

HISTORY
OF
SCOTLAND.

CHAP. I.

1573—1580.

REGENCY OF MORTON,
CONTINUED.

CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.

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

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

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

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

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

² June 29.

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

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

