopes. Nor had he long to wait. Only ten days after her last letter, Elizabeth caught a severe cold at Whitehall; and as she had been warned by Dr Dee, her astrologer, to beware of

¹ MS. Letters, St. P. Off., Royal Letters, Scotland. Indorsed 5th January, copy of her Majesty's Letter to the King of Scots, written with her own hand. It is now printed for the first time.

that palace, she exposed herself to a removal to Richmond in stormy weather, and after a slight amendment became worse. Up to this time she had struggled sternly and strongly against every symptom of increasing weakness. It had long been evident to all about her that, since the death of Essex, her mind and constitution had been perceptibly shattered. Her temper was entirely broken; and, in spite of every effort to defy it, a deep melancholy, and weariness of life, had fixed upon her. But although this was apparent to near observers,¹ to the world she kept up appearances; and continued her usual fêtes and diversions, interrupted by sudden fits of silence, abstraction, and tears.² At last, the effort was too much; the bow, bent to its utmost endurance, snapt asunder; and her lion heart, and strong energetic frame, sunk at once into a state of the most pitiable and helpless weakness. Every effort to rouse her was ineffectual. She would take neither medicines nor nourishment; her sleep entirely forsook her, and a low hectic fever seemed to be wasting her by inches; whilst she complained of a heavy load upon the heart, which made her sigh almost incessantly, and seek, in vain, for relief in a restless change of position. These sad symptoms increased to such a degree in the beginning of March, that the physicians pronounced her case hopeless; and it was deemed right to send for the

¹ Letter of Sir John Harrington, quoted in Dr Lingard's History, vol. viii. p. 394.

² Birch's Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 505. Harrington's *Nugæ Antiquæ*, pp. 317, 318.

Council, who arrived at Richmond on the 18th of March; and anticipating her speedy dissolution, took such measures as were thought necessary, in that event, to secure the public tranquillity. With this object, it was resolved, that the Lord High Admiral, Howard Earl of Nottingham, the only member of the Council whose presence seemed to give comfort to the dying Queen; Cecil, the Secretary of State; and the Lord Keeper, should remain at Richmond; whilst the rest of the Council repaired to Whitehall. Orders, at the same time, were issued to set a guard upon the Exchequer; to arrest and transport to Holland all suspicious characters found lurking in London and Westminster; to furnish the Court with means of defence; and convey to the Tower some gentlemen who were believed to be desperate from discontent, and anxious for innovation. Most of these whose hands it was thus thought wise to manacle before they could use them in any sudden mischief, were partisans of Essex; and it is remarkable, that in this number we find Baynham, Catesby, and Tresham, afterwards involved in the Gunpowder Treason.

Whilst these precautions were being taken, the melancholy object of them, the Queen, seemed retired and sunk within herself; took no interest in anything that was going on; and if roused for a moment, declared that she felt no pain, required no remedies, and was anxious for death. She expressed, however, a strong desire to hear prayers in her private chapel, and all was made ready; but she found the effort too much for her, and had cushions spread at

the door of the Privy Chamber, where she lay and heard service. Want of food and sleep appear, not long after, to have brought on a partial delirium: for she now obstinately insisted on sitting up, dressed, day and night upon her cushions; and when entreated by the Lord Admiral to go to bed, assured him, with a shudder of terror, that if he had seen what she saw there, he would choose any place but that. She then motioned him to approach her; and ordering the rest to leave the room, drew him with a piteous gesture down to her low seat, and exclaimed, "My Lord, they have bound me: I am tied with an iron collar about my neck."¹ It was in vain he attempted either argument or consolation: no power would make her undress or go to bed; and in this miserable state she sat for two days and three nights, her finger pressed upon her lips, as if afraid of betraying some secret; her eyes open and fixed on the ground, and generally silent and immoveable.² Yet, when Cecil her Secretary remonstrated against this, and asked if she had seen spirits, she smiled contemptuously, and said the question was not worthy an answer; but when he told her she must go to bed, if it were but to satisfy her people, she showed a flash of her former spirit. "Must!" said she; "is must a word to be addressed to Princes? Ah, little man, little man! thy father, had he been alive, durst not have used that word; but

¹ Lingard, vol. viii. p. 397. Camden's Elizabeth in Kennet, vol. ii. p. 653. Carey's Memoirs, p. 117.

² Turner's History of Elizabeth, pp. 700, 701. Birch's Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 507.

thou art presumptuous, because thou knowest I shall die." To the same minister she repeatedly declared that she was not mad, and that he must not think to make Queen Joan of her: alluding, perhaps, to Joanna the deranged Queen of Naples.¹

It was now thought right to summon the ministers of religion; upon which the aged Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of London her Almoner, immediately repaired to Richmond; and being admitted to her sick chamber, appeared to give her comfort by their ministrations and prayers. They attempted to induce her to take some nourishment, and to follow the prescriptions of her physicians; but this she steadily refused, declaring that she had no wish to live. They then exhorted her to provide for her spiritual safety; to which she mildly answered, "That I have done long ago."² When the Archbishop, who was affected by the deep despondency and melancholy into which she had sunk, attempted to rouse and comfort her by alluding to the services she had conferred on Europe, and by her glorious defence of the Protestant faith, she checked him severely, declaring that she had too long listened to the voice of flattery, and that it should at least be silent on her death-bed; but she held him by the hand, and compelled him to continue his prayers, till the aged primate's knees were wearied, and he had almost sunk down at her bed-side. At last she permitted him to depart, after receiving his blessing. In

¹ MS. of Lady Southwell, quoted by Dr Lingard, vol. viii. p. 397.

² Sloan MSS., printed by Ellis, 2d Series, vol. iii. p. 194.

these devotions she did not join audibly, for her speech had almost entirely left her for two days before her death; but it was apparent to those around her that she was perfectly sensible; and they had the comfort of seeing her lift her eyes to heaven and join her trembling, emaciated hands in the attitude of prayer.¹

To the latest moment of her life she seemed willing to keep up the mystery as to her successor, and either evaded the question, or replied so obscurely, that it was difficult to divine her wishes. On the night, however, on which she died, Cecil made a last effort for the King of Scots; and accompanied by the Lord Admiral Howard, and the Lord Keeper, earnestly requested her to name a successor. Her answer was proud and brief: "My seat has been the seat of kings, and none but a king must succeed me." They urged her to be more explicit, and mentioned the King of France; but she was silent. They then ventured on the King of Scots; but she vouchsafed no sign. The Lord Beauchamp, the heir of the house of Suffolk by his mother Lady Catherine Grey, was then spoken of; upon which she roused herself and said, with a look and flash of her former lion spirit, "I will have no rascal's son in my seat."² Here, according to the account of Lady Southwell, one of her maids of honour, who stood at the moment beside

¹ Carey's Memoirs, pp. 120, 122. It is remarkable that no proposal to receive the blessed communion was made by the dying Queen or the Bishops.

² MS. by Lady Southwell, Lingard, vol. viii. p. 397.

the bed, the important interview ended; and the Queen never again spoke. But, on the other hand, it was positively affirmed by Cecil, and the two lords his companions, that at a later hour of the same night she clearly declared by signs that the King of Scots alone ought to succeed her. When his name was mentioned, it is said she suddenly started, heaved herself up in the bed, and held her hands jointly over her head in manner of a crown. It is probable that this sign given by the dying Princess was one of assent; yet, it is possible, also, that they who had seized the awful moment when her soul was hovering between the two worlds to torture her with questions, may have mistaken a movement of agony for one of approbation.¹

Soon after this she sunk into a state of insensibility, and about midnight fell into a placid sleep, from which she woke to expire gently and without a struggle. Cecil and the Lords at Richmond, instantly posted to London; at six in the morning the Council assembled; and on that same morning, before ten o'clock, King James the Sixth was proclaimed heir and successor to Elizabeth, both by proximity of blood, and, as it was now positively added, by her own appointment upon her death-bed. Sir Robert Carey, Lord Hunsdon's youngest son, a near relative and favourite of the Queen, was at Richmond during her few last miserable days of suffering; and Lady Scrope, his sister, one of her ladies, watched her royal mistress at the moment of her death. Both were

¹ Sloan MSS., printed by Ellis, 2d Series, vol. iii. p. 194.

friends and correspondents of the King of Scots, and it had been concerted between the brother and sister that the distinction of being the first to announce the happy news to that monarch should be theirs. It was difficult, however, to cheat the vigilancy of Cecil and the Council, who had ordered all the gates of the palace to be closed; but Carey was on the alert, ready booted and spurred; his sister stood beside the bed, watching for her mistress' last sigh; and the moment it was breathed, she snatched a ring from her finger, (it had been a gift from the King of Scots,) glided out of the chamber, and cast it over the palace window to her brother, who threw himself on horseback, and rode post into Scotland. The Queen had died at three o'clock on Thursday morning and Carey reached the palace of Holyrood on Saturday night, after the royal expectant had retired to bed. He was immediately admitted; and throwing himself on his knees, saluted James as monarch of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland. The King asked for the token; and Carey, drawing the ring from his bosom, presented it in his sister's name. James then gave him his hand to kiss; and without evincing any unseemly exultation, bade the messenger good night, and composed himself to rest. Next morning, and for the two succeeding days, the news was not made public, as Carey's message was not official; but on the third day Sir Charles Percy, brother to the Earl of Northumberland, and Thomas Somerset, son of Lord Worcester, arrived with a letter from the Privy Council of England, announcing

the death of the Queen; the proclamation of James' accession to the throne; and the universal joy and impatience with which the people of England expected their new monarch. It assured him that their sorrow for their recent loss was extinguished by looking forward to the heroical virtues which resided in his person; laid at his feet the humble offering of their faith and obedience; and besought him, in his excellent wisdom, to visit them with all speed, that he might take possession of his inheritance, and inspire new life into its languishing body.¹

This great event was now communicated to the people, who received it at first with universal demonstrations of exultation and delight, and the King declared his determination to set out speedily for his new kingdom, leaving the Queen and his children to follow at a slower pace. He committed the government of Scotland to the Privy Council; intrusted his eldest son, Henry, now Prince of Wales, to the Earl of Mar; Prince Charles to Sir Alexander Seton, President of the Session; and the Princess Elizabeth to the Earl of Linlithgow. On the succeeding Sunday, James attended service in the High Church of St Giles, where, after a sermon was preached, in which the minister enumerated the many mercies poured out upon their Prince; and described, as none of the least, his peaceable accession to that mighty kingdom which now awaited him. The monarch himself then rose and delivered a valedictory address to the congregation, which, we are told, was often interrupted

¹ Spottiswood, pp. 473, 474.

by the tears of the people. James, who was himself moved by these expressions of regret and affection, entreated his subjects not to be too deeply troubled at his departure; assured them that they should find the fruits of his government as well afar off as when he had resided amongst them; pleaded that his increase in greatness did in nowise diminish his love; and promised them a personal visit once every three years; when the meanest, as well as the greatest, should have access to his person and permission to pour their complaints into his bosom.¹

This farewell oration was delivered on the 3d of April, 1603. On the 5th of the same month the King, surrounded by a large and brilliant cavalcade, composed not only of Scottish but of English noblemen and gentlemen, who had hurried to his Court with the proffers of their homage, took his departure from Edinburgh amid the lamentations of the citizens. His progress through England, which occupied a month, was one long and brilliant pageant. Triumphs, speeches, masques, huntings, revels, gifts, all that wealth could command, and flattery and fancy devise, awaited him at the different cities and castles which he visited; and on the 6th of May, 1603, he entered London, accompanied by a numerous concourse of his nobility and councillors, guarded and ushered by the Lord Mayor and five hundred citizens on horseback, and welcomed by the deafening shouts of an immense multitude of his new subjects. It seemed as if the English people had in this brief

¹ Calderwood, p. 472. Spottiswood, p. 476.

period utterly forgotten the mighty Princess, whose reign had been so glorious, and over whose bier they had so lately sorrowed. Not a murmur was heard, not one dissenting voice was raised to break the unanimity of his welcome; and thus, after so many centuries of war and disaster, the proud sceptre of the Tudors was transferred to the house of Stewart, with a tranquillity and universal contentment which, even considering the justice of the title, was remarkable and unexpected.

In this memorable consummation, it was perhaps not unallowable, certainly it was not unnatural, that the lesser kingdom, which now gave a monarch to the greater, should feel some emotions of national pride: for Scotland had defended her liberty against innumerable assaults; had been reduced, in the long struggle, to the very verge of despair; had been betrayed by more than one of her Kings, and by multitudes of her nobles; had been weakened by internal faction, distracted by fanatic rage; but had never been overcome, because never deserted by a brave, though rude and simple people. Looking back to her still remoter annals, it could be said, with perfect historical truth, that this small kingdom had successfully resisted the Roman arms, and the terrible invasions of the Danish Sea Kings; had maintained her freedom, within her mountains, during the ages of the Saxon Heptarchy, and stemmed the tide of Norman conquest; had shaken off the chains attempted to be fixed upon her by the two great Plantagenets, the First and Third Edwards, and, at a

later period, by the tyranny of the Tudors; and if now destined, in the legitimate course of royal succession, to lose her station as a separate and independent kingdom, she yielded neither to hostile force nor to fraud, but willingly consented to link her future destinies with those of her mighty neighbour: like a bride, who, in the dawning prospect of a happy union, is contented to resign, but not to forget, the house and name of her fathers. Yet, however pleased at this pacific termination of their long struggles, the feelings with which his ancient people beheld the departure of their prince, were of a melancholy nature; and an event occurred on the same day on which he set out, that made a deep impression upon a nation naturally thoughtful and superstitious.

As the monarch passed the house of Seton, near Musselburgh, he was met by the funeral of Lord Seton, a nobleman of high rank; which, with its solemn movement and sable trappings, occupied the road, and contrasted strangely and gloomily with the brilliant pageantry of the royal cavalcade. The Setons were one of the oldest and proudest families of Scotland; and that lord, whose mortal remains now passed by, had been a faithful adherent of the King's mother: whose banner he had never deserted, and in whose cause he had suffered exile and proscription. The meeting was thought ominous by the people. It appeared, to their excited imaginations, as if the moment had arrived when the aristocracy of Scotland was about to merge in that of Great Britain; as if the Scottish nobles had finished their career of national glory, and this last

representative of their race had been arrested on his road to the grave, to bid farewell to the last of Scotland's Kings. As the mourners moved slowly onward, the monarch himself, participating in these melancholy feelings, sat down by the way-side, on a stone still pointed out to the historical pilgrim; nor did he resume his progress till the gloomy procession had completely disappeared.¹

It is with feelings of gratitude, mingled with regret, that the Author now closes this work—the history of his country—the labour of little less than eighteen years: gratitude to the Giver of all Good, that life and health have been spared to complete, however imperfectly, an arduous undertaking; regret that the tranquil pleasures of historical investigation, the happy hours devoted to the pursuit of truth, are at an end, and that he must at last bid farewell to an old and dear companion.

LONDON, *26th October*, 1843.

¹ History of the House of Seyton, Bannat. Club Edition, p. 60. History of Scotland, by Sir Walter Scott, vol. ii. p. 426.