

PROOFS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM

MANUSCRIPTS

IN

HER MAJESTY'S STATE PAPER OFFICE,
AND OTHER COLLECTIONS,

HITHERTO UNPRINTED.

I.

HUNTLY'S REBELLION, WITH ERROL, ANGUS, AND BOTHWELL.

Page 28.

On the 16th March, 1588-9, Elizabeth sent the following private letter to James, remonstrating with him against his misplaced lenity to Huntly and the Catholic faction. It was delivered to the King by the English resident Ashby, on the 21st March, as we learn by the following passage from that gentleman's letter to Lord Burghley. (St. P. Off.)

“The 21, early in the morning, I received a letter from your Honor, with the inclosed of her Majesty's; which I presented to him that day.” * * Ashby afterwards tells us the King liked the Queen's letter, and meant to prosecute the matter against the Catholic lords with severity. As to the Spaniards, against whose stay in Scotland Elizabeth so proudly remonstrated, calling them “the spoils of her wreck,” the same gentleman writes Burghley, “that it is thought as many as a thousand are dispersed over Scotland; and how they are to be transported, unless her Majesty go to charges, he cannot tell.” This fact is new.

ELIZABETH TO JAMES.¹

“MY DEAR BROTHER.—I am driven, through the greatness of my care for your safe estate, to complain to yourself of yourself; wondering not a little what injurious planet against my nearest neighbours reigneth with such blindness, and suffereth them not to see their changing peril and most imminent danger. Shall I

¹ Warrender MS., vol. A., p. 196.

excuse them they know it not? I am too true a witness that ignorance cannot excuse, as having been a most near spy to find out those treacheries. Must I say they dare not? Far be it from kingly magnanimity to harbour within their breast so unseemly a guest. Have I no excuse to serve them for payment? Well, then must I wail that I cannot mend; and if there befall them mishap, I am not guilty of such disaster. Yet can I not desist, though I might be discouraged, to beseech you in God's name, not to overstep such happy occasions as it hath pleased God to reveal unto you: for if, when they be at your side, you will not make yourself a profit of their wreck, how will you catch them when they are aloof from you?

“Let too late examples show you for pattern, how dishonourable it is to prolong to do by right, that [which] after they are driven to do by extremity; yea, and perchance as being taught to take heed, they will shun the place of danger; and so your danger worse than the others.

“It had been for honour and surety never to have touched, than so slightly to keep them in a scorn in durance, to be honoured with your presence with all kindness, and soon after to be extolled to your dearest chamber. Good Lord! what uncouth and never-heard-of trade is that? You must pardon my plain dealing: for if my love were not greater than my cause, as you treat it, I should content myself to see them wrecked with dishonour that contemn all loving warning and sister-like counsel. I pray God there be left you time (you have dealt so untimely) to be able to apprehend and touch, such as dares boldly, through your sufferance, attempt anything they list, to bring you and your land to the slavery of such as never yet spared their own. I know not how gracious they will be to you and your realm. When they *get footing*, they will suffer few feet but their own. Awake, therefore, dear Brother, out of your long slumber; and deal like a king who will ever reign alone in his own. If they found you stout, you should not lack that would follow you, and leave rotten posts.

“I marvel at the store you make of the Spaniards, being the spoils of my wreck. You wrote me word not one should bide with you; and now they must attend for more company. I am sorry to see how small regard you have of so great a cause. I may claim by treaty that such should not be; but I hope, without such claim, (seeing your home practices,) you will quickly ride

your realm of them, with speed; which I do expect for your own sake, and not the least for mine; of whom you may make sure reckoning (if you abandon not yourself) to be protected by for ever.

“And thus I end with axing a right interpretation of my plain and sincere meaning; and wish ever to you as to myself; as knoweth the Lord, whom ever I beseech to preserve you with long and happy days.—xvi. Martii, 1588.”

“ELIZABETH R.”

Indorsed, Copie of a letter from the Queen, 1588.

II.

Pages 49 and 51.

It appears by a letter of Mr R. Bowes, the English Ambassador at the Scottish Court, to Lord Burghley, dated at Edinburgh, 4th June, 1590, that on the 3d June he received the following letter of Elizabeth to James, and presented it next day (the 4th) to the King of Scots. “He received,” says Bowes, “her Majesty’s letter very friendly; showing himself much pleased and comforted therewith.” The person against whom Elizabeth had remonstrated, deprecating his being sent on so weighty and confidential a business, was Colonel Stewart, whom she suspected, on account of his former desertion of the Protestant party.

QUEEN ELIZABETH TO KING JAMES. MS. St. P. Off., Royal Letters, 29th May, 1590.

“My conceit, I perceive, my dear Brother, hath no whit swerved from your good intent: for now I well see Colonel Steward’s negotiation was not framed of his own brain, but proceeded from your earnest affection to so laudable a cause; and by your last letters, I find your earnest motion made to the two Dukes, together with their good and loving consent.

“All this moveth me to find you a redevable¹ Prince to a careful friend; and [I] do praise my judgment to have chosen so grateful a King, on whom to spend so many careful thoughts, as since your peregrination I have felt for your surety and your land’s wealth: and as my thanks are manifold, so shall the memorial bide perpetual.”

¹ “Redeivable,” Fr., beholden to; grateful.

“And for the Action, at the arrival of such a one as you are sending me, I will at large impart plainly my resolution therein, and considering it not your least regard of me, that you be heedful to deal no other ways than as may best content me. And [I] do assure you, that as I will never myself enter into it the first, yet I will ask nothing that shall not fit a King to demand, nor plead more innocency in all the cause, than my guiltless conscience, well showed by my actions, shall ever testify. And so you may be assured to get most honour, and never blot your fame with dealing in an action, when so great injury shall appear, and no just cause to enforce it.

“That I perceive the Governors of Denmark like well that other Princes of Germany should send their good consent, with joining their message, I must needs say, “the more the better” that desire such thing as is best for all Christendom; although I had thought that you, with the King of Denmark, would have sufficed. Yet if the rest do make the knot the greater, I must think my Bond to them the more, and trust the pact will be the surer.

“In the choice of such as you mind to send, this I hope you will chiefly regard: that he be none such as whose own cause or affection to the adverse part may breed a doubt of performance of the sender’s will; but be chosen even such a one, as whose honest and wise endeavour may much advance the end of so good a beginning.

“My good brother, I write this the plainer that you might clearly see what one I wish, and that may suffice for all. And for that the time requireth speed, I doubt not but you will use it.

“And so I leave scribbling, but never end to love you, and assist you with my friendship, care, and prayer to the living God to send you all prosperous success, and his Holy Spirit for guide.

“Your most assured faithful Sister and Cousin.”

Indorsed, 29th May, 1590. Copy of her Majesty’s letter, written with her own hand to the King of Scots, sent to Mr Bowes.

III.

The following letter, written by Elizabeth to Henry the Fourth, at the time that she sent her favourite Essex with four thousand men to his assistance, is highly characteristic. It is taken from a contemporary copy preserved in the Collection of Royal Letters

