

CHAP. II.

JAMES THE SIXTH.

1580—1582.

 CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.

<i>England.</i> Elizabeth.		<i>France.</i> Henry III.		<i>Germany.</i> Rudolph II.		<i>Spain.</i> Philip II.		<i>Portugal.</i> Philip II.		<i>Pope.</i> Gregory XIII.
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For some time after this, Elizabeth's policy towards Scotland was of that vacillating and contradictory kind which estranged her friends, and gave confidence to her opponents. She had been early warned by Sir Robert Bowes, then resident at Berwick, of the great strength of the confederacy at the head of which Lennox had placed himself, and that soon no efforts would avail against it.¹ "Such had been," he said, "the success of the French intrigues, that Scotland was running headlong the French course;"² and that everything tended to the overthrow of religion,—by which we must understand him as meaning the Pres-

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. 27th June, 1580, Bowes to Walsingham. Also, 1st Sept., 1580, Walsingham to Bowes. Also, 6th Sept., 1580, Bowes to Walsingham; and 18th Sept., 1580, Walsingham to Bowes. Orig. Draft.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Bowes to Walsingham, 10th Aug., 1580, Berwick.

byterian party in that country. "Still," he added, "all was not irrecoverable, if the Queen would dismiss her parsimony, and take the true way to secure friends." But Elizabeth was deaf to these remonstrances. She alternately flattered, remonstrated, and threatened; but she resolutely refused to "go to any charges;" and the effects of her indecision and neglect were soon apparent.¹

Lennox grew daily more formidable. As he was supported by the favour of the King, and the countenance and money of France, he drew into his party the most powerful of the nobility. His possessions and landed property were already great. Favour after favour was bestowed. Himself, or his friends and retainers, held some of the strongest castles in Scotland; and not long after this, Walsingham, who was anxiously watching his power, heard, with dismay, from Bowes, that Dumbarton, one of the most important keys of the kingdom, was to be delivered to the favourite.²

This last determination incensed Elizabeth to the highest pitch. She had for some time been engaged in a secret correspondence with the captain of the castle, the noted Cunningham of Drumquassel, who had promised to retain it at her devotion; and on the

¹ MS. Letters, St. P. Off. Draft, Walsingham to Bowes, 31st Aug., 1580; and same to same, 10th Aug., 1580. Also, Orig. Draft, Elizabeth to Morton, 22d June, 1580; and Bowes to Walsingham, 9th July, 1580. Also, Orig. Draft, Walsingham to Bowes, 1st June, 1580.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Bowes to Walsingham and Burghley, Aug. 31, 1580.

first intimation that it was to be placed in the hands of Lennox, she ordered Sir Robert Bowes to ride post from Berwick into Scotland, with a fiery message, to be delivered to the Scottish Council. The imperious and unscrupulous temper of the Queen was strongly marked in his instructions. If he found the fortress (for so its great strength entitled it to be called) undelivered, he was to remonstrate loudly against its being surrendered to one who, whatever mask the Pope allowed him to wear, was in his heart an enemy to the Gospel. If it was too late, and the castle already given up, he was instantly to confer with Morton how so fatal a step could be remedied: "Either (to quote the words of the instructions) by laying violent hands on the Duke and his principal associates, in case no other more temperate course can be found, or by some other way that by him might be thought meet."¹

Bowes hurried on to Edinburgh; met with Morton, whom he found still bold, and ready to engage in any attack upon his rival; and had already given him "some comfort to prick him on"—meaning, no doubt, an advance in money, when new letters arrived from the Queen. A single day had revived her parsimony, and cooled her resentment: it would be better, she thought, to try persuasion first, and forbear advising force, or any promise of assistance. None could answer for the consequences of a civil war.

¹ Orig. Draft, St. P. Off. Walsingham to Bowes, Aug. 30, 1580. Endorsed by Walsingham's hand, "My letter to Mr Bowes."

They might seize the young King, carry him to Dumbarton, and thence transport him to France.¹

Bowes was directed, at the same time, to alarm James' fears, for a second time, on the subject of the succession,—to assure him, in great secrecy, that if he continued obstinately to prefer D'Aubigny's persuasions to the counsels of his mistress, his right would be cut off by an act of Parliament, and the title to the English throne established in the person of another.² This threat, however, had been so often repeated, that it produced not the slightest effect; and Elizabeth soon after recalled her Ambassador, commanding him, before he left the Scottish Court, to upbraid the King with his ingratitude. His farewell interview was a stormy one. "His royal mistress," he said, "was bitterly mortified to find that this was all the return for her care of James ever since his cradle. She had little expected to be treated with contempt, and to see promoted to credit and honour the very man against whom she had expressed so much suspicion and dislike; but hereafter, he might find what it was to prefer a Duke of Lennox before a Queen of England."³

This retirement of Bowes greatly strengthened D'Aubigny. The young King became more attached to the interests of France: he entered into communication with his mother, the imprisoned Queen; and

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Walsingham to Bowes, 1st Sept., 1580.

² St. P. Off. Copy. Walsingham to Bowes, 10th Sept., 1580.

³ Orig. Draft, St. P. Off. Walsingham to Bowes, 7th Oct., 1580.

whilst the courts of Rome, Paris, and Madrid, united their endeavours to procure her liberty, Lennox persuaded James to second their efforts, and to overwhelm their opponents by a mighty stroke. This was the destruction of Morton, the bitterest enemy of the Scottish Queen, and whose recent intrigues with the English Ambassador had shown that, although his power was diminished, his will to work their ruin was as active as before. Their plot against him, which had been in preparation for some time, was now ripe for execution, and it was determined to arraign him as guilty of the murder of Darnley. That he had been an active agent in the conspiracy against that unhappy Prince, was certain; and that Archibald Douglas, another powerful member of the house of Douglas, had been personally present at the murder was well known: but this could be said of others who had escaped prosecution; and as to Morton, although shorn of much of his power and lustre, he was still so dreaded that no one, for many years, had dared to whisper an accusation against him. The arrival of Lennox, however, had changed the scene; and this new favourite of his Sovereign was now risen to such a height of power, that, finding the late Regent intriguing with Elizabeth against him, he determined to pull down and destroy his enemy at once.

For this purpose many things then assisted. Morton had quarrelled with the Kirk, and lost the confidence of its ministers; he was hated by the people for his avarice and severe exactions during his

regency; and his steady adherence to England had made him odious to the friends of the imprisoned Queen, and the party of France. Lennox, therefore, had every hope of success; and to effect his purpose, he employed a man well calculated to cope with such an antagonist. This was James Stewart, Captain of the Royal Guard, and second son of Lord Ochiltree, who had already risen into great favour with the King, and was afterwards destined to act a noted part in the history of the country. Stewart had received a learned education; and from the principles of his father, and his near connexion with Knox, who had married his sister, was probably destined for the Church. But his daring and ambitious character threw him into active life: he embraced the profession of arms, served as a soldier of fortune in the wars of France and Sweden, visited Russia, and afterwards returned to his own country, where he soon won the confidence of the young King and the Duke of Lennox, by his noble presence and elegant accomplishments. Beneath these lighter attractions, however, he concealed a mind utterly reckless and licentious in its principles, confident and courageous to excess, intolerant of the opinions of other men, and unscrupulous as to the means he adopted to raise himself into power.

To this man, then only beginning to develop these qualities, was committed the bold task of arraigning Morton; and to obtain complete proof of his guilt, it was arranged that Sir James Balfour, who was believed to have in his possession the bond for Darn-

ley's murder, and who was himself a principal assassin, should come secretly from France, and exhibit this paper with Morton's signature attached to it.

In this last scene of his life, the ex-Regent exhibited the hereditary pride and courage of the house of Douglas. He had been warned of the danger he incurred, and the storm which was about to burst over his head, two days before, when hunting with the King. But he derided it; and on the last of December, the day on which he fell into the toils, took his place, as usual, at the Council table, where the King presided. After some unimportant business, the usher suddenly entered and declared that Captain James Stewart was at the door, and earnestly craved an audience. The request was immediately granted; and Stewart advancing to the table, fell on his knees, and instantly accused Morton of the King's murder. "My duty to your Highness," said he, addressing the King, "has brought me here to reveal a wickedness that has been too long obscured. It was that man (pointing to the Earl) now sitting at this table, a place he is unworthy to occupy, that conspired your royal father's death. Let him be committed for trial, and I shall make good my words."¹

Amidst the amazement and confusion occasioned by this sudden and bold impeachment, the only person unmoved was Morton himself. Rising from his seat, he cast a momentary and disdainful glance upon

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Bowes to Walsingham and Burghley, Jan. 1, 1580-1.

his accuser, and then firmly regarding the King, "I know not," he said, "by whom this informer has been set on, and it were easy for one of my rank to refuse all reply to so mean a person; but I stand upon my innocence—I fear no trial. The rigour with which I have prosecuted all suspected of that murder is well known; and when I have cleared myself, it will be for your Majesty to determine what they deserve who have sent this perjured tool of theirs to accuse me!" These bitter terms Stewart threw back upon the Earl with equal contempt and acrimony. "It is false, utterly false," he replied, "that any one has instigated me to make this accusation. A horror for the crime, and zeal for the safety of my Sovereign, have been my only counsellors; and as to his pretended zeal against the guilty, let me ask him, where has he placed Archibald Douglas his cousin? That most infamous of men, who was an actor in the tragedy, is now a Senator, promoted to the highest seat of justice, and suffered to pollute that tribunal before which he ought to have been arraigned as the murderer of his Prince."¹

This scene had begun calmly; but as these last words were uttered, Stewart had sprung upon his feet, and Morton laid his hand upon his sword, when Lords Lindsay and Cathcart threw themselves between them, and prevented a personal encounter.² The King then commanded both to be removed; and,

¹ Spottiswood, p. 310.

² Harleian, 6999, fols. 3, 4, 5. Bowes to Walsingham, Jan. 7, Berwick, 1580-1.

after a brief consultation, the Justice-clerk, who sat at the Council table, having declared that, on a charge of treason, the accused must instantly be warded, Morton was first shut up in the palace, and after one day's interval, committed to the castle of Edinburgh. Even there, however, he was not deemed secure from a rescue; and his enemies were not contented till they had lodged him within the strong fortress of Dumbarton, of which Lennox, his great enemy, was governor.¹

On the same day that the ex-Regent was committed, the Council ordered his cousin, Archibald Douglas, to be seized; and Hume of Manderston, with a party of horse, rode furiously all night to his castle of Morham: but Douglas had escaped, a few hours before, across the English Border, having received warning from his friend the Laird of Long Niddry, who rode two horses to death in bringing him the news.² Lennox and his faction, however, had made sure of their principal victim; and all was now headlong haste to hurry on his trial, and have the tragedy completed, before any interruption could be made, or any succour arrive. Yet this was not easily accomplished. The story of his seizure had effectually roused Elizabeth. Randolph was despatched on the spur of the moment, to carry a violent remonstrance to the King; and Lord Hunsdon,

¹ Calderwood, MS. Hist. Brit. Mus. Ayscough, sub anno 1581, fol. 1115. Also, MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Walsingham to Randolph, 25th January, 1580-1.

² MS. Calderwood, sub anno 1581, fol. 1116.

her cousin, a proud and fiery soldier, received orders to raise the power of the north, and lead an army into Scotland.¹

But the envoy, on his arrival at Edinburgh,² found it more difficult to raise a party for the delivery of Morton than he had anticipated. Matters were there in so violent a state, and the English alliance so unpopular, that he dreaded assassination; and prayed Walsingham, who had addressed him as an envoy, to vouchsafe him the name of an ambassador, if it were merely for protection, and to save him from personal violence.³ On sounding the dispositions of the leading men, they appeared coldly affected. The Earl of Angus, indeed, Morton's nearest kinsman, was ready to peril all in the effort to save him; but he stood alone. The rest of the nobles were either banded with Lennox, or held themselves aloof, till Hunsdon's soldiers should be seen crossing, and not threatening to cross the Border, and till Randolph had begun to pay them in better coin than promises. They had been so often deceived by the artful diplomacy of the English Queen; she had already so frequently incited them to take arms, under a promise of assistance, and left them, when it was too late to retreat; that they were full of distrust and suspicion. Nor was the audience with the young King in any

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Walsingham to Randolph, 8th Jan., 1580-1.

² Jan. 18, 1580-1.

³ MS. St. P. Off. Randolph to Walsingham, Jan. 22, 1580-1, Sunday. He arrived in Edinburgh on Wednesday the 18th Jan., 1580-1.

way more encouraging. James had been irritated on Randolph's first arrival, by his refusal to have any intercourse with his favourite Lennox;¹ and when the envoy attempted to justify himself, and offered to prove, by the production of an intercepted letter, that he was an agent of Rome and the house of Guise, and carried on a secret intelligence with the enemies of both kingdoms, the monarch answered with much spirit, that Lennox was an honourable nobleman, his own near kinsman, and that the accusation was perfectly false. He had come from motives of affection to visit him; and as for the intercepted letter he spoke of, from the Bishop of Glasgow to the Pope, if any such existed, it was either a forgery, or a design of that prelate for Lennox's ruin. "The Bishop's character," said James, "is well known; he is my declared traitor and rebel; a favourer and kinsman of the Hamiltons, the mortal foes of the house of Lennox; and no one would be more likely than Beaton to think his labour well bestowed, if, by his letters and intrigues, he might cause me to suspect and discard my kinsman, who has embraced the true religion, and is zealous for my honour and interest. On this head," he added, "the Duke is anxious for the fullest investigation, and will refuse no manner of trial to justify himself from so false a slander; and as to the trial of Morton, (he concluded,) my good sister cannot be more solicitous on that head than I myself. But what would she

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Randolph to Walsingham, 22d Jan., 1580-1, Edinburgh, Sunday.

have? Can she complain, that a man accused, in my own presence, of the murder of my father, has been imprisoned till the evidence be collected against him; or is it reasonable to be angry because the day of trial is not fixed, when she is aware that Archibald Douglas, a principal witness, has fled into England, and that till the Queen of England delivers him up, Morton cannot possibly be arraigned?¹

To all this Randolph had little to reply; and every day convinced him more deeply than the preceding, that Morton's fate was sealed. Elizabeth, indeed, had at first talked proudly and authoritatively of her determination to save him; and her ministers and soldiers borrowed her tone. Walsingham declared to Randolph, that if a hair of Morton's head were touched, it would cost the Queen of Scots her life.² Hunsdon addressed to the same Ambassador a blustering epistle, anticipating his speedy invasion of Scotland, and full of threats against the "petty fellows" who were about the King of Scots.³ Leicester, whose opinion ought to have had still greater weight, expressed himself in ominous and warning words: alluding to the dreadful fate of Darnley, "Let that young King take heed," said he. "If he prove unthankful to his faithful servants so soon, he cannot long tarry in that soil. Let the speed of his predecessors be his warning."⁴ Bowes declared, that if

¹ MS. St. P. Off. The King of Scots and his Council's Answer to Mr Randolph, 7th Feb., 1580-1.

² MS. St. P. Off. Walsingham to Randolph, 9th Feb., 1580-1.

³ MS. St. P. Off. Hunsdon to Randolph, 3d Feb., 1580-1.

⁴ MS. St. P. Off. Leicester to Randolph, 15th Feb., 1580-1.

Lennox were permitted to triumph, and Morton to fall, the quarrel would be no longer about the trifles of the Borders, but the right to the crown; in which Scotland would be assisted by France and Spain, and fortified by a large party within England.¹ And the wise Burghley, in his "Directions" to Randolph, urged the necessity of immediate action to save Scotland from the domination of a concealed Papist—so he described Lennox—who, whatever he might pretend to the contrary, had been permitted by the Court of Rome to dissemble his religion.²

But this energy was short-lived, and spent itself in words. Hunsdon, after all his threats, protracted his levies; not an English soldier crossed the Border; and no decided support or supplies of money could be extracted from the caution and parsimony of the English Queen; whilst on the part of Lennox and his adherents, all was vigour and warlike preparation. The whole force of the realm was summoned to be in readiness to resist the English army. Bands of "waged soldiers"—so termed to distinguish them from the feudal militia of the country, who served without pay—were enlisted, and added to the ordinary guard about the King's person; and the three Estates assembled to vote supplies for the exigencies of the expected war with England.

Before this Parliament Randolph appeared and

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Bowes to Leicester, 14th March, 1580-1, Berwick.

² MS. St. P. Off. Directions sent to Mr Randolph, wholly in Burghley's hand, 17th Feb., 1580-1.

made his last great effort to bring about the deliverance of Morton, and overthrow the power of Lennox, by open negotiation and remonstrance. He spoke for two hours: insisted with much earnestness on the benefits to be derived from the friendship of his royal mistress; described, in glowing terms, the dangers to be apprehended from Lennox, whom he denounced as an agent of France and Rome; and produced an intercepted letter from the Bishop of Ross, to prove his allegations. All these exertions, however, came too late, and were utterly unsuccessful. Lennox denied the charge, and demanded the fullest investigation. The Parliament promised forty thousand pounds to support the preparations against England; daily rumours of war, and whisperings of the intrigues and conspiracies which were fomented by the English diplomatist, agitated and inflamed the country; and at last, as Randolph himself described it, "Every day bred a new disorder; men began to be stirring in all parts; the Ambassador grew odious, his death suspected, and the Court in a manner desperate."¹

These suspicions of conspiracies were not without foundation; for, from the moment of his arrival, Randolph had kept in his eye the third article in his instructions, which was, to raise a faction against Lennox, and employ force, either in seizing his person, or putting him to death in some open attack, if more conciliatory measures failed.² It was hoped

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Mr Randolph's Negotiation in Scotland.

² MS. Instructions to Mr Randolph, Jan. 6, 1580-1. Also, Memorial for Secret Objects. Caligula, C. vi. 104-106.

that in this way the party in the interest of England might secure the person of the young King, and remove from him those obnoxious ministers who persuaded him to throw himself into the arms of France, and to seek the liberty of the imprisoned Queen. The great advocates for this plan were Sir Robert Bowes, Lord Hunsdon, Lord Huntingdon, and the Earl of Angus; but they differed somewhat as to the best mode of proceeding. Bowes seemed to have the least scruples as to employing force, for the separating James from his favourite. In a letter to Walsingham or Burghley,¹ written shortly after Randolph's arrival, he informed his correspondent, that the Scottish nobles were drawing to an association; and that, amid the pageants with which the King and Lennox were then recreating the Court, "a strange masque might be, perhaps, seen at Holyrood," which would check the triumph of the favourite. Hunsdon, whose fiery temper on no occasion brooked much delay, recommended martial measures; and assured the English secretary, that Lennox must look for his dismissal to France, or to "something worse."² Huntingdon, a nobleman of the highest honour in these dark times, "assured Randolph, that any attempt to restore English ascendancy by negotiation would be fruitless; that open war must be deprecated; and that to get out of their difficulties

¹ The address is lost. MS. Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. vi. fol. 113. Bowes to —, 7th February, 1580-1, Berwick.

² Harleian, 6999, fol. 203. Hunsdon to Walsingham, 6th Feb., 1580-1.

by 'murder' would be worst of all: but, he added, that he could see no objection to another method, which had been already resorted to with success, and that more than once, in Scottish history. Why may not some of the nobility, assisted by England, say to the King,—'Your Grace is young; you cannot judge for yourself, and must be rescued from this French stranger, who abuses your confidence;' and then," he added, "if Lennox resisted and took arms, let them unarm him if they can, and let our royal mistress assist them."¹

Amidst these various and conflicting opinions, Randolph laboured busily, and with the ardour of a man in his native element; so that at last a band or association was "packed up," to use the common phrase of the times, amongst the nobles; and Bowes informed Leicester of the intentions of the conspirators, in a letter which shows, when taken in connexion with a communication addressed the day after by Walsingham to Lord Hunsdon, that the design of the nobles was to seize the person of the King, and secure, or perhaps murder, Lennox. "Albeit," said Bowes, "the levy of the forces newly assembled in Edinburgh and elsewhere, and the planting them about the King, to guard his person against suspected surprise or violence, doth greatly threaten the stay or defeat of the purposes intended, whereof I know your Lordship is advertised; yet I am in good hope, that, if any opportunity be found, the parties asso-

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Huntingdon to Randolph, 21st March, 1580-1.

ciate will, with good courage, attempt the matter." To this, Elizabeth, who knew and directed all, replied, that she would hear of no violence being offered to the King's person; but as for D'Aubigny, she could be content he were surprised, provided it could be executed when he was found separated from his young master.¹ The extent of violence or bloodshed sanctioned under this word, "surprised," cannot be precisely fixed; but to those who knew the character of the Scottish nobles of those days, and none knew it better than the English Queen, it conveyed, no doubt, an emphatic meaning.

The conspirators thus encouraged, completed their arrangements. They succeeded in corrupting some of the royal household; by their connivance, forged keys for the King's private apartments were made; and they thus hoped to enter the palace, seize the young monarch, put Lennox, Argyle, and Montrose to death, and send James to England.² But Lennox, when on the very point of being cut off, was saved by an unexpected discovery; and Morton, when his prison began to be cheered by the near prospect of escape, found himself more hopelessly situated than before. The chief actors in the association for his rescue were the Earls of Angus and Mar. With Angus, Randolph had arranged all in nightly meetings, held sometimes in the fields, sometimes at Dal-

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. 14th March, 1580-1. Bowes to Leicester. Also, MS. Brit. Mus., Harleian, 6999, fol. 479. Orig. Draft, Walsingham to Hunsdon, 15th March, 1580-1.

² MS. Harleian, copy of the time. Randolph to Hunsdon, March 20, 1580-1.

Keith. The Laird of Whittingham, a Douglas, and brother to the noted Archibald Douglas, was a principal conspirator, and intrusted with their most secret intentions; and four confidential servants of Morton, named Fleck, or Affleck, Nesbit, Reid, and Jerdan, were principal agents in the plot, and knew all its ramifications. Lord Hunsdon, who had a high admiration of Angus, was, as we have seen, deeply implicated: his forces were in readiness to advance from Berwick into Scotland, and he only waited for the signal which was to be the news of the King's seizure; when Lennox, receiving some hint which awakened his suspicion, seized Douglas of Whittingham, threatened him with the rack, and obtained a revelation of the whole. Morton's servants, Fleck, Nesbit, Reid, and Jerdan, were instantly arrested and put to the torture. Angus was banished beyond Spey; Randolph, whose intrigues were laid bare, fled precipitately to Berwick, after having been nearly slain by a shot fired into his study;¹ and Elizabeth, disgusted by the treachery of Whittingham, and the utter failure of the plot against Lennox, commanded Hunsdon to dismiss his forces, recalled Randolph, and abandoned Morton to his fate.

This, it was now evident, could not be long averted. His enemies were powerful and clamorous against him. Captain James Stewart, the accuser of the ex-

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Randolph to Walsingham, 25th March, 1580. Randolph affects to "suspend" his judgment of the truth of all this confession of Whittingham till further trial. There seems to be little doubt that he knew all the particulars of the plot previous to the confession, and bore a principal part in arranging it.

Regent, had openly declared, if they by whom he had been urged to this daring enterprise, did not make an end of the old tyrant, he would soon make an end of them.¹ The confession of Whittingham, and of Morton's confidential servants, had furnished his enemies with evidence sufficient to bring him to the scaffold;² and although Angus, Randolph, and Hunsdon still continued their plots, it was found impossible to carry them into execution. One by one the various Earls and Barons, whose assistance had been bought by Elizabeth, dropped off, and made their peace with the stronger party;³ till at last Morton was left alone, and nothing remained to be done but to sacrifice the victim.

For this purpose, Stewart, his accuser, and Montrose, were commissioned to bring him from Dumbarton to the capital. In those dark days many prophetic warnings hung over ancient houses; and among the rest, was one which predicted that the bloody heart, the emblem of the house of Douglas, would fall by Arran. This saying Morton affected to despise; for the Earl of Arran was dead, and the Hamiltons, his enemies, in whose family this title was hereditary, were now banished and broken men. But Stewart, his implacable foe, had recently procured from the King the gift of the vacant earldom,

¹ MS. St. P. Off. 11th Jan., 1580-1, Bowes to Lord Burghley and Sir Fr. Walsingham.

² MS. St. P. Off. Randolph to Walsingham, 25th March, 1581.

³ MS. Harleian, 6999, fol. 527. Randolph to Hunsdon, Edinburgh, 23d March, 1580-1.

though the news of his promotion had never reached the captive in his prison at Dumbarton. When Morton, therefore, read the name of Arran in the commission, he started, exclaiming, "Arran! who is that? the Earl of Arran is dead." "Not so," said the attendant; "that title is now held by Captain James Stewart." "And is it so?" said he—the prediction flashing across his memory. "Then, indeed, all is over; and I know what I must look for."¹

Yet, although hopeless as to the result, nothing could be more calm or undaunted than the temper in which he met it. During his long imprisonment, he had expressed contrition for his sinful courses; deplored the many crimes into which ambition and the insatiable love of power had plunged him; and sought for rest in the consolations of religion, and the constant study of the Holy Scriptures. At the same time, his preparations for the worst had not prevented him from taking as active a part against his enemies as his captivity would allow.

He was brought to trial on the first of June, five months after his arrest; and such was still either the lingering dread of his power, or the terror of some attempt at rescue, that the whole town was in arms. Two companies of soldiers were placed at the Cross, two bands above the Tolbooth; whilst the citizens armed also, and with another body of troops filled the principal street, for the purpose of conducting him from his lodging to the Tolbooth, where the trial took place. His indictment contained twelve heads of

¹ Spottiswood, p. 313.

accusation, or "*dittay*;" but the paper has not been preserved; and this is the less material, as the proceedings had scarcely begun, when a letter from the King was presented, commanding the Jury to confine their attention solely to the most important charge, his accession to the murder of the late King, his father. On this point, absolute and direct proof might not have been easily procured; for it turned out that Sir James Balfour either did not possess, or would not produce, the bond for Darnley's murder. But Morton's own defence supplied this defect; for although he denied that he had ever procured, or given his consent to the death of Darnley, he distinctly admitted that he knew the murder was to be committed, and had concealed it; upon which confession the Jury found him guilty.

The terms in which their sentence was embodied were the same as those still employed in Scotland. It declared him "convicted of counsel, concealing, and being art and part of the King's murder." And upon hearing these last words read aloud, the Earl, who had maintained the greatest calmness and temper during the trial, became deeply agitated. "Art and part!" said he, with great vehemence, and striking the table repeatedly with a little baton or staff which he usually carried. "Art and part! God knoweth the contrary." It is evident that he drew the distinction between an active contrivance and approval, and a passive knowledge and concealment of the plot for Darnley's assassination.

On the morning of the day on which he suffered,

some of the leading ministers of the Kirk, with whom he had been much at variance on the subject of Episcopacy, breakfasted with him in the prison, and a long and interesting conference took place, of which the particulars have been preserved, in a narrative drawn up by those who were present.¹ It is difficult for any one who reads this account, and who is acquainted with the dark and horrid crimes which stained the life of Morton, not to be painfully struck with the disproportion between his expressions of contrition, and his certain anticipations of immediate glory and felicity. The compunction for his many crimes—murder, tyranny, avarice, cruelty, lust, and all the sins which were the ministers of his exorbitant ambition and pride—is so slight, that we feel perplexed as to the sincerity of a repentance which seems to sit so easily. He speaks of the murder of Riccio, or as he terms it, “the slaughter of Davie,” in which he acted so prominent a part, without an expression of regret; and appears to have lost almost every recollection of his former life, in his prospect of instant admission into the society of the blessed. Yet all may have been, nay, let us hope all was sincere; and whilst it is vain to speculate upon a state of mind known only to Him who sees the heart, allowance must be made for the character of an age familiar with blood; for the peculiar, and almost ultra-Calvinistic, theology of the divines who ministered to him in his last moments; and the possibility of inaccuracy in the narrative itself,

¹ Bannatyne's Memorials, Bannatyne Club Edition, p. 317.

which was not read over to him before his death. In speaking of the assassination of the King, he distinctly repeated his admissions made at the trial; affirming that he, in common with many others, knew that Darnley was to be cut off, but did not dare to forewarn him; and adding, that the Queen was the contriver of the whole plot.

These conferences took place on the day in which he suffered; and his friends amongst the clergy had scarcely left him, when his keeper entered his room, and desired him to come forth to the scaffold. He appeared surprised, and observed, that having been so much troubled that day with worldly matters, he had hoped that one night at least would have been allowed him to have advised ripely with his God. "But, my Lord," said the keeper, "they will not wait, and all things are ready." "If it be so," answered he, "I praise God I am ready also;" and, after a short prayer, he passed down to the gate of the palace to go to the scaffold. Here another interruption took place; for Arran, his mortal enemy, was waiting on the steps, and requested him to tarry till his confession, which had been made to the ministers, had been written down, and brought to him for his signature. But this reimmersion into worldly affairs he entreated to be spared. "Bethink you, my Lord," said he, "that I have far other things now to advise upon. I am about to die: I must prepare for my God. Ask me not to write now; all these good men (pointing to the ministers) can testify what I have spoken in that matter." With

this Arran professed himself satisfied ; but his importunity was not at an end ; for he added that Morton must be reconciled to him before he proceeded farther. To this the Earl willingly agreed ; observing, that now was no time to reckon quarrels, and that he forgave him and all, as he himself hoped for forgiveness. He then proceeded to the scaffold, which he ascended with a firm step ; and turning to the people, repeated, shortly, his confession of the foreknowledge of the King's murder, only suppressing the name of his near relative, Mr Archibald Douglas. He declared that he died in the profession of the gospel as it was at that day taught and established in Scotland ; and exhorted the people, if they hoped for the favour of Heaven, to hold fast the same. Mr James Lawson, one of the ministers, then prayed aloud ; and, during this act of devotion, Morton, who had thrown himself, with his face on the ground, before the block on which he was to suffer, was observed to be deeply affected. In his agitation, his whole frame was convulsed with sighs and sobs bursting from his bosom ; and his body rebounded from the earth on which he lay along. On rising up, however, his face was calm and cheerful ; he shook his friends by the hand, bidding them farewell with many expressions of kindness ; and having declined to have his hands bound, knelt down, and laid his neck upon the block. At this awful moment, Mr James Lawson, stooping forward to his ear, read some verses from the Scripture, which Morton repeated with a firm voice. As he pronounced the words, " Lord

Jesus, receive my spirit!" the axe descended, and the imperfect sentence died upon the lips, which quivered and were silent for ever.¹ The execution took place about four o'clock on the evening of Friday the 2d of June. It was remarked that Fernyhirst, who was known to have been acquainted with the murder of the King, stood in a window opposite the scaffold. He was recognised by a conspicuous feature in his dress—his large ruffles; and seemed to take delight in the spectacle. The people also remarked that Lord Seton and his two sons had taken great care to secure a good view of all that passed, by pulling down a stair which would have intercepted their view of the scaffold.²

On the day after Morton suffered, George Binning, a servant of Archibald Douglas, was executed for his participation in the murder of the King. The confession of this accomplice threw some additional light on this dark story. He affirmed, that his master, Archibald Douglas, who was then an adherent of the Earl of Bothwell, was present at the deed, and, in his haste to leave the spot, lost one of his slippers; that, when his master came home, his clothes were full of clay and soil, occasioned, no doubt, by the explosion; and that, in retreating from the scene of the murder, he (Binning) encountered,

¹ MS. Calderwood, Brit. Mus., Ayscough, 4736, fol. 1156. Morton's head was fixed on the Tolbooth, on the highest stone of the gable towards the public street. There is a fine original picture of the Regent Morton at Dalmahoy, near Edinburgh, the seat of the present Earl of Morton. It has been engraved by Lodge.

² Id. Ibid.

at the foot of a narrow lane near the spot, certain "musselled men," meaning men who had disguised themselves by muffling their faces in their cloaks; one of whom, as he conjectured by his voice, was a brother of Sir James Balfour.¹

The death of Morton was followed, as was to be expected, by the concentration of the whole power of the state in the hands of the Earl of Lennox and Captain Stewart, now Earl of Arran. This necessarily led to the revival of the influence of France, and to renewed intrigues by the friends of the Catholic faith, and the supporters of the imprisoned Queen. The prospects of the Protestant lords, and of the more zealous ministers of the Kirk, were proportionably overclouded; the faction in the interest of England was thrown into despair; and reports of the most gloomy kind began to circulate through the country. It was said that religion was on the point of being altered; that the King would marry a Princess of the house of Lorraine; that the Duke of Guise had already written to him in the most friendly terms, and now for the first time had condescended to call him King.² The conduct of Lennox was calculated to confirm rather than mitigate these suspicions. He professed, indeed, an earnest desire to maintain amicable relations with England; and had written to this effect to the Earl of Leicester, warning him

¹ MS. Calderwood, Brit. Mus., Ayscough, 4736, fol. 1156.

² MS. St. P. Off. B.C., Scrope to Burghley, 18th Aug., 1581. Also, B.C., same to same, 31st September, 1581. Also, MS. St. P. Off. Bowes to Burghley, 3d Oct., 1581.

against Archibald Douglas, who was now in England, and laboured to embroil the two kingdoms.¹ But he had forgotten entirely his friendly professions to the Presbyterians. The ministers of the Kirk, who had congratulated themselves as the instruments of his conversion, were treated with coldness; and it was soon discovered that he had warmly espoused the King's opinions with regard to Episcopacy, and was ready to second, to his utmost ability, the efforts of the monarch for its complete establishment in his dominions.

Meanwhile, the new Earl of Arran was not neglectful of his interests, and advanced rapidly in power and presumption. Soon after the execution of Morton, he appeared before the Privy-council, entered into a detail of his proceedings against that nobleman, lamented the necessity he had been under of employing torture to procure evidence, and demanded and obtained an Act of approval from the King, which characterized his whole conduct as honourable, and assured him, that at no future period should it be called in question.² His next step was an act of such open profligacy, as to incense and scandalize the whole country. He lived in habits of familiar friendship with the Earl of March, and had been under deep obligations to him; but he employed the opportunities such intimacy gave him to seduce the affections of the Countess of March, a woman of great beauty;

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Lennox to Leicester, 7th Oct., 1581, Lithgow.

² Orig. Record of Privy-council in the Register-House, Edin., 3d June, 1581.

and so completely succeeded in depraving her mind, that she brought an action of divorce against her husband, on a ground which none but the most abandoned could plead. The suit was successful, the decree of divorce pronounced; and Arran married the Countess, whose situation at that moment proclaimed her either a liar or an adultress. It affords a shocking picture of the manners of the times, that the young King appears to have countenanced this proceeding. Nor was this all. James determined to grant new honours to those who had assisted him in the overthrow of Morton: Lennox was made a Duke; Captain Stewart, who had already received a gift of the Earldom of Arran, was invested in that dignity with great solemnity; the Earl of March received the Earldom of Orkney; Lord Ruthven that of Gowrie; and Lord Maxwell, one of the most powerful nobles of that time, became Earl of Morton.

Parliament now assembled, and the sanction of this supreme Court was given to all those measures lately passed in favour of Lennox and Arran. Indeed, it could scarcely be expected that any would dare to oppose them; for James had sent intimation to the Earls of Mar, Eglinton, Glencairn, with the Lords Lindsay, Boyd, Herries, and Ochiltree, that he would dispense with their presence on this occasion;¹ and none, probably, attended but those who were favourable to the Court. The adherents of the late Earl of Morton were pronounced rebels, and their estates confiscated. Amongst these, the principal were the

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Bowes to Burghley, 18th October, 1581.

Earl of Angus; Archibald Douglas of Whittingham; James Douglas, Prior of Pluscardine, and James Douglas of Pittendreich, two natural sons of the Regent Morton; Douglas of Parkhead; and Archibald Douglas, Constable of the Castle of Edinburgh. In the same Parliament, Lennox, who believed his influence now to be all powerful, exerted himself to procure the pardon of Sir James Balfour, who had recently done him good service in the overthrow of Morton. But he was disappointed; for James refused his request, and pointed to those Acts of Parliament by which it was declared, that no person guilty of the King his father's murder, should ever be restored.¹ At the same meeting of the Estates, the statutes were confirmed which protected the reformed religion; some enactments introduced for the regulation of the coinage, against the exportation of wool, and that excess of apparel amongst the middle and lower classes, and expensive and superfluous banquets, which marked the progress of the country in wealth and refinement, and had excited the jealousy of the higher nobility.

It is now necessary to turn for a moment to the Scottish Queen in her imprisonment. It was a miserable circumstance in the fate of this unfortunate Princess, that any successes of her friends generally brought along with them an increase of rigour and jealousy upon the part of her inexorable rival. This increase, on the other hand, as surely led to more

¹ MS. St. P. Off. B.C., Thomas Selby to Mr Thomas Foster, 29th Nov., 1581.

determined efforts for her delivery ; and thus, during the thirteen years for which she had now continued a captive, her health had been shattered, and her spirits broken, by those alternations of hope and fear,—those fluctuations of ardent expectation, or bitter disappointment, which must have destroyed even the healthiest and most buoyant constitution. Her condition about this time was so feeble, that she had lost the use of her limbs, and was carried in a chair, or litter, by her servants. She besought Elizabeth, in pathetic terms, for the favour of a coach, that she might enjoy a drive in the park of Sheffield Castle, where she was confined ; she requested the additional attendance of two female servants and two men-servants, which her sickness demanded ; and she entreated to have passports for the Lady Lethington and Lord Seton, in whose society she might find some alleviation of her solitude. But, although Castelnau, the French Ambassador, seconded these requests by the most earnest remonstrance, the English Queen was deaf to his entreaties, and resisted the application.¹

This cold and unrelenting conduct could not fail to make a deep impression upon Mary ; and, in a moment of resentment and excitation, she had determined to resign her rights as Queen of Scots, and her claims upon the Crown of England, into the hands of her son, with an earnest hope, that he would invade that realm, and, assisted by the Roman Catholic

¹ Addition aux Mem. de Castelnau, p. 519. Chalmers' Life of Mary, vol. i. pp. 384, 388.

party abroad, and Elizabeth's discontented subjects at home, establish his rights, and overwhelm her oppressor. But the return of calmer consideration showed the madness of such a scheme; and her anxiety for the amicable recognition of the rights of her son to the English Crown, banished the suggestions of personal resentment. In a memorial presented by Mary about this time to Elizabeth and her Parliament, she requested to be heard, by deputies whom she would appoint, upon the subject of her title and pretensions.¹ It was not, she added, on her own account that she suggested this. Continued affliction had brought on a premature age; sorrow had extinguished ambition; and, with her shattered frame, it would be ridiculous to expect to survive Elizabeth. But she felt the natural anxiety of a mother to secure the rights of her child, and she entreated her sister of England to agree to her petition, and to recognise the undoubted title of her son, as the most certain means of promoting settled peace, and securing their mutual security.

This sensible memorial experienced the same fate as her former petition: it made no impression upon the Queen of England, or her ministers; and Mary, defeated in her moderate desires, was compelled to embrace more determined measures, and to throw herself entirely into the arms of France. This led to a new project, known by the name of "The Association," and which appears to have originated about this time. It was proposed

¹ Murdin, p. 367.

to the young King, that in order to have his title to the Scottish throne recognised by the powers of Europe,—none of whom, with the exception of England, had yet publicly given him the name of King,—he should resign the Crown to his mother, under the condition, that she should retransmit it to him, and retire from all the active duties of the Government. But before pursuing this scheme, which led ultimately to important consequences, it is necessary to attend to the state of the Church, and its violent collision with the Crown.

The struggle between Episcopacy and the Presbyterian form of Church government, which had been originally established at the time of the Reformation, was now assuming every day a more determined and obstinate form. The young King, with his ministers, and favourites, Lennox and Arran, and a large proportion of the nobility, supported Episcopacy. The ministers of the Kirk, and the great body of the burghers, and middle and lower classes of the people, were zealously attached to the Presbyterian model; and considered the office of a Bishop as anti-Scriptural, and a remnant of Popery. In a General Assembly, held some time previous to this, the “Platform” of Ecclesiastical government, drawn up by Andrew Melvil, had been ratified by a majority of the ministers; and received the solemn sanction of the Church, under the title of “The Second Book of Discipline.”¹ Under these conflicting cir-

¹ Calderwood's History, pp. 97, 102, convened 20th April, 1581. Confessions of Faith, vol. ii. p. 807.

cumstances, the Duke of Lennox, whose influence with the young King gave him an almost absolute power in the disposal of patronage, appointed Mr Robert Montgomery to the vacant bishoprick of Glasgow. It was notorious to all, that this was a collusive and Simoniacal transaction; for Montgomery resigned the temporalities of the see to the Duke, and was contented to receive a small annual stipend out of its revenues. But the clergy, at first waving this objection, pronounced a high censure upon Montgomery, and interdicted him from accepting a bishoprick. He remonstrated, and was supported by the King and his Council; who contended, that as Episcopacy had never been abolished by the three Estates, no illegal act had been committed.

The General Assembly of the Church soon after was convened in the capital; and as some private intelligence had been sent to Scotland of the intended "Association" between the imprisoned Queen and the King her son, this ecclesiastical convention met in a state of much excitement.¹ It was known that various missionary priests were secretly intriguing in the country; that George Douglas had arrived on a mission from France, charged with secret despatches from the Bishops of Glasgow and Ross, her agents in that realm; and great dread was entertained of Lennox's increasing influence over the mind of the young King. Determined measures, therefore, were adopted by the Church. Articles against Montgomery were drawn up, which condemned, in strong

¹ Calderwood, p. 118.

terms, his life, conversation, and opinions; and although, upon investigation, many faults objected to him turned out to be frivolous and unfounded, other matters were proved, which, it was contended, utterly incapacitated him for the office which he had accepted. He received an injunction, therefore, to continue in his ministry at Stirling; and, under pain of the highest censures, to abandon all thoughts of the bishoprick.

During these transactions, Elizabeth, who had become alarmed on the subject of Scotland, and dreaded the preponderating influence of Lennox and Arran, despatched Captain Nicolas Arrington, an able officer of the garrison at Berwick, on a mission into that country. He was instructed to use his utmost efforts to persuade the King to continue in amicable relations with England; to sow, if possible, by some secret practice, a division between the Duke of Lennox and the Earl of Arran; and to expose the devices of France and Spain for the overthrow of religion, and the resumption of power by the Scottish Queen.¹ It had been the advice of Sir Robert Bowes, in a letter addressed to Burghley, that every means should be adopted to increase some jealousies which, owing to the pride and intolerance of Arran, had arisen between him and the Duke. But after every effort to "blow the coals,"² as he expressed it, these proud rivals became convinced that their safest policy was to forget their differences, and unite against their

¹ St. P. Off. 26th October, 1581, Instructions for N. Erington, sent into Scotland. Copy.

² MS. St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 18th Oct., 1581.

common enemies. A reconciliation, accordingly, took place;¹ and Lennox, strong in the continued attachment of the King, and the new friendship of Arran, determined to concentrate his whole strength against that faction of the Kirk which opposed themselves to Episcopacy, and had threatened his Bishop with deposition.

At this moment secret information of a threatening nature arrived from France. The reports regarding the progress of "The Association" between the Queen-mother and her son were confirmed. It was said, that Lord Arbroath, the head of the great house of Hamilton, now in banishment, was to be restored by French influence, under the condition, that the "Mass" should return along with him. And Mr John Durie, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, sounded a fearful note of alarm, in a sermon which he delivered in the High Church of the city. "The King," he said, "had been moved by certain courtiers, who now ruled all at their will, to send a private message to the King of France and the Duke of Guise, and to seek his mother's blessing. He knew this, he declared, from the very man who was employed in the message—George Douglas, Mary's sworn servant; and he painted in strong colours the deplorable effects which might be anticipated from such a coalition. It was proposed, in these dark counsels, that the King should resign the Crown to his mother, and she convey it again to him, with an assurance, that he should then be acknowledged as King by France, and by the powers of Europe, which, up to this time, had refused

¹ Historie of King James the Sext, p. 186.

him the royal title. And what must inevitably follow from all this? If the transaction were completed, it would be argued, that the establishment of religion, and all other public transactions since the coronation, were null; that the King's friends were traitors, and their adversaries his only true subjects." After the sermon, a remarkable conference took place between the Earls of Argyle and Ruthven, and the ministers, Durie, Lawson, and Davison, in the Council-house. On being pressed as to the French intrigues, Argyle confessed that he had gone too far; but affirmed, that if he saw anything intended against religion, he would forsake his friends, and oppose it to his utmost. To Ruthven, Davison the minister of Libberton, in alluding to the murder of Riccio, used a still stronger argument—"If things," said he, "go forward as they are intended, your head, my Lord, will pay for Davie's slaughter. But Scottish nobles now are utterly unworthy of the place they hold: they would not, in other times, have suffered the King to lie alone at Dalkeith with a stranger, whilst the whole realm is going to confusion; and yet the matter (they significantly added) might be reformed well enough with quietness, if the noblemen would do their duty."¹

Nor were these warnings and denunciations confined to the nobility. The young King, when sitting in his private chamber in the Palace of Stirling, received an admonition quite as solemn as any delivered to his subjects. It was entered by Mr John Davison, along with Duncanson the royal chaplain, and Mr

¹ MS. Calderwood, Ayscough, 4736, fol. 1172.

Peter Young: and Davison, after pointing out the dreadful state of the country, exhorted him to put away those evil councillors who were so fast bringing ruin upon the commonweal, and his own soul. "My liege," said he, "at this present, there are three jewels in this realm precious to all good men—Religion, the Commonweal, and your Grace's person. Into what a horrible confusion the two first have entered, all men are witness; but as to the third, your Grace hath need to beware, not only of the common hypocrites and flatterers, but more especially of two sorts of men. First; such as opposed themselves to your Grace in your minority: whereby they have committed offences for which they must yet answer to the laws; and, therefore, must needs fear the King. Remember the saying, '*Multis terribilis, caveo multos.*' The second sort, are those who are conjured enemies to religion. If (he concluded) your Grace would call to you such godly men as I could name, they would soon show you whom they think to be included in these two ranks." It had been arranged beforehand, that should the young King exhibit any desire to profit by this counsel, Davison was to name the Lairds of Dun, Lundie, and Braid, with Mr Robert Pont and Mr James Lawson, two of the leading ministers; but James, after hearing the exordium, and observing hurriedly, that it was good counsel, started off from the subject, and broke up the interview.¹

¹ MS. Calderwood, Brit. Mus. fol. 1172.

These scenes of alarm and admonition were followed by a violent attempt of Montgomery to possess himself of the bishoprick, in which he entered the Church at Glasgow, accompanied by a band of the royal guard, and in virtue of a charge addressed by the King to that Presbytery, endeavoured to expel the established minister from the pulpit, and to occupy his place. This was resisted by the Kirk; and the ministers of the Presbytery of Glasgow were in consequence summoned before the Council:¹ but they defended themselves with the greatest courage, and, when pressed by the King, declined the judgment of the Sovereign, or his judges, in a matter not of a civil but of a purely spiritual nature. Lawson, Durie, Andrew Hay, and a large body of the ministers and elders from Edinburgh, Dalkeith, and Lithgow, accompanied them to Stirling; and when the King insisted that they should receive Montgomery, and warned them of the fatal consequences of a refusal, he was boldly reminded by Durie, that such intemperate proceedings would only lead to the excommunication of the man whom he favoured.² This threat, and the preparations for carrying it into immediate execution, alarmed the object of the quarrel himself; and the submission of Montgomery to the

¹ April 13, 1582.

² Calderwood MS., fol. 1174. Montgomery, incensed against Andrew Hay, one of the ministers, threatened to bring him to justice, as art and part in foreknowing and concealing the late King's murder. The only ground of the charge was, that Mr Andrew Hay was uncle to the Laird of Tallo, (Hay,) who was executed for the murder.

jurisdiction and sentence of the Kirk, led to a temporary cessation of the controversy.

This lull, however, was exceeding brief; and soon followed by a more determined collision between the antagonist principles of Presbyterianism and Episcopacy. The Kirk at this time possessed, amongst its ministers, some men of distinguished learning, and of the greatest courage. Durie, Lawson, Craig, Lindsay, Andrew Melvil, Thomas Smeton, Pont, Davison, and many others, presided over its councils; and formed a spiritual conclave which, in the infallibility they claimed, and the obedience they demanded, was a hierarchy in everything but the name. Eloquent, intrepid, and indefatigable, they had gained the affections of the lower classes of the people; and were supported, also, by the increasing influence of the burghs and the commercial classes. Animated by such feelings, wielding such powers, and backed by such an influence, it was not to be expected that they would be easily put down. The great cause of Episcopacy, on the other hand, was supported by the young King, who was himself no contemptible theologian; by the Duke of Lennox, the Earl of Arran, and a large portion of the old nobility. Abroad, it looked to the sympathy and assistance of France; and as the whole hopes of the imprisoned Queen, and the great body of the Roman Catholics in England, rested on Lennox and his friends, they were inclined to strengthen his hands in every possible way. The power of this party had recently been shown by the destruction of Morton, which they carried through

with a high hand against the whole influence of England and the Kirk; and, flushed by this success, they resolved to renew the battle with the Presbyterian party, in the case of the Bishop of Glasgow; which, however insulated or insignificant it might appear at first sight, really involved the establishment or destruction of Episcopacy. Montgomery, a weak man, and wholly under the influence of Lennox, was easily persuaded to retract his submission, and repeat his attempts to possess himself of the bishoprick; whilst, at this moment, the feelings of the ministers were goaded to the highest pitch of jealousy and resentment, by the arrival of a messenger from the Duke of Guise: ostensibly, he came with a present of horses to the King; but it was suspected that more was intended than mere courtesy. The person who brought this gift was Signor Paul, the Duke's master-stabler, and, as was asserted, one of the most active and remorseless murderers at the massacre of St Bartholomew.¹ It was scarcely to be expected that this should be tamely borne; and John Durie, the minister of Edinburgh, instantly rode to Kinneil, Arran's castle, where the King had determined to receive Guise's envoy. Meeting Signor Paul in the garden, the minister hastily drew his cap over his eyes, declaring he would not pollute them by looking on the devil's ambassador; and, turning to the King, rebuked him sharply for receiving gifts

¹ MS. Calderwood, Ayscough, 4736, fol. 1189. "This Signor Paul was a famous murthurer at the massacre at Paris. No fitter man could be sent to make pastime to the King."

from so odious a quarter. "Is it with the Guise," said he, "that your Grace will interchange presents—with that cruel murderer of the saints? Beware, my liege, I implore you, (he continued,) beware with whom you ally yourself in marriage; and remember John Knox's last words unto your Highness—remember that good man's warning, that so long as you maintained God's holy Gospel, and kept your body unpolluted, you would prosper. Listen not, then, to those ambassadors of the devil, who are sent hither to allure you from your religion."¹ To this indignant sally, James, overawed by the vehement tone of the remonstrant, quietly answered, "that his body was pure; and that he would have no woman for his wife who did not fear God and love the Evangell."²

From Kinneil, Durie returned to Edinburgh, where his zeal flamed up to the highest pitch; and, transforming the pulpit, as was the practice of those times, into a political rostrum for the discussion of the measures of the Government, he exposed the intrigues of Lennox, the schemes of the Queen-mother, and the profligacy of the Court, in such cutting and indignant terms, that he was immediately summoned before the Council, and ordered to quit the city. The strictest injunctions, at the same time, were directed

¹ MS. Calderwood, fol. 1189, and MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. Weddrington to Walsingham, Berwick, 15th May, 1582. The interview between Durie and the King at Kinneil, took place on the 11th May. MS. Calderwood.

² Ibid. MS. Calderwood, fol. 1189.

to the Provost and Magistrates to carry this sentence of banishment into execution under pain of treason.¹ Lennox's party, at this moment, was described by the Laird of Carmichael, (a Scottish gentleman employed to transmit secret information to Walsingham,) as guiding all at Court. Its ranks, as he informed the English secretary, embraced Arran, a great persecutor of the preachers, Huntley, Seton, Ogilvy, the Prior Maitland, (this was the younger brother of the famous Secretary Lethington,) Balfour, Robert Melvil, Mr David Makgill, and one Mr Henry Keir. These, he added, were all Papists.² But Carmichael, himself probably a rigid Presbyterian, was little disposed to make any distinction between those who supported Episcopacy, and the friends of the Church of Rome. Yet it must be remembered, that the reported intrigues between the Courts of Spain and the Duke, with the secret negotiations of the Jesuits for the association of the Queen-mother with her son in the Government, gave him no little countenance in the assertion; and the vigour with which Lennox pushed forward his measures against the Kirk, seemed to indicate a very formidable combination of forces. Undismayed, however, by the attack of their adversaries, the party of the Kirk only roused themselves to a more determined opposition: retaliated, by excommunicating Montgomery; and called upon the people to weep for their sins, and be prepared to

¹ MS. Calderwood, fol. 1189, 30th May, 1582.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., 1st June, 1582. Laird of Carmichael to Walsingham.

peril all, rather than part with their religion. The country, at this moment, must have presented an extraordinary picture: the pulpits rang with alternate strains of lamentation and defiance. Patrick Simpson, alluding to the fate of Durie, declared, that the principal link in the golden chain of the ministry was already broken. Davison, a firmer spirit, whose small figure and undaunted courage had procured him from Lennox the *soubriquet* of the "*petit diable*," exhorted his auditors to take courage, for God would dash the devil in his own devices; and, on the 27th of June, an extraordinary Assembly of the Church was convened in the capital, to meet the crisis which, in the language of the times, threatened destruction to their Zion.¹

The proceedings were opened by a remarkable sermon, or lecture, which Andrew Melvil delivered from the pulpit of the New Kirk. He chose for its subject the 4th chapter of the first Epistle to Timothy; and, in speaking of the fearful trials and heresies of the "latter days," inveighed, in no gentle terms, against the audacious proceedings of the Court. The weapon now raised against them, he described as the "bloody gully² of absolute power." And whence, said he, "came this gully?—From the Pope.—And against whom was it used?—Against Christ himself: from whose divine head these daring and wicked men would fain pluck the crown, and from whose hands they would wrench the sceptre. These might be deemed strong expressions, he added, but did not every

¹ MS. Calderwood, fol. 1189, 1190, 1191, 1192.

² Gully: a large knife; a sword, or weapon.

day verify his words, and give new ground for alarm? Need he point out to them the King's intended demission of the crown to his mother? Was not the palpable object of this scheme, which had been concocting these eight years past, the resumption of her lost power, and with it the reëstablishment of her idolatrous worship? Who were its authors? Beaton Bishop of Glasgow, and Lesly Bishop of Ross. And by what devices did this last-named prelate explain their intentions to the imprisoned Princess? To the letters which he sent, he had added a painting of a Queen, with a little boy kneeling at her feet and imploring her blessing; whilst she extended one hand to her son, and with the other pointed to his ancestors, as if she exhorted him to walk in their footsteps, and follow their faith.¹

At this Assembly, it was warmly debated whether Durie was bound to obey the sentence of banishment—a point upon which opinions were much divided. The Provost and Magistrates contended that they must execute the law which had pronounced the sentence, or become amenable to its penalties. One party of the ministers, taking a middle course, advised that two of their brethren, Mr David Ferguson and Mr Thomas Buchanan, should be sent to remonstrate with the King. But from this the fiery Davison loudly dissented. “Ye talk,” said he, “of reponing John Durie. Will ye become suppliants for reinstating him whom the King had no power to displace; albeit, his foolish flock have yielded?” At

¹ MS. Calderwood, Ayscough, 4736, fol. 1192, June 27, 1582.

this, Sir James Balfour started to his feet, and fixed his eyes sternly on the speaker. Balfour was notorious as one of the murderers of Darnley; yet, having been acquitted of that crime by a packed jury, he had resumed his functions as an elder of the Kirk.¹ Such a man was not likely to overawe the bold minister; and he undauntedly continued. "Tell me what flesh may or can displace the great King's ambassador, so long as he keeps within the bounds of his commission?" Saying this, he left the Assembly in great heat, perceiving that the question would be carried against him, which accordingly happened; for, on the resumption of the debate, it was determined that Durie should submit, if the Magistrates, who belonged to his flock, insisted. They did so: and that very evening, he was charged not only to depart from the town, but not to reside within the freedom and bounds of the city.² About nine o'clock the same night, he was seen taking his way through the principal street of the city, accompanied by two notaries, and a small band of his brethren; among whom were Lawson, Balcanquel, and Davison. On reaching the Market-cross, he directed the notaries to read a written protestation, which attested the sincerity of his life and doctrine; and declared, that although he obeyed the sentence of banishment, no mortal power should prevent him from preaching the Word.³ Upon this, placing a piece of money in the hands of the

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., B.C. Scrope to Burghley, Aug. 18, 1581.

² MS. Calderwood, Brit. Mus. Ayseough, 4736, fol. 1195-6.

³ MS. Calderwood, fol. 1196.

notaries, he took instruments, as it was termed ; and, during the ceremony, Davison, who stood by his side, broke into threats and lamentation. "I too must take instruments," cried he ; "and this, I protest, is the most sorrowful sight these eyes ever rested on : a shepherd removed by his own flock, to pleasure flesh and blood, and because he has spoken the truth. But plague, and fearful judgments, will yet light on the inventors." All this, however, passed away quietly, except on the part of the speakers ; and the denunciations of the minister appear to have met with little sympathy. A shoemaker's wife in the crowd cried out, if any would cast stones at him, she would help.¹ A bystander, also, was heard to whisper to his neighbour, looking with scorn on the two protesters, "If I durst, I would take instruments that ye are both knaves."²

Shortly before this, a conference had been held at Stirling, between the Commissioners of the Court and the Kirk, which had concluded by the King directing the ministers to present him with a list of the grievances of which they complained. They accordingly prepared their "Articles," which, in bold and unequivocal language, drew the distinction between the obedience they owed to the King and the submission which was due to the Kirk. They complained, that the monarch, by advice of evil counsellors, had taken upon him that spiritual authority which belonged to Christ alone, as the King

¹ MS. Calderwood, fol. 1196. This same woman had troubled the Kirk much in Morton's time. Her name was Urquhart.

² Calderwood, MS. Hist. fol. 1196.

and Head of His Church; and, as examples of this unwarrantable usurpation, appealed to the late banishment of Durie, the maintaining an excommunicated Bishop, the interdicting the General Assembly from the exercise of their undoubted spiritual rights, and the evil handling of the brethren of Glasgow for doing their duty in the case of Montgomery.¹

The presentation of these Articles was intrusted to a committee of the ministers. It embraced Pont, Lawson, Smeton, Lindsay, Hay, Polwart, Blackburn, Galloway, Christison, Ferguson, James Melvil, Buchanan, Brand, Gillespie, Duncanson the minister of the King's household, and Andrew Melvil, Principal of the new College at St Andrew's. To these a single layman was added in the person of Erskine of Dun, a name much venerated in the history of the Kirk. It had been agreed, that these "Grievs" should be presented to the King in the beginning of July; and on the sixth of that month, this intrepid band of ministers set out for Perth, where James then held his Court. Their adversaries had in vain made many exertions to intimidate them; and secret information had been sent by Sir James Melvil, to his relative Andrew Melvil, that his life was in danger; but he only thanked God that he was not feeble in the cause of Christ, and proceeded forward with his brethren. On being ushered into the presence-chamber, they found Lennox and Arran with the King; and laid their remonstrance on the table.

¹ MS. St. P. Off., Advertisements from Scotland, 22d June, 1582. MS. Calderwood, fol. 1198-9.

Arran took it up, glanced his eye over it, and furiously demanded "Who dares sign these treasonable Articles?" "We dare," responded Andrew Melvil, "and will render our lives in the cause." As he said this, he came forward to the Council-table, took the pen, subscribed his name, and was followed by all his brethren. The two nobles were intimidated by this unlooked-for courage: the King was silent; and, after some conference, the ministers were dismissed in peace.¹

It would have been well for Lennox and Arran had they taken warning from these symptoms of determined opposition; but they underrated the influence of the ministers, and were not aware that, at this moment, a strong party of the nobility was forming against them. It was fostered by the Kirk, and encouraged by England; whilst its leaders, as usual in such enterprises, appear, about this time, to have drawn up a written contract, which declared the purposes for which they had leagued together. This paper was entitled the "Form of the Band, made among the noblemen that is enterprised against Dobany;"² and it described, in strong language, the causes which had led to the association. These were said to be, the dangers incurred by the professors of God's true religion; the intended overthrow of the Gospel, by godless men, who had crept into credit with the King's Majesty; the perversion of the laws; the wreck of the ancient nobility and the ministers of

¹ MS. Calderwood, fol. 1200, 1201.

² Caligula, C. vii. fol. 14, Brit. Mus. A copy. Dobany is D'Aubigny, the Duke of Lennox.

religion; the interruption of the amity with England; and the imminent peril of the King's person, unless some remedy were speedily adopted. "Wherefore," (it continued,) "we have sworn, in God's presence, and engaged, by this 'Band,' to punish and remove the authors of these intended evils, and to reëstablish justice and good order, as we shall answer to the Eternal God, and upon our honour, faith, and truth."¹ The original of this important paper has not been preserved; and the names of the associators do not appear in the copy: but we may pronounce them, from the evidence of other letters, to have been the Earls of Gowrie, Mar, Glencairn, Argyle, Montrose, Eglinton, and Rothes, with the Lords Lindsay, Boyd, and many others.² The principal enemies to Lennox among the ministers, were Lawson, Lindsay, Hay, Smeton, Polwart, and Andrew Melvil.³

At the time this Band was formed, its authors had not fixed upon any precise mode of attack; but the events which now occurred brought their measures to a head, and compelled them to act upon the offensive.

Shortly previous to the interview of the ministers with the King at Perth, Montgomery had been reinstated in the bishoprick of Glasgow by the royal command; and the sentence of excommunication pronounced upon him by the Kirk was reversed, and

¹ Caligula, C. vii. fol. 14, Brit. Mus. A copy. See also MS. Calderwood, p. 1210.

² Caligula, C. vii. fol. 18, MS. Letter, Widdrington to Walsingham, July 19, 1582, Berwick.

³ MS. Calderwood, fol. 1201.

declared null. To soften, at the same time, the effect of this strong measure of defiance, the King, by a public proclamation, renounced all intention of making any changes in religion; and Montgomery, confiding in his restored honours, ventured from his seclusion at Dalkeith, where he had resided with his patron Lennox, and once more showed himself in Edinburgh. But Lawson, one of the leading ministers, flew to the magistrates, accused them of permitting an excommunicated traitor to walk the streets; and compelled them to discharge him from their city.¹ As he departed, Montgomery threatened that, within half an hour, they should change their tone; and, within a brief space, returned with a royal proclamation, which was read at the Cross, commanding all men to accept him as a true Christian and good subject. He brought, also, letters to the same purport, which were sent to the Lords of Session. All, however, was in vain, so strong was the popular current against him. The Provost, in an agony of doubt between his duty to the King and his allegiance to the Kirk, imprecated vengeance upon his head, and declared he would have given a thousand merks he had never seen his face. The Judges refused to hear him; and a report arising, that he should be again expelled, an immense crowd assembled. Tradesmen, armed with bludgeons, and women with stones, waited round the door of the Court; and their expected victim would probably have been torn in pieces, had he not been smuggled away by the Magistrates through a narrow lane called

¹ MS. Calderwood, fol. 1198, 1201, July 2, 1582, and July 24.

the Kirk Heugh, which led to the Potterrow gate. His retreat, however, became known; the people broke in upon him with many abusive terms. False traitor, thief, mansworn carle, were bandied from mouth to mouth; and as he sprung through the wicket, he received some smart blows upon the back. So little sympathy did he meet with from the King, that, when the story reached the Court at Perth, James threw himself down upon the Inch, and, calling him a seditious loon, fell into convulsions of laughter.¹

The effect, however, was different upon Lennox. His penetration did not enable him to see the formidable strength which was gradually arraying itself against him; and his blind obstinacy only hurried on the catastrophe. At the instigation of France,² he determined, by a sudden attack, to overwhelm his enemies; and, assisted by the force which himself and Arran could command, to seize the Earls of Gowrie, Mar, and Glencairn, with Lindsay, and the chief of the Protestant nobles. Having achieved this, and banished the leading ministers of the Kirk, he looked forward to a triumphant conclusion of his labours in the establishment of Episcopacy, and the association of the imprisoned Queen with the government of her son. Bowes, however, the English Ambassador, became acquainted with these intentions,

¹ MS. Calderwood, fol. 1202.

² Sir R. Bowes to Secretary Walsingham, August 15, 1582. Orig. Draft. From the Original Letter-Book of Sir Robert Bowes, kindly communicated to me by my friend Sir Cuthbert Sharpe.

and informed the Protestant Lords of the plot for their destruction. The minuteness of the information which this veteran diplomatist elicited by his pensioned informers, is remarkable. He assured Gowrie and his friends, that they must look to themselves, or be content soon to change a prison for a scaffold; that he had certain intelligence the King had consented to arraign them of a conspiracy against his person: and they knew, that if convicted of treason, their fate was sealed. It was by Walsingham's orders that Bowes made this communication, in the hope it would rouse the enemies of Lennox to immediate exertion; nor was he disappointed.¹ Appalled by the news, and aware that even a brief delay might sweep them over the precipice on which they stood, it became necessary to act upon the moment. The only danger to be dreaded was in prematurely exploding the mine already in preparation, and thus risking a failure. The band, or contract, as we have seen, had been drawn up; but it was still unsigned by many of the nobility. There was scarcely time to concentrate all their forces; and although they made sure of the approval of the ministers of the Kirk, who had already cordially coöperated with them in all their efforts against Lennox, still these ecclesiastical associates were now scattered in different parts of the country, and could not be individually consulted. On the other hand, the danger

¹ Orig. Draft. Sir Robert Bowes to Walsingham, August 25, 1582, Bowes' Letter-Book. See, also, Widdrington to Walsingham, July 19, 1582, Caligula, C. vii.

was imminent; and, if they acted instantly, some circumstances promised success. The young King was at Perth, separated both from Lennox and Arran.¹ He had resorted to that country to enjoy his favourite pastime of the chase; his Court was few in number; Gowrie, Glamis, and Lindsay, three of the chief conspirators, were all-powerful in the neighbourhood of Perth; and should they delay, as had been intended, till the King removed to the capital, it would become more difficult, if not impossible, to execute their design. In this state of uncertainty, they received intelligence which made them more than suspect that Lennox had discovered their conspiracy.² This settled the question: and having once decided on action, their proceedings were as bold as they had before been dilatory. In an incredibly short time, Gowrie, Mar, Lindsay, the Master of Glamis, and their associates, assembled a thousand men, and surrounded Ruthven Castle, where the King then lay. It was Gowrie's own seat; and James, who, it appears, had no suspicion of the toils laid for him, had accepted the invitation of its master, thinking only of his rural sports. To his astonishment, the Earls of Mar and Gowrie entered his presence, removed his guards, presented a list of their grievances, and, whilst they professed the utmost fidelity to his person, took special care that all possibility of escape was cut off.

¹ Wednesday, 22d August. Lennox was then at Dalkeith, Arran at Kinneil,—both places in the vicinity of Edinburgh.

² MS. Letter, Sir George Bowes to Walsingham, 26th Aug., 1572, Bowes' Letter-Book. Melvil's Memoirs, pp. 277, 281.

Meanwhile, the intelligence flew to Arran that the King was captive; and he and Colonel Stewart, his brother, set off in fiery speed at the head of a party of horse. Their attempt at rescue was, however, too late; for Colonel Stewart was attacked, and defeated by Mar and Lochleven, who threw themselves upon him from an ambush, where they had watched his approach; whilst Arran, who had galloped by a nearer way to Ruthven, was seized the moment he entered the Castle court, and confined under a guard. All this had passed with such rapidity, and the Lords who surrounded the King treated him with so much respect, that James deluded himself with the hope that he might still be a free monarch. But next morning dispelled the illusion. As he prepared to take horse, the Master of Glamis intimated to him that the Lords who were now with him deemed it safer for his Grace to remain at Ruthven. James declared he would go that instant, and was about to leave the chamber, when this baron rudely interposed, and placing his leg before the King, so as to intercept the door-way, commanded him to remain. The indignity drew tears from the young monarch; and some of the associated Lords remonstrated with Glamis; but he sternly answered, "Better bairns¹ greet, than bearded men,"—a speech which his royal master never afterwards forgot or forgave.²

But although thus far successful, the actors in this

¹ Bairns, children; greet, weep.

² MS. Calderwood, Ayscough, 4737, fol. 682, 683. Spottiswood, p. 320.

violent and treasonable enterprise were in a dangerous predicament. Gowrie, Mar, Glamis, and Lindsay, were indeed all assured of each other, and convinced that they must stand or fall together; but the band or covenant which, according to the practice of the times, should have secured the assistance of their associates, was still unsigned by a great majority of the most powerful nobles and barons, on whose assistance they had calculated. On the other hand, the Duke of Lennox could reckon on the support of the Earls of Huntley, Sutherland, Morton, Orkney, Crawford, and Bothwell; besides Lords Herries, Seton, Hume, Sir Thomas Ker of Fernyhirst, Sir James Balfour, the Abbot of Newbottle, and many inferior barons; whilst the Earls of Caithness, March, and Marshal, professed neutrality.¹ This array of opposition was sufficiently appalling; and for a brief season the enterprisers of the Raid of Ruthven (as it was called) began to waver and tremble;² but a moment's consideration convinced them, that if there was danger in advance, there was infinitely greater in delay. They were already guilty of treason; they had laid violent hands on the King's person; had defied Lennox, imprisoned Arran, outraged the laws, and raised against them the feelings, not only of their opponents, but of all good citizens. If they drew back, ruin was inevitable. If they went forward, although

¹ St. P. Off. Names of the noblemen and lords that as yet stand with the Duke, 5th Sept., 1582.

² MS. Caligula, C. vii. fol. 23. Sir George Carey to Burghley, 5th Sept., 1582.

the peril was great, the struggle might yet end triumphantly. They had the young King in their hands, and could work upon his timidity and inexperience, by menacing his life: they had possession of Arran, also—a man whom they dreaded far more than the gentler and vacillating Lennox: they were certain of the active support of the ministers of the Kirk; and Bowes and Walsingham had already assured them of the warm approval, and, if necessary, the assistance of England. All this was encouraging; and they determined, at every risk, to press on resolutely in the revolution which they had begun.

In the meantime, whilst such scenes passed at Ruthven, the capital presented a stirring scene. Lennox, who was at his Castle of Dalkeith, in the immediate neighbourhood of the city, when he received the intelligence of the surprise of the King, deeming himself insecure in the open country, took refuge with his household within the town. On his arrival, the magistrates despatched messengers to Ruthven, to ascertain the truth or falsehood of the King's captivity from his own lips; the ministers of the Kirk began to exult, and rouse the people to join with the Ruthven lords; and Mr James Lawson, although earnestly entreated, by the Provost of the city, to be temperate in his sermon, replying, in the words of Micah, that what the Lord put in his mouth he would speak,¹ seized the opportunity to deliver, from the pulpit, a bitter and emphatic attack upon the Duke and his profligate associate,

¹ Calderwood, MS. Hist., fol. 1205-6.

Arran. It was true, he said, that these two barons had subscribed the Confession of Faith, professed the true religion, and communicated with their brethren at the Lord's table; but their deeds testified that they were utter enemies of the truth. Had they not violated discipline, despised the solemn sentence of excommunication, set up *Tulchan* bishops, and traduced the most godly of the nobility and of the ministry? And as for this Duke of Lennox, what had been his practices since the day he came amongst them? With what taxes had he burdened the Commonwealth, to sustain his intolerable pride? What vanity in apparel; what looseness in manners; what superfluity in banqueting; what fruits and follies of French growth had he not imported into their simple country? Well might they be thankful; well praise God for their delivery from what was to have been executed the next Tuesday. Well did it become Edinburgh to take up the song of the Psalmist—*“Laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus.”*¹

Whilst the ministers of the Kirk thus eulogised the enterprise of the Ruthven lords, Elizabeth, who had speedily received intelligence of their success, despatched Sir George Carey to Scotland, with letters to the young King, and instructions to coöperate with her Ambassador Bowes, in strengthening the hands of Gowrie, and his faction. Randolph, too, wrote in great exultation to Walsingham, rejoicing in the success of the revolution; and, with the avidity and instinct of the bird which comes out in the storm, requesting to be again

¹ Calderwood MS., fol. 1206, Ayscough, 4736, Brit. Mus.

employed in the troubled atmosphere of Scotland. Unmoved by the violence of the measures which had been adopted, he, in the spirit of the Puritan party to which he belonged, pronounced the King's captivity a reward conferred by God on his sincere followers. "If it be true," said he, "that the King be now in the Protestants' hands, the Duke pursued, Arran imprisoned, and his brother slain, we may then see from this what it is to be true followers of Christ, in earnest preaching, and persevering in setting forth His word without respect or worldly policies."¹ It seems strange it should never have occurred to this zealous diplomatist, that the imprisonment of a King, and the violent invasion and slaughter of his councillors, were not the fruits to be expected from the gospel of peace and love.

Meanwhile, the captive monarch considered the late proceedings in a very different light, and meditated many schemes of escape and revenge; but he was alone, and closely watched: he did not even consider his life in safety; and although it would be difficult to believe that Gowrie and his associates had any such atrocious designs, yet the history of Scotland afforded him too good a ground for these apprehensions. Lennox, on the other hand, was timid and irresolute, allowed the precious moments for action to pass, and contented himself with despatching Lord Herries, and the Abbot of Newbottle,

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., 2d Sept., 1582, Maidstone.

with some offers of reconciliation, which were instantly rejected.¹

These envoys, on arriving at Stirling, where Gowrie and his fellow-conspirators now held the King a prisoner, were not permitted to see James in private, but were introduced to him in the Council Chamber, where they declared their message. "The Duke of Lennox," they said, "had sent them to inquire into the truth of a rumour, that his Sovereign lord was forcibly detained in the hands of his enemies; for if it were so, it was his duty to set him free; and with the assistance of his good subjects, he would instantly make the attempt." The scene which occurred, on the delivery of this message, must have been an extraordinary one. Without giving Gowrie, or his friends, a moment to reply, James started from his seat, crying out it was all true: he was a captive; he was not at liberty to go where he chose, or to move a step without a guard: and he bade them tell it openly, that all who loved him should assist the Duke, and achieve his deliverance. The Ruthven lords were, for a moment, overwhelmed with confusion: but they outbraved the accusation. Their Sovereign, they declared, had no more faithful subjects than themselves; nor should he be denied to go where he pleased; only, they would not permit the Duke of Lennox, and the Earl of Arran, to mislead him any longer. If he valued, therefore, the life of that person, he would do well to cause

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off.

him to retire instantly, and quietly, to France. If this were not done, they must call him to account for his late actions, and enforce against him the most rigorous penalty of the law. Such was the message which they sent back by Lord Herries; and they followed it up by a peremptory command to Lennox to deliver up Dumbarton Castle, and quit the kingdom within twelve days; orders which, after a short consideration, he despondingly prepared to obey.