

HISTORY

OF

SCOTLAND.

CHAP. I.

1565 - 1567.

From the Marriage of Mary with Darnley to her Marriage with Bothwell.

CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.

<i>England.</i>	<i>France.</i>	<i>Germany.</i>	<i>Spain.</i>	<i>Portugal.</i>	<i>Pope.</i>
Elizabeth.	Charles IX.	Maximilian II.	Philip II.	Sebastian.	Pius IV.

PREVIOUS to her marriage with Darnley, Mary had become assured that Murray and his faction were ready to rise in rebellion against her government if they met with the least encouragement from England; after this event, every day convinced her that Randolph, the English Ambassador, was using all his efforts to induce her barons to throw off their allegiance, and that Elizabeth not only approved of their proceedings, but secretly stimulated them to revolt.¹

To prepare for this emergency, the Scottish

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Earl of Murray to Cecil. Carlisle, Oct. 14, 1565. [I may here observe where the words *MS. letter* occur in this volume, the reader may consider the letter to be an original. When I quote a Copy, the word Copy is subjoined.]

Queen summoned her subjects to meet her in arms in the capital.¹ Her safety lay in promptitude and decision; she resolved to anticipate the movements of her opponents before it was possible for them to receive succour from England; and in this her efforts were eminently successful. Three days after her marriage, Murray was commanded to appear at court, under the penalty of being proclaimed a rebel, and having failed, he was “put to the horn,” as it was termed, that is, his life and estates were declared forfeited to the laws; upon which Randolph, in a letter addressed to the Queen of England, implored her to strengthen the hands of the English party in Scotland, and to save them from utter ruin.² He wrote also to the Earl of Bedford, an old and tried friend of Murray, urging him to use his influence to procure instant assistance, and assuring him, that if the English borderers could be let loose at this crisis, so as to keep their Scottish neighbours employed, the Queen and Darnley would be reduced to great distress.³ His letters to Elizabeth contained an alarming picture of affairs in Scotland. He represented religion, by which

¹ MS. Proclamation. St. P. Off. July 16, 1565. Copy of the time endorsed by Randolph.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Randolph to the queen. [When in the notes to this volume, I use the words “*to the Queen*,” in quoting any letter, the Queen of England is meant.] 23 July, 1565. Edinburgh.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Randolph to Bedford. Edinburgh. 24 July, 1565.

he meant protestantism, as in danger, and affirmed that the amity between the two kingdoms was on the point of being broken : but the English queen was slow to credit all his statements, and contented herself with dispatching Mr. Tamworth, one of the gentlemen of her bed-chamber, to the Scottish court, with the vain object of accomplishing a reconciliation between Mary and the Earl of Murray.¹

This, however, was now impossible. The Scottish queen, convinced that Murray's sole purpose was to recover the power which he had lost, allowed her enemies no time to concentrate their strength, but at the head of a force which defied opposition, compelled them to fly from Stirling to Glasgow, and from Glasgow to Argyle.² She then returned to Edinburgh, where Tamworth had arrived, and this envoy being admitted to an audience, was received by Mary with a spirit for which he seems not to have been prepared.³

In the letter which Elizabeth sent to this princess, she had affected to treat with contempt her pretensions to the English throne, and her practices with foreign powers, but Mary could express

¹ MS. Letter St. P. Off. Tamworth and Randolph to Cecil. Edinburgh, 10 Aug. 1565.

² Diurnal of Occurrents, p. 82. Keith p. 316. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Mary to the Master of Maxwell. Copy. Edinburgh, 23 August 1565.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Tamworth and Randolph to Cecil, Edinburgh, 10 Aug. 1565.

herself as severely, though with greater command of temper than her sister of England. After defending her marriage, and remonstrating against the uncalled-for interference of Elizabeth, she turned to the subject of the succession. I am not, said she, so lowly born, nor yet have I such small alliances abroad, that if compelled by your mistress to enter into 'practices' with foreign powers, she shall find them of such small account as she believes. The place which I fill in relation to the succession to the Crown of England, is no vain or imaginary one, and by God's grace, it shall appear to the world, that my designs and consultations shall prove as substantial as those which at any time my neighbours have taken in hand.¹

But although she repelled Elizabeth's haughty and sarcastic insinuations, Mary was sincerely desirous of peace. To promote this, she promised Randolph all that could justly be required. She could not consent indeed to renounce her title to a throne to which she held her claim to be undoubted, but she was ready to come under the most solemn obligation that neither she nor her husband should attempt any thing to the prejudice of the English queen or of her issue, and that whenever God called them to the possession of their right in England, no alteration should be made in the religion, laws, or liberties, of that ancient kingdom. In return, she insisted on the performance of two conditions, the

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Answers given by the queen of Scots to "Articles" proponed by Mr. Tamworth. 12 August, 1565.

first that Elizabeth, by Act of Parliament, should settle the English crown upon herself and Darnley, in the first instance, and in default of them and their children on the Lady Margaret, Countess of Lennox; the second, that she should offer no countenance or assistance to her rebels.¹

In this last stipulation Mary was peremptory; for she had discovered that Randolph, the English ambassador, intrigued with Murray, and she then suspected (what is now established beyond a doubt by the original letters of the actors in these unworthy scenes) that Elizabeth's advice and encouragement were at the bottom of the whole rebellion. Without waiting therefore for any further communication from England, she deemed it proper to take a determined step. The English ambassador was informed that he must either promise upon his honour to renounce all intercourse with her rebels, or be put under the charge of those who should take care to detect and restrain his practices: Randolph's reply to the Privy Council was more a defiance than an answer. "I will promise nothing," said he, "either on honour, honesty, word, or writing, and as for guards to attend me, they shall fare full ill, unless stronger and better armed than my own servants." Lethington, the secretary, then proposed that he should retire to Berwick, but this, too, he peremptorily refused. "Wheresoever

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Offers made by the queen of Scots to the queen's majesty of England. Wholly in Randolph's hand, and endorsed by Cecil. 13 Aug. 1565.

the queen, your mistress, keeps her court," was his reply, "there, or not far off, is my place. If I am driven from this, it is easy to see what mind is borne to my sovereign."¹ His insolence encouraged Tamworth to equal arrogance: he refused to give Darnley the royal title, and declined accepting a passport, because it bore his signature as king: but this ill judged presumption cost him dear. On his way home, a hint having been given to the borderers, he was waylaid, maltreated, and carried a prisoner to Hume Castle, from which he addressed a letter to Cecil, detailing his sorrowful adventure.²

In the meantime Elizabeth amused the insurgent barons by large promises, and small pecuniary advances, and thus encouraged, Murray, the duke, and Glencairn, at the head of a thousand men, advanced to Edinburgh, which they entered on the last day of August.³ The movement proved to be ill judged, and premature. The citizens received them coldly—not a man joined their ranks; it was in vain they endeavoured to excite an alarm that

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Randolph to Cecil, Edinburgh, 20 Aug. 1565. [As these inverted comma's may possibly mislead a reader, I beg to say, that where they occur, as they do here in reporting any conversation or dialogue, they do not always indicate that the passages are given strictly word for word. Sometimes, indeed, the very words are given; but sometimes only the sense.]

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Tamworth to Cecil. Hume Castle. Aug. 21, 1565.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Randolph to Cecil. Edinburgh, 31 Aug. 1565. Same to the same, 1 Sept. 1565.

religion was in danger; in vain they addressed a letter to the queen, in which they threatened that if she continued to pursue them, their blood should be dearly bought,¹ in vain that they dispatched urgent entreaties for assistance to Bedford and Cecil.² Before time was given for reply, Mary had marched against them, a cannonade was opened from the castle, and they were compelled with precipitation and dismay, to abandon the capital and retire to Dumfries.³ From this place they dispatched Robert Melvil, brother to the well known Sir James Melvil, to the English court. He was instructed to require the immediate assistance of three thousand men, and the presence of some ships of war in the Firth.⁴

With these exorbitant demands Elizabeth could not possibly have complied unless she had been prepared to rush into open war: she was now convinced that Randolph had misled or deceived her, by overrating the strength of the insurgents. She had believed that the whole country was ready to

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. contemporary copy. Letter from the lords to the queen, sent from Edinburgh to Glasgow. 1 Sept. 1565.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Border Correspondence; [henceforth to be marked simply by the letters B.C.] Bedford to Cecil. Berwick, 2 Sept. 1565. *Ibid.* Randolph to Cecil, 2d. Sept. 1565. Edinburgh.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Randolph to Cecil. Edinburgh, 4 Sept. 1565.

⁴ MS. St. P. Off. Instructions given to Robert Melvil, 10 Sep. 1565.

rise against the government of Mary and Darnley, and a short time before Melvil's arrival, had directed Bedford to assist them both with money and soldiers.¹ On discovering, however, the real weakness of Murray's faction, these orders were countermanded, and the insurgents found themselves in the alarming predicament of having risen in rebellion, trusting to succours which never arrived.²

Nor did Mary give Elizabeth time, even had she so determined, to save her friends. Before a company of horse, pikes, or bowmen, could have reached the borders, the Scottish queen had swept with her forces through Fife, inflicted chastisement on the Laird of Grange and other barons who had joined the rebels, levied a heavy fine on the towns of Dundee and St. Andrew's, seized Castle Campbell, and prepared, at the head of an army which rendered opposition fruitless, to attack the rebel lords at Dumfries. So keen was she in the pursuit, that she rode with pistols at her saddle bow, and declared to Randolph, that she would rather peril her crown, than lose her revenge.³

At this crisis, the Earl of Bothwell returned from

¹ The Queen to Bedford, Sep. 12, 1565. Appendix to Robertson's History of Scotland, vol. i. No. 13.

² MS. Letter. St. P. Off. Lords of Scotland to Mr. Melvil, 15 Sep., 1565. Dumfries.

³ MS. Letter. St. P. off. Randolph to Cecil, Edinburgh. Sept. 9, 1565. *Ibid.* Same to the same, Edinburgh. Aug. 27, 1565. *Ibid.* Same to the same, Edinburgh. Sept. 4, 1565.

France, profiting by the disgrace of Murray, whose power had expelled him from his country. He was favourably received by the queen, although well known to be a rash, daring, and profligate man ; but his extensive border estates gave him much power, and the circumstances in which Mary was placed made her welcome any baron who could bring a formidable force into the field.¹ In his company came David Chambers, a person of a dark, intriguing spirit, who had long been a retainer of this nobleman, and although a lord of the session, more likely to outrage than administer the law.

Aware that the arrival of such partizans would be followed by the most determined measures, the rebel lords made a last effort to alarm Elizabeth on the subject of religion. They transmitted to Robert Melvil, their envoy in England, a paper entitled " Informations to be given to the Queen's Majesty, in favour of the Church of Christ, now begun to be persecuted in the chief members of the same."² Even the title of this paper contained a misrepresentation of the truth, for at this moment, so far from persecution, there was complete religious toleration in Scotland. Its contents, too, were of questionable accuracy, certainly highly coloured. Melvil was directed to assure the Eng-

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Randolph to Cecil, Edinburgh, Sep. 19 and 20, 1565. Same to the same, Edinburgh, Sept. 1, 1565.

² MS. St. P. Off. Informations given to the queen's Majesty of England, and the Council, in favour of religion in Scotland, Sep. 22, 1565.

lish queen, that nothing was meant by Mary and him who was now joined with her, but the utter subversion of the religion of Jesus Christ within the realm, and the erecting again of all papistry and superstition. "The cause," said they, "why our destruction is sought, is, first the zeal that we bear to the maintenance of the true religion; and secondly, the care that we have to redress the great enormities lately crept into the public regimen of this miserable commonwealth." The patrimony of the crown was described as so dilapidated, that it was impossible the common expenses could be borne, and this they affirmed had led to the persecution of honourable men, and the promotion of crafty foreigners, chiefly two Italians, David Riccio, and Francisco, who, with other unworthy persons, occupied the place in council belonging to the ancient nobility. As to the Earl of Murray, he was hated, they said, because he would not support Riccio in his abuses, whilst a stranger (meaning Darnley), the subject of another realm, had intruded himself into the state, and claimed the name and authority of a king, without their consent, against all order that ever was used in this realm; and now, because they desired redress of these great enormities, they were persecuted as traitors and enemies to the commonwealth.¹

Although in some parts exaggerated, these fears and accusations were not without foundation. Mary

¹ Id : Ut supra.

had undoubtedly negotiated with the Roman See for an advance of money, and the pope had transmitted to her the sum of eight thousand crowns in a vessel, which, being wrecked on the coast of England, fell a prey to the cupidity of the Earl of Northumberland.¹

She was in correspondence also with Philip II., who had expressed to the Cardinal Pacheco, the papal envoy, his determination to assist her to subdue her rebels, maintain the catholic faith, and vindicate her right to the English throne. Nor did the Spanish king confine himself to mere promises. He had sent a remittance of twenty thousand crowns to Guzman de Silva, his ambassador at the court of England, with orders to employ it “with the utmost secrecy and address, in the support of the Scottish queen and her husband.”² It was true, also, that Mary had appointed Riccio to the place of French secretary. This foreigner, who was a Milanese, had come to Scotland in the train of Moret, the Savoy ambassador, and his ambition was at first satisfied with the humble office of a singer in the queen’s band, but being well educated, he was occasionally employed in other matters, and on the dismissal of Raulet, her French secretary,

¹ Keith, p. 316.

² Gonzalez Apuntamientos para la Historia del Rey Felipe II., p. 312, published in vol. vii. of the Memoirs of the Historical Society of Madrid. The work was pointed out to me by a kind and respected friend to whom I am indebted for some valuable papers and references, Mr. Howard, of Corby Castle.

Mary rewarded his talent with the vacant office. But when betrayed, as she had repeatedly been by her own nobility, to whom office, but not fidelity, was transmitted by birth, it was not wonderful that the queen employed those whom she could better trust, and, on the whole, the arguments of the insurgents produced little effect upon Elizabeth. She was convinced of the power and popularity of the Scottish queen; the feebleness of Murray and his associates, whom she had bribed into rebellion, was proved beyond a doubt, and the moment this was discovered, they were abandoned to their fate, without pity or remorse. True to her wonted dissimulation in all state policy, she assured them that she still favoured their enterprise, and was moved by their distress, but no remonstrances of Murray, who loudly declared that desertion was ruin, could extort from her either money or troops.¹ At this moment, Monsieur de Mauvissiere, better known as the Sieur de Castelnau, was in England, whither he had been sent by his master, the French king, to accomplish, if possible, a reconciliation between Mary and Elizabeth. By the advice of Cecil, Mauvissiere and Cockburn, the last a creature of this minister, and known to Mary as an archer in the Scottish guard, repaired to Scotland, and made an attempt to procure a pardon for Murray and his associates. To both, the queen readily gave audience, and the picture given by them of the miser-

¹ MS. St. P. Off. An answer for Robert Melvil, Oct. 2, 1565. Entirely in Cecil's hand.

able and distracted state of her kingdom was so sad and true, as to draw many tears from her eyes ;¹ but when the terms upon which they proposed to mediate were stated, her spirit rose against the imperious dictation of Elizabeth, she dismissed the envoys, and proceeded instantly against her rebels, who still lay, with a few horse, at Dumfries. On advancing at the head of her army, Lord Maxwell, the most powerful baron in these quarters, hastened to make his submission, and Murray, with the chiefs of his faction, fled in terror to Carlisle.²

From this city the Scottish earl addressed a letter of remonstrance to Cecil, imploring his mistress to save them from the wreck of "honour, conscience, and estate." On the other hand, Mary, a few days before, had written in spirited terms to Elizabeth. It had been reported she said, much to her astonishment, that her sister of England intended to protect her rebellious subjects who had fled to the borders. She declared her unwillingness to give credit to such tales, but should they prove true, should she make common cause with such traitors, she avowed her resolution to denounce such wrongful dealings to all the foreign princes who were her allies. The English queen was alarmed. The French and Spanish ambassadors took Mary's part, and accused Elizabeth, in

¹ MS. Letter. St. P. Off., Edinburgh. Oct. 2, 1565, Captain Cockburn to Cecil. "She wept wondrous sore."

² MS. Letter. St. P. Off. B.C., Bedford to Cecil. Carlisle, Oct. 14, 1565.

no measured terms, of fomenting civil commotions in other realms, that she might avert danger from her own ; it was her favourite policy, they affirmed, Scotland proved it, and at this instant the rebels there acted by her encouragement, and, in their distress, looked to her as their last resource.

Murray, by this time, was travelling to the English Court, and Elizabeth found herself in an awkward predicament ; but it was necessary to take immediate measures, and those which she adopted strongly marked her character ; an envoy was hurried off to command the Scottish earl and his friends, on pain of her displeasure, to remain at a distance. This was the public message intended to vindicate her fair dealing to the world. The messenger encountered and stopped Murray at Ware : here the earl remained, and here he soon received a secret message, permitting him to come forward.¹ He obeyed, and was admitted into the presence of the English queen, but it was to be made an actor in a scene which overwhelmed him with confusion. She had summoned the French and Spanish ambassadors to be present. Murray and the Abbot of Kilwinning entered the apartment, fell upon their knees, and implored her intercession with the queen, their mistress. “ I am astonished,” said Elizabeth, “ that you have dared without warning to come before me ; are you not branded as rebels

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Murray to the Privy Council, Ware, Oct. 21, 1565. Copy MS., St. P. Off., of the speech to the Earl of Murray. Oct. 23, partly in Cecil's hand.

to your sovereign? have you not spurned her summons, and taken arms against her authority? I command you, on the faith of a gentleman, to declare the truth." Murray repelled the charge of treason, lamented that he was encompassed with enemies, who made it dangerous for him to come to court, and declared that the accusation that he had plotted to seize the person of his sovereign, and had been encouraged in his rebellion by the Queen of England, was utterly false and ridiculous; the whole pageant had evidently been arranged beforehand,¹ and Elizabeth's answer was in perfect keeping.

Turning in proud triumph to the foreign ambassadors, she bade them mark his words, and then, with an expression of anger and contempt, she addressed Murray and the Abbot of Killwinning, still on their knees before her:—"It is well," said she, "that you have told the truth: for neither did I, nor any one else in my name, ever encourage you in your unnatural rebellion against your sovereign, nor, to be mistress of a world, could I maintain any subject in disobedience to his prince: it might move God to punish me by a similar trouble in my own realm:—but as for you two, ye are unworthy traitors, and I command you instantly to leave my presence."²

The earl and his friend were then ignomini-

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Copy of the Queen's speech to the Earl of Murray, before the French ambassador, the Sieur de Mauvissiere, and the Queen's Council. Also Melvil's Memoirs, p. 57.

² Id: ut supra.

ously driven from court, and care was taken to render as public as possible the severe treatment they had received, so that the news soon reached the court in Scotland, and occasioned great triumph to the party of Mary and the king. "All the contrary faction," said Randolph, in a letter from Edinburgh, to Cecil, "are discouraged and think themselves utterly undone."¹ Nor did they want good reason to think so, for the Scottish queen summoned a Parliament to meet in February, and it was publicly declared that the forfeiture of Murray and his adherents was the principal business to be brought before it.²

It is scarcely necessary here to repeat what has been apparent, from innumerable examples in the course of this history, that feudal forfeiture was in these days equivalent to absolute ruin, that it stripped the most potent baron at once of his whole estates and authority, throwing him either as an outcast upon the charity of some foreign country, or exposing him to be hunted down by those vassals whose allegiance followed the land, and not the lord.

To avert this dreadful calamity, Murray exerted himself to the utmost. He interceded with Leicester, he wrote to Cecil, imploring him to save him from being "wrecked for ever."³ He ad-

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Randolph to Cecil, Edinburgh. Nov. 8, 1565.

² MS.. Letter, St. P. Off. Randolph to Cecil, Edinburgh. Dec. 23, 1565.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Murray to Cecil, Newcastle. Jan. 9, 1565-6. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Murray to Leicester, Newcastle, Dec. 25, 1565.

dressed a letter to Elizabeth, and he even condescended to court Riccio.

The influence of this Milanese adventurer had been gradually increasing. At this moment Maitland of Lethington, the secretary of state, was suspected of having been nearly connected with the rebellion of Murray,¹ and, as a trustworthy servant was a prize rarely to be found, the queen began to consult her French secretary in affairs of secrecy and moment. The step was an imprudent one, and soon attended with the worst effects. It roused the jealousy of the king, a weak and suspicious youth, who deemed it an affront that a stranger of low origin should presume to interfere in state affairs; and it turned Riccio's head, who began to assume, in his dress, equipage, and establishment, a foolish state totally unsuited to his rank.² In the meantime, his influence was great, and Murray bespoke his good offices by the present of a rich diamond, with a letter soliciting his assistance.³

Had Mary been left to herself, there is little doubt that her rebels would have been pardoned. Her natural generosity and the intercession of some powerful friends, strongly impelled her to the side of mercy;⁴ and she had already consented to delay

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Randolph to Cecil, Edinburgh, 1st. Dec. 1565.

² Spottiswood, p. 193.

³ Sir James Melvil's Memoirs, p. 147. Bannatyne Club edition.

⁴ Sir J. Melvil, p. 146.

the parliament, and to entertain proposals for the restoration of the banished lords, when an unforeseen circumstance occurred, which led to unfortunate results. This was the arrival of two gentlemen, de Rambouillet and Clernau, on a mission from the French court. Their message was outwardly one of mere ceremony, to invest the young king with the order of St. Michael, but amid the festivities attendant on the installation, a more important and secret communication took place. Clernau, the special envoy of the Cardinal Lorraine, and Thornton, a messenger from Beaton, the Scottish ambassador in France, who had come to court about the same time, informed Mary of the coalition which had been concluded between France, Spain, and the Emperor, for the destruction of the Protestant cause in Europe. It was a design worthy of the dark and unscrupulous politicians by whom it had been planned—Catherine of Medicis, and the Duke of Alva. In the summer of the preceding year, the queen dowager of France and Alva had met at Bayonne, during a progress, in which she conducted her youthful son and sovereign, Charles IX., through the southern provinces of his kingdom. And there, whilst the court was dissolved in pleasure, those secret conferences were held which issued in the resolution that toleration must be at an end, and that the only safety for the Roman Catholic faith was the extermination of its enemies.¹

¹ Keith, p. 325, Mezerai Abrege Chronologique de L'Histoire de

Thornton accordingly brought from the Cardinal Lorraine the "*Band*" or League which had been drawn up on this occasion; it was whispered that some of her friends in England were parties to it, and Mary was strongly urged to become a member of the coalition. Her intention of pardoning Murray and her other rebels was at the same time opposed by these foreign envoys, with the utmost earnestness. It was represented as her only safe policy to crush, while she had it in her power, that busy Protestant faction which had been so long encouraged, and was even at this moment secretly supported by Elizabeth, and to join that sacred League, to which she was united, as well by the bonds of a mutual faith, as by those of blood and affection. If she adopted this method, it was argued, her authority within her realm would be placed upon a secure foundation; if she neglected it, her misfortunes, however complicated they had already been, were only in their commencement.

Riccio, who at this moment possessed much influence, and was on good grounds suspected to be a pensioner of Rome, seconded these views with all his power. On the other hand she did not want advisers on the side of wisdom and mercy. Sir James Melvil, in Scotland, and Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, one of her most powerful friends in England, earnestly implored her to pardon Mur-

France, vol. v. p. 87-8, Randolph to Cecil, February 7, 1565-6. Robertson's Appendix, No. xiv.; also Bedford to Cecil, 13 February, 1565-6, British Museum. Caligula, B. X. fol. 391.

ray and adopt a conciliatory course.¹ Mary was not naturally inclined to harsh or cruel measures, and for some time she vacillated between the adoption of temperate and violent counsels. But now the entreaties of her uncle the cardinal, the advice of her ambassador, the prejudices of her education, and the intolerance of the Protestants, and of Elizabeth, by whom she had been so often deceived, all united to influence her decision, and overmaster her better judgment. In an evil hour she signed the League, and determined to hurry on the parliament for the forfeiture of the rebels. This may, I think, be regarded as one of the most fatal errors of her life; and it proved the source of all her future misfortunes. She united herself to a bigotted and unprincipled association, which, under the mask of defending the truth, offered an outrage to the plainest precepts of the Gospel. She imagined herself a supporter of the Catholic Church, when she was giving her sanction to one of the worst corruptions of Romanism; and she was destined to reap the consequences of such a step in all their protracted bitterness.

The moment the queen's resolution was known, it blasted the hopes of Murray, and threw him and all Mary's enemies upon desperate courses. If the Estates were allowed to meet, the consequence to them was ruin; if the councillors continued unchanged, and Riccio's advice was followed, it was

¹ Sir J. Melvil's Memoirs, pp. 141, 144.

certain the Estates would meet. What then was to be done? The time was fast running on, and the remedy, if there was to be any, must be sudden. Such being the crisis, it was, at once, determined that the meeting of parliament should be arrested, the government of the queen and her ministers overturned; and that, to effect this, Riccio must be murdered. This last atrocious expedient was no new idea, for the seeds of an unformed conspiracy against the foreign favorite, had been sown some time before; and of this Murray's friends now availed themselves, artfully uniting the two plots into one, the object of which was the return of Murray, the dethronement of the queen, and the re-establishment of the Protestant leaders in the power which they had lost.

The origin, growth, and subsequent combination, of these two conspiracies have never yet been understood, although they can be distinctly traced. The first plot for the death of Riccio was, strange to say, formed by no less personages than the young king and his father, the Earl of Lennox. It had its rise in the jealousy and ambition of these unprincipled men, and the imprudent conduct of Mary. In the early ardour of her affection, the queen had promised Darnley the *crown matrimonial*, by which was meant an equal share with herself in the government; but after a few months she had the misery to discover, that her love had been thrown away upon a husband whom it was impossible for her to treat with confidence or respect. He was fickle, proud, and sus-

picious ; ambitious of power, yet incapable of business, and the easy dupe of every crafty or interested companion whom he met. It became necessary for Mary to draw back from her first promise. This led to coldness, to reproaches, soon to an absolute estrangement ; even in public he treated her with harshness ; he became addicted to low dissipation,¹ forsook her company, and threw himself into the hands of her enemies. They persuaded him that Riccio was the sole author of those measures which had deprived him of his due share in the government. But this was not all, Darnley had the folly to become the dupe of a more absurd delusion. He became jealous of the Italian secretary ; he believed that he had supplanted him in the affections of the queen ; he went so far as to assert that he had dishonoured his bed, and in a furious state of mind sent his cousin George Douglas to implore Lord Ruthven, in whom he had great confidence, to assist him against “ the villain David.”² Ruthven was at this moment confined to bed by a dangerous sickness, which might have been supposed to unfit him for such desperate projects. He was, as he himself informs us, “ scarcely able to walk twice the length of his chamber ;” yet he consented to engage in the murder, and Darnley was sworn to keep all

¹ Drury to Cecil, 16th Feb. 1565-6. Keith, 329.

² This was about the 10th February. Ruthven's Narrative in Keith, Appendix, p. 119 ; and Caligula, B. ix. f. 219. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Ruthven and Morton to Cecil, 27th March, 1566.

secret; but Randolph, the English minister, having become acquainted with the plot, revealed it to Leicester in a remarkable letter which yet remains. He informed him that the king and his father, Lennox, were determined to murder Riccio; that within ten days the deed would be done; that, as to the queen, the crown would be torn from her whose dishonour was discovered; and that still darker designs were meditated against her person, which he did not dare to commit to writing. From his letter, which is very long, I must give this important passage. "I know now for certain," said he, "that this queen repenteth her marriage; that she hateth him (Darnley) and all his kin. I know that he knoweth himself, that he hath a partaker in play and game with him; I know that there are practices in hand, contrived between the father and son to come by the crown against her will. I know that if that take effect which is intended, David, with the consent of the king, shall have his throat cut within these ten days. Many things grievouser and worse than these are brought to my ears; yea, of things intended against her own person, which, because I think better to keep secret than write to Mr. Secretary, I speak not of them but now to your lordship."¹

At this time Randolph, who, from the terms

¹ Randolph to the Earl of Leicester, Edinburgh, 13 February, 1565-6. This remarkable letter, which has never been published, is to be found in the Appendix to a privately printed and anonymous work, entitled "Maitland's Narrative," of which only twenty

in which he described it, appears to have had no objection to the plot, was banished by Mary to Berwick, the queen having now discovered certain proof of his having encouraged and assisted Murray in his rebellion.¹ To supply his place, Ruthven, who perceived that the king's intent to murder the Italian gave him a good opportunity to labour for the return of his banished friends, called in the Earl of Morton, then chancellor of the kingdom.² This powerful and unscrupulous man proved an able assistant. Under his father, the noted George Douglas, he had been early familiarized with intrigue. He hated Riccio, and dreaded the assembling of parliament almost as much as Murray, from a report that he was to be deprived of certain crown lands, which had been improperly obtained, and to lose the seals as chancellor.³ Morton, too, was the personal friend of Murray; like him he belonged to

copies were printed. The book was politely presented to me by Mr. Dawson Turner, in whose valuable Collection of MSS. the original letter is preserved.

¹ MS. Letter communicated to me by the Hon. William Leslie Melvil; Mary to Melvil, 17 February, 1565-6.; A copy—Mary confronted Randolph before the Privy Council, with Johnston, the person to whom he had delivered the money to be conveyed to Murray; and the evidence being considered conclusive, he received orders to quit the court, and retired to Berwick.

² Narrative ut supra. Keith, p. 120, Appendix." MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Morton and Ruthven to Cecil, Berwick, 27th March, 1566.

³ MS. Letter St. P. Off. Randolph to Cecil, Berwick, 6 March, 1565.

the party of the reformed Church ; and when Ruthven and Darnley solicited his aid, he at once embraced the proposal for the murder of the secretary, and proceeded to complete the machinery of the conspiracy, with greater skill than his fierce but less artful associates.

His first endeavour was to strengthen their hands by procuring the co-operation of the party of the reformed church ; his next, to follow out Ruthven's idea, by drawing in Murray, and making the plot the means of his return to power ; his last to secure the countenance and support of Elizabeth and her chief ministers, Cecil and Leicester.

In all this he succeeded. The consent and assistance of the leading Protestant barons, was soon gained, and to neutralize any opposition on the part of their chief ministers was not found a difficult matter.¹ They were in the deepest alarm at this moment. It was known that Mary had signed the Popish League ; it was believed that Riccio corresponded with Rome, and there was no doubt that some measures for the restoration of the Roman Catholic religion were in preparation, and only waited for the parliament to be carried into execution.² Having these gloomy prospects before their eyes, Knox and

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Morton and Ruthven to Cecil, 27th March, 1566.

² Mary's own words in her letter describing the murder of Riccio, addressed to Beaton, her ambassador at the French court, are quite explicit upon this point. "The spiritual estate (says she) being placed therein in the ancient manner tending to have done some good anent restoring *the auld Religion*." Keith, p. 331.

Craig, the ministers of Edinburgh, were made acquainted with the conspiracy ;¹ Bellenden, the justice clerk, Makgill the clerk register, the lairds of Brunston, Calder and Ormiston, and other leading men of that party were, at the same time, admitted into the secret. It was contended by Morton, that one only way remained to extirpate the Romish faith, and replace religion upon a secure basis ; this was, to break off the parliament, by the murder of Riccio, to imprison the queen, entrust Darnley with the nominal sovereignty, and restore the Earl of Murray to be the head of the government. Desperate as were these designs, the Reformed party in Scotland did not hesitate to adopt them. Their horror of Idolatry, the name they bestowed on the Roman Catholic religion, misled their judgment and hardened their feelings, and they regarded the plot as the act of men raised up by God for the destruction of an accursed superstition. The General Fast, which always secured the presence of a formidable and numerous band of partisans, was near approaching ; and as the murder had been fixed for the week in March, in which the parliament had been summoned, it was contrived that this religious solemnity should be held in the capital at the same time. This secured Morton and enabled him to work with greater boldness.²

Having so far organized the conspiracy, it re-

¹ See the evidence on which this fact is now stated for the first time in Proofs and Illustrations, No. I.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Morton and Ruthven to Cecil, 27th March, 1566. Knox, Hist. p. 341, 342.

mained to communicate it to Murray, and for this purpose, the king's father the Earl of Lennox repaired to England.¹ It required no great persuasion to induce Murray, now in banishment, and over whose head forfeiture and ruin were impending, to embrace a plot which promised to avert all danger, and restore him to the station he had lost. It was accordingly arranged by him, with Grange, Ochiltree, the father-in-law of Knox, and the other banished lords, that as soon as the day for the murder was fixed, they should be informed of it, and then order matters so that their return to Edinburgh should take place instantly after it was committed.² But this was not all. According to a common but revolting practice of this age, which combined the utmost feudal ferocity with a singular love of legal formalities, it was resolved, that "Covenants" or contracts for the commission of the murder, and the benefits to be derived from it should be entered into, and signed by the young king himself and the rest of the conspirators. Two "Bands," or "Covenants," were accordingly drawn up: the first ran in the king's name alone, although many were parties to it. It stated that the queen's "gentle and good nature" was abused by some wicked and ungodly persons, specially an Italian

¹ Calderwood MS. Brit. Mus. Ayscough, 4735, f. 642.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Edinburgh, February 25, 1565, i. e. 1565-6. Randolph to Cecil—also Ibid. March 8, 1565. Berwick. Bedford, and Randolph to Leicester and Cecil. Ibid. MS. Letter, Murray to Cecil, Newcastle, March 8, 1565-6.

stranger called David; it declared his resolution, with the assistance of certain of his nobility and others, to seize these enemies; and if any difficulty or resistance occurred, “to cut them off immediately, and slay them wherever it happened,” and solemnly promised on the word of a prince, to maintain and defend his assistants and associates in the enterprise, though carried into execution in presence of the queen’s majesty, and within the precincts of the palace.¹ By whom this agreement was signed, besides the King, Morton, and Ruthven, does not appear; but it is certain that its contents were communicated amongst others to Murray, Argyle, Rothes, Maitland, Grange, and the Lords Boyd and Lindsay. Of these persons, some were in England, and could not personally assist in the assassination; and to them, among others, Morton and Ruthven no doubt alluded, when they afterwards declared, that the most honest and the most worthy, were easily induced to approve of the intended murder, and to support their prince in its execution.² The second “Covenant” has been also preserved. It was supplementary to the first, its purpose being to bind the king on the one hand, and the conspirators on the other, to the performance of those conditions which were considered for their mutual advantage. The parties to it were the

¹ Brit. M. Caligula, B. ix. fol. 212, Copy of the time. Endorsed by Randolph.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Morton and Ruthven to Cecil. Berwick, March, 27, 1566. Also Keith, p. 120.

King, the Earls of Murray, Argile, Glencairn, and Rothes, the Lords Boyd and Ochiltree, and their "complices." They promised to support Darnley in all his just quarrels, to be friends to his friends, and enemies to his enemies; to give him the crown matrimonial, to maintain the protestant religion, to put down its enemies, and uphold every reform founded on the word of God. For his part, the king engaged to pardon Murray and the banished lords, to stay all proceedings for their forfeiture, and to restore them to their lands and dignities.¹

Such was now the forward state of the conspiracy for the murder of Riccio, the restoration of Murray, and the revolution in the government; and it appears to have assumed this form, only a few days previous to Randolph's dismissal from the Scottish court. One only step remained: to communicate the plot to the queen of England and her ministers, and to obtain their approval and support. Randolph was now at Berwick with the Earl of Bedford, the lieutenant of the North, and from this place these persons wrote on the 6th of March to Elizabeth, informing her of "a matter of no small consequence being intended in Scotland," referring to a more particular statement which they had transmitted to Cecil, adding that Murray would thus

¹ St. P. Off. Copy by Randolph from the original:—"Conditions for the earls to perform to their king," and "Conditions to be performed by the King of Scots to the earls." Endorsed in Cecil's hand, Primo Martii, 1565.

be brought home ; that Tuesday was the last day, and that they looked daily to hear of its execution.¹

The other letter from Bedford and Randolph to Cecil, written on the same day, was far more explicit. It enjoined the strictest secrecy : they had promised, they said, upon their honour, that none except the Queen, Leicester, and Cecil himself, should be informed of “ the great attempt,” now on the eve of being put in execution ; and they went on thus to describe it :

“ The matter is this. Somewhat we are sure you have heard of divers discords and jarrers² between this queen and her husband, partly for that she hath refused him the crown matrimonial, partly for that he hath assured knowledge of such usage of herself, as altogether is intolerable to be borne, which, if it were not overwell known, we would both be very loath to think that it could be true. To take away this occasion of slander, he is himself determined to be at the apprehension and execution of him, whom he is able manifestly to charge with the crime, and to have done him the most dishonour that can be to any man, much more being as he is. We need not more plainly to describe the person. You have heard of the man whom we mean of.

“ To come by the other thing which he desireth, which is the crown matrimonial, what is devised and concluded upon by him and the noblemen, you

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Bedford and Randolph to the Queen. Berwick, March 6, 1565.

² Jars.

shall see by the copies of the conditions between them and him, of which Mr. Randolph assureth me to have seen the principals, and taken the copies written with his own hand.

“ The time of execution and performance of these matters is before the parliament, as near as it is. To this determination of theirs, there are privy in Scotland these : Argile, Morton, Boyd, Ruthven, and Liddington. In England these : Murray, Rothes, Grange, myself, and the writer hereof. If persuasions to cause the queen to yield to these matters do no good, they purpose to proceed we know not in what sort. If she be able to make any power at home, she shall be withstood, and herself kept from all other counsel than her own nobility. If she seek any foreign support, the queen’s majesty, our sovereign shall be sought, and sued unto to accept his and their defence, with offers reasonable to her majesty’s contentment. These are the things which we thought and think to be of no small importance, and knowing them certainly intended, and concluded upon, thought it our duties to utter the same to you Mr. Secretary, to make declaration thereof as shall seem best to your wisdom. And of this matter thought to write conjunctly, though we came severally by knowledge, agreeing both, in one, in the substance of that which is determined. At Berwick, 6th March, 1565.¹

“ F. BEDFORD. TH. RANDOLPHE.”

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., March 6, 1565, Berwick. Earl of

I have given this long extract as the letter is of much importance, and has never before been known. It proves that Elizabeth received the most precise intimation of the intended murder of Riccio, that she was made fully acquainted with the determination to secure the person of the Scottish queen, and create a revolution in the government. Murray's share in the conspiracy, and his consent to the assassination of the foreign secretary, are established by the same letter beyond a doubt; and we see the declared object of the plot was, to put an end to his banishment, to replace him in the power which he had lost, and by one decided and triumphant blow, to destroy the schemes which were in agitation for the re-establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in Scotland. It is of great moment to attend to the conduct of Elizabeth at this crisis. She knew all that was about to occur: the life of Riccio, the liberty—perhaps, too, the life—of Mary was in her hands; Murray was at her court; the conspirators were at her devotion; they had given the fullest information to Randolph, that he might consult the queen: she might have imprisoned Murray, discomfited the plans of the conspirators, saved the life of the miserable victim who was marked for slaughter, and preserved Mary, to whom she professed a warm attachment, from captivity. All this might have been done, perhaps it

Bedford and Thomas Randolph, to Secretary Cecil, endorsed by Cecil's clerk, *Earl of Bedford and Mr. Randolph to my Mr.*

is not too much to say, that even in these dark times it would have been done by a monarch acutely alive to the common feelings of humanity. But Elizabeth adopted a very different course: she not only allowed Murray to leave her realm, she dismissed him with marks of the highest confidence and distinction, and this baron, when ready to set out for Scotland, to take his part in those dark transactions which soon after followed, sent his secretary, Wood, to acquaint Cecil with the most secret intentions of the conspirators.¹

Whilst these terrible designs were in preparation against her, some hints of approaching danger were conveyed to the Scottish queen; but she imprudently disregarded them. Riccio too received a mysterious caution from Damiot, an astrologer, whom he used to consult, and who bad him beware of the bastard, evidently alluding to George Douglas, the natural son of the Earl of Angus, and one of the chief conspirators; but he imagined that he pointed at Murray, then in banishment, and derided his apprehensions.² Meantime every thing was in readiness; a large concourse of the friends of the Reformed Church assembled at Edinburgh, for the week of fasting and humiliation: directions for prayer and sermons, had been previously drawn up by Knox and the ministers, and the subjects

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., March 8, 1565. Newcastle, Murray to Cecil. See also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. Bedford to Cecil, Berwick, March 8, 1565. Also MS. letter, St. P. Off. Bedford and Randolph to Leicester and Cecil, Berwick, March 8th, 1565.

² Spotswood, p. 194.

chosen were such as seemed calculated to prepare the public mind for resistance, violence and bloodshed. They were selected from the Old Testament alone, and included, amongst other examples, the slaying of Oreb and Zeb, the cutting off the Benjamites, the fast of Esther, the hanging of Haman, inculcating the duty of inflicting swift and summary vengeance on all who persecuted the people of God.¹

On the 3rd of March the fast commenced in the capital, and on the 4th, parliament assembled. It was opened by the queen in person, and the lords of the Articles having been chosen, the statute of treason and forfeiture against Murray and the banished lords was prepared. This was on a Thursday; and on Tuesday, in the following week, the act was to be passed; but it was fearfully arrested in its progress.²

On Saturday evening, about seven o'clock, when it was dark, the Earls of Morton and Lindsay, with a hundred and fifty men bearing torches and weapons, occupied the court of the palace of Holyrood, seized the gates without resistance and closed them against all but their own friends. At this moment Mary was at supper in a small closet or cabinet, which entered from her bed chamber. She was attended by the countess of Argyle, the commendator of Holyrood, Beaton, master of the household,

¹ Knox pp. 340, 341, Treatise on Fasting, &c. a rare Tract. Edinburgh, 1565, Lekprivick. Kindly communicated to me by my friend, Mr. James Chalmers; and Goodall, vol. i. p. 248, 249.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Bedford and Randolph to Leicester and Cecil, Berwick, 8th March, 1565-6. Ibid. B.C. Same to the Queen, 6th March, 1565-6.

Arthur Erskine, captain of the guard, and her secretary, Riccio. The bed chamber communicated by a secret turnpike-stair with the king's apartment below, to which the conspirators had been admitted; and Darnley ascending this stair, threw up the arras which concealed its opening in the wall, entered the little apartment where Mary sat, and casting his arm fondly round her waist, seated himself beside her at table. A minute had scarcely passed when Ruthven, clad in complete armour, abruptly broke in. This man had just risen from a sick bed, his features were sunk and pale from disease, his voice hollow, and his whole appearance haggard and terrible. Mary, who was now seven months gone with child, started up in terror, commanding him to be gone; but ere the words were uttered, torches gleamed in the outer room, a confused noise of voices and weapons was heard, and the next moment George Douglas, Car of Faudonside and other conspirators rushed into the closet¹. Ruthven now drew his dagger, and calling out that their business was with Riccio, made an effort to seize him, whilst this miserable victim springing behind the queen, clung by her gown, and in his broken language called out, "Giustizia, Giustizia, sauve ma vie, Madame, sauve ma vie."² All was now

¹ Mary to the Bishop of Glasgow, 2 April, 1566. Keith, 330; also Bedford and Randolph to the Council, 27 March, 1566. Ellis, vol. ii. 1st series, p. 207. Morton and Ruthven's Narrative. Caligula, B. ix. f. 298, more full than that in Keith, App. 120, which is a Copy.

² Birrel's Diary p. 5.

uproar and confusion ; and though Mary earnestly implored them to have mercy, they were deaf to her entreaties ; the table and lights were thrown down, Riccio was stabbed by Douglas over the queen's shoulder, Car of Faudonside, one of the most ferocious of the conspirators, held a pistol to her breast, and whilst she shrieked with terror, their bleeding victim was torn from her knees, and dragged amidst shouts and execrations through the queen's bed room, to the entrance of the presence chamber. Here Morton and his men rushed upon him, and buried their daggers in his body. So eager and reckless were they in their ferocity, that in the struggle to get at him, they wounded one another, nor did they think the work complete till the body was mangled by fifty-six wounds, and left in a pool of blood, with the king's dagger sticking in it, to show as was afterwards alleged, that he had sanctioned the murder.¹

Nothing can more strongly show the ferocious manners of the times than an incident which now occurred. Ruthven, faint from sickness, and reeking from the scene of blood, staggered into the queen's cabinet, where Mary still stood distracted

¹ Drury to Cecil, B.C. Berwick, 27 March, 1566, "David had 56 wounds, whereof 34 was in his back." "Such desire" says Drury, "was to have him surely and speedily slain, that in jabbing at him so many at once, as some bestowed their daggers where neither they meant it not, nor the receivers willing to have it ; as one can for his own good, now in this town (a follower to my lord Ruthven) be too true a testimony, who carries the bag in [on] his hand."

and in terror of her life. Here he threw himself upon a seat, called for a cup of wine, and being reproached for the cruelty of his conduct, not only vindicated himself and his associates, but plunged a new dagger into the heart of the unhappy queen, by declaring that her husband had advised the whole. She was then ignorant of the completion of the murder, but suddenly one of her ladies rushed into the room and cried out that their victim was slain. "And is it so," said Mary, "then farewell tears, we must now think of revenge."¹

Having finished the first act of this tragedy, the conspirators proceeded to follow out their preconcerted measures. The queen was kept a prisoner in her apartment, and strictly guarded. The king assuming the sole power, addressed his royal letters, dissolving the parliament, and commanding the Estates to leave the capital within three hours on pain of treason; orders were despatched to the magistrates, enjoining them with their city force to keep a vigilant watch, and suffer none but Protestants to leave their houses. And to Morton, the chancellor, with his armed retainers, was entrusted the guarding the gates of the palace, with strict injunction that none should escape from it.²

This, however, amid the tumult of a midnight murder, was not so easy a task. Huntley and Bothwell contrived to elude the guards. Sir James Balfour and James Melvil were equally fortunate; and

¹ Morton and Ruthven's Narrative ut supra. Spotswood, p. 195.

² Morton and Ruthven's Narrative, Keith, 126.

as this last gentleman passed beneath the queen's window, she threw up the sash and implored him to warn the citizens, to save her from the traitors who had her in their power : soon after the common bell was heard ringing, so speedily had the message been carried ; and the chief magistrate, with a body of armed townsmen, rushed confusedly into the palace court, demanding the instant deliverance of their sovereign. But Mary in vain implored to speak with them ; she was dragged back from the window by the ruffians, who threatened to cut her in pieces if she attempted to show herself ; and in her stead the pusillanimous Darnley was thrust forward. He addressed the citizens, assured them that both he and the queen were in safety, and, commanding them on their allegiance to go home, was instantly obeyed.¹

Thus ended all hope of rescue ; but although baffled in this attempt, secluded even from her women, trembling and justly fearing for her life, the queen's courage and presence of mind did not forsake her. She remonstrated with her husband ; she even condescended to reason with Ruthven, who replied in rude and upbraiding terms, and at last exhausted with this effort, she would have sunk down had they not called for her ladies and left her to repose. Next morning all the horrors of her condition broke fully upon her ; she was a prisoner, in the hands of a band of assassins ; they

¹ Mary to Archbishop Beaton, 2 April, 1565-6. Keith, 332. Melvil's Memoirs, 150.

were led by her husband, who watched all her motions; he had already assumed the royal power, she was virtually dethroned; who could tell what dark purposes might not be meditated against her person. These thoughts agitated her to excess, and threw her into a fever, in which she imagined the ferocious Ruthven was coming to murder her, and shrieking out that she was abandoned by all, she was threatened with miscarriage. The piteous sight revived Darnley's affection; her gentlewomen were admitted, and the danger passed away, yet so strong was the suspicion with which she was guarded, that no lady was allowed to pass "muffled" from the queen's chamber.¹

It was now Sunday night, the murder had been committed late on Saturday evening; and according to their previous concert, Murray, Rothes and Ochiltree, with others of the banished lords, arrived in the capital and instantly rode to the palace. They were welcomed by Darnley; and so little did Mary suspect Murray's foreknowledge of the murder, that she instantly sent for him, and throwing herself into his arms in an agony of tears, exclaimed, "if my brother had been here he never would have suffered me to have been thus cruelly handled." The sight overcame him, and he is reported to have wept; but, if sincere, his compunction was momentary, for, from the queen he repaired to Morton, and in a

¹ Morton and Ruthven's Narrative. Keith, Appendix, pp. 127, 128.

meeting with the whole conspirators, it was resolved to shut up their sovereign in Stirling Castle, to compel her to give the crown and the whole government of the realm to Darnley, and to confirm the Protestant religion, under the penalty of death or perpetual imprisonment.¹

Meanwhile, Mary's spirit and courage revived. She perceived that her influence over her husband was not at an end, and exerting those powers of fascination and persuasive language which she possessed in so high a degree, she succeeded in alarming his fears, and awakening his love. She represented to him, that he was surrendering himself a tool into the hands of her enemies and his own: if they had belied her honour, if they had periled her life, and that of his unborn infant, could he believe, that when he alone stood between them and their ambition, they would hesitate to destroy him. Already he might see they took the power into their own hands, and when he sent his servants to her, refused to admit them, and then the flagrant falsehood of accusing him as a party to so base a murder, a deed which had he really contemplated, (but this she was assured he never had) must cover him with infamy in the eyes of the country, and of the world. Their only safety lay in escaping together. If, said she, it is your wish, I am ready to forgive, even the bloody men whose atrocious act you have just witnessed.—Go and tell them so—but let them treat

¹ Mary to Beaton. Keith, p. 332.

me as a free queen, let them remove their guards, avoid the palace which they have polluted with blood, and I will sign a written pardon for them on the spot. Darnley was won by her arguments, and becoming terrified for the consequences of the murder, took refuge in falsehood, denied all connection with the conspiracy, and placed himself in the hands of Mary, with the same facility which had lately made him the slave of the conspirators. Ruthven and Morton, however, were not so easily deceived, and insisted that the queen meant only to betray them. The king replied, she was a true princess, that he would stake his life for her faith and honour,¹ and led the conspirators to her presence, where she heard their defence, assured them of her readiness to pardon, and sent them away to draw up a writing for their security. They did so, delivered the paper to Darnley, left the palace, removed the guards, and permitted the servants of the household to resume their charge. To lull suspicion, the queen retired to rest, and Ruthven and his associates deeming all safe, betook themselves to the house of Morton the chancellor, as we have seen, one of the chief actors in the murder—but at midnight Mary rose, threw herself upon a fleet horse, and accompanied only by the king and Arthur Erskine, fled to Dunbar. The news of her escape

¹ This assertion of Darnley, which gives a direct contradiction to the story of Mary's alleged passion for Riccio, rests on the evidence of Lord Ruthven, who was present.—See his narrative of the murder in Keith, Appendix, p. 128.

flew through the land, her nobles, Huntly, Athol, Bothwell, and multitudes of barons and gentlemen, crowded round her, and in the morning Morton, Ruthven, and the rest of the conspirators, awoke only to hear that their victim had eluded their grasp, that an army of her subjects had already assembled at Dunbar, and that the penalties of treason were suspended over their heads.

Mary thus escaped, and it is impossible to withhold our admiration of the coolness, judgment, and courage exhibited by a woman under the dreadful circumstances in which she was called upon to exert these qualities. If we blame her duplicity, let it be remembered, that her own life, and that of her infant, were in jeopardy, that there was nothing unreasonable in the idea that the ruffians who had torn her secretary from her knees, and murdered him in her chamber, might before many hours were over, be induced to repeat the deed upon herself. We may gather, indeed, from the dark and indefinite expressions of Randolph in describing the approaching assassination, that their intentions, if she resisted their wishes, vacillated between murder and perpetual captivity.

Once more free, the queen acted with her usual spirit and decision. Having regained her ascendancy over the king, she obtained from this weak prince a disclosure of the chief persons engaged in the conspiracy. It would appear, however, that Darnley concealed Murray's guilt, and only denounced Morton, Ruthven, and other associates.

Against them the queen took instant steps. She summoned her people to attend her in arms, directed a writ of treason to be issued against the Chancellor, Lethington, and their accomplices, and advanced at the head of a force of eight thousand men to the capital.¹ Aware of this, the conspirators fled with the utmost precipitation. Morton, Ruthven, Brunston, and Andrew Car, took instant refuge in England, others, scattered hither and thither, concealed themselves in their own country. Knox in great agony of spirit, and groaning over the Church and his flock, buried himself in the friendly recesses of Kyle, and Lethington hastened to gain the mountain fastnesses of Athol. It was remarkable that Craig, the colleague of Knox, did not leave the city.²

To the English queen, and her brother, the Earl of Murray, Mary had a more difficult part to act, whilst she felt equal embarrassment as to the degree of confidence to be given to the king. We have seen incontrovertible proof that Murray was a party to the murder, though not a perpetrator of it, that Elizabeth was accessory to the conspiracy, and that Darnley and his father Lennox were the original contrivers of the whole: but of all this

¹ Knox, p. 344, Hist.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Randolph to Cecil, Berwick, 21 March, 1565. M'Crie's Life of Knox, p. 254. I quote from the new and excellent Edition of this work by Dr. Crichton. See also Knox's Prayer, dated 12th March 1565, subjoined to his Answer to Tyrie.

Mary at this moment was ignorant. Elizabeth on being informed of the outrage, expressed the deepest sympathy and indignation; Murray affected an equal abhorrence of every thing that had occurred. Darnley not only denounced his former friends, but busied himself in bringing them to justice. The queen, therefore, without renouncing her resolution to punish the murder with the utmost rigour, deemed it prudent in the first instance to secure the active assistance of Elizabeth, to strengthen her ties with France, and to promote a reconciliation amongst her nobility, many of whom were at feud with each other: Bothwell, who during the late disturbances had vigorously exerted himself for his sovereign, was the enemy of Murray and Lethington—Athol, with whom Lethington had taken refuge, was at variance with Argyle, and the differences amongst the leading barons as usual extended their ramifications though all their retainers and dependants.

It says much for the judgment of the queen that her efforts to compose these fatal differences were successful. Murray and Bothwell were reconciled, Argyle and Athol agreed to suspend their contests, and Mary seemed even disposed to pardon Morton, Lethington, and the principal conspirators, if the extension of mercy could have brought back peace and security to her kingdom.¹ But this intended leni-

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Randolph to Cecil, 2 April, 1566; and *Ibid.* Robert Melvil to Cecil, 3 April, 1566, Edinburgh.

ency only brought upon her more sorrow. Her weak and treacherous husband became alarmed, and more loudly denounced his late friends, who had murdered Riccio. This conduct enraged them to the utmost, and they retaliated by again accusing him in more distinct and positive terms than before of being the sole instigator and contriver of the murder. To prove this, they laid the "bands," or covenants before the queen, and the dreadful truth broke upon her in all its sickening and heart-rending force.¹ She now understood for the first time that the king was the principal conspirator against her, the defamer of her honour, the plotter against her liberty and her crown, the almost murderer of herself and her unborn child; he was convicted as a traitor and a liar, false to his own honour, false to her, false to his associates in crime. At this moment Mary must have felt, that to have leant upon a husband whom she could trust, might, amid the terrible plots with which she was surrounded, have been the means of saving herself and her crown; but on Darnley she could never lean again. Can we wonder that her heart was almost broken by the discovery—that, to use the words of Melvil, she should have loudly lamented the king's folly and unthankfulness, that she was compelled to withdraw from him all confidence, and in solitary bitterness to act entirely for herself.¹

But if such were the queen's feelings towards the

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. April 4. Berwick. Randolph to Cecil.
"The queen hath now seen all the covenants and bands that

young king, those of the conspirators whom he had betrayed were of a sterner kind. Even in those flagitious days, there were sanctions, the disregard of which covered a man with infamy and contempt, and amongst these, one of the most sacred was fidelity to the written "bands" by which the feudal barons were bound to each other. To one of these Darnley, as we have seen, had become a principal—his fellow-conspirators had performed their promise: he had not only broken his and denied all accession to the plot, but had betrayed the principal actors, and meanly purchased his own safety by their destruction. The consequence was the utmost indignation, and a thirst for revenge upon the part of Morton, Murray, Lethington, and their associates, which there is reason to believe increased in intensity till it was assuaged only in his death. These feelings of indignation were not confined to the fugitive lords. Mary avoided his company, and forbade her friends to give him any countenance. She promoted Joseph Riccio, David's brother, who had arrived in the suite of Mauvissiere, the French ambassador, to the dangerous vacancy caused by the murder ;¹ and at last became so impatient and passed between the king and the lords. And now findeth that his declaration before her and the Council, of his innocency of the death of David was false."

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Office, B.C. Berwick, April 20, 1566. Drury to Cecil.—Also Same to same, B.C. Berwick, April 26, 1566. See also Sir Th. Hoby to Cecil. French Corr. St. P. Off. 29 April, 1566.

miserable under the ties by which she was bound to her husband, that she entertained the extraordinary design of retiring to France, and entrusting the government of her kingdom to a regency, composed of five of her principal lords, Murray, Mar, Huntly, Athol, and Bothwell.¹ Another scheme, which at this moment occupied her mind, was the possibility of obtaining a divorce, on which errand it was reported, she had sent a messenger, named Thornton, to Rome.²

Her feelings, however, though keen, were not bitter or lasting. As the period of her confinement drew near, her resentment softened towards the king. At this moment her mind had become haunted with the terror that Morton and his savage associates, whose hands were stained with the blood of Riccio, had determined to break in upon her, during her labour: but the assurances of the English queen, who sent her word that she had dismissed him from her dominions, (which was not strictly true) restored her to composure.³ Uncertain that she should survive her confinement, she called for her nobility, took measures regarding the government of the kingdom, made her will, became re-

¹ MS. Letter, copy, Lethington to Randolph, 27 April, 1565. Caligula, B. IX. f. 244.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Berwick, April 25th, 1566, Randolph to Cecil.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Berwick, June 13, 1566, Randolph to Cecil. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Edinburgh, July 4, 1566, Killigrew to Cecil.—Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Killigrew to Cecil, 24th June, 1566.

conciled to the king, and personally arranged every thing either for life or death.¹

On the 19th of June she was delivered of a prince in the Castle of Edinburgh, and immediately dispatched Sir James Melvil to carry the news to Elizabeth. The English queen received the intelligence with her usual duplicity. From Cecil, who saw her before Melvil was admitted, and whispered the unwelcome news in her ear as she was dancing at Greenwich, after supper, she could not conceal her feelings. All mirth was at an end, she sat down, leant her cheek on her hand, and then burst forth in lamentations to her ladies, that she was a barren stock, whilst the Queen of Scots was the mother of a fair son. When Melvil had audience next morning, every thing was serene. His tidings, she said, gave her the utmost joy, and had cured her of a fifteen days' sickness. She promised also, in reply to his urgent request, that there should be a speedy settlement of the question of the succession.²

Meanwhile Mary recovered, and assured of the continuance of amicable relations with England, applied herself with her usual energy to heal the dissensions amongst her nobles, to conduct internal tranquillity and to re-establish a firm government. The great difficulty was the conduct to be pursued with Morton and the banished lords; and the queen

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Berwick, Randolph to Cecil, 7 June, 1566.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Killebrew to Cecil, 24 June, 1566. Melvil's Memoirs, Bannat. Ed. p. 161.

soon became convinced that she must sacrifice her own feelings and adopt a lenient course, if she wished to recover her power. Amongst her nobility there was no want of talents or energy; the difficulty was, to attach them to the Crown, to heal their feuds amongst themselves, to prevent their intrigues with England. So long as Lethington was in disgrace, and the murderers of Riccio were banished, these ends could not be gained. The queen, therefore, listened to the intercession of Murray, whom she now treated with great confidence. Lethington was reconciled to Bothwell, and pardoned; the lairds of Brunston, Ormiston, Hatton, and Calder, the leaders of the Church party, were received into favour, but Knox still continued in his retreat, and there appears to have been some special rigour manifested against him on the part of the queen.¹ Morton, the arch conspirator, with his assistants, Lindsay and Ruthven, were still proscribed, but Murray, Bothwell, Argyle, Athol, and Lethington, who now acted together, exerted themselves unremittingly to procure their restoration, and the queen, it was evident, began to think of permitting their return.²

This intended mercy enraged the young king, and appears to have driven him upon foolish and dangerous courses: as his opponents were mostly Protestants, he began to intrigue with the Romanists, and went so far as to write secretly to the

¹ M'Crie's Life of Knox p. 254.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Foster to Cecil, Sept. 19, 1566.

Pope, arraigning the conduct of the queen, in delaying to restore the mass. When his letters were intercepted, and his practices discovered, he complained bitterly of the neglect into which he had fallen, affirmed that he had no share in the government, accused the nobles of a plot against his life, and at last formed the desperate resolution of leaving the kingdom, and remonstrating to foreign powers against the cruelty with which he was treated.¹ This mad project alarmed his father Lennox, who communicated his fears to the queen, and Mary made an earnest attempt to restore him to his duty. The interview and remonstrances to which this led, are of much importance, in estimating the dark charges afterwards brought against Mary, and we fortunately know the whole particulars from the Lords of the Council before whom it took place, and also from the French ambassador, de Croc, who was present. The queen, it appears, had at first affectionately, and in private, implored Darnley to disclose the causes of his grief. “The queen,” said the Lords of the Council, addressing the queen mother,² “condescended so far as to go and meet the king without the palace, and so conducted him into her own apartment, where he remained all night; and then her Majesty

¹ Monsr. De Croc's Letter to Arch. Beaton, printed by Keith, p. 345, from the original then in the Scots College, Paris.

² Lords of the Privy Council to the Queen Mother, Oct. 8, 1566. Keith, p. 347, being a translation from a copy then in the Scots College at Paris.

entered calmly with him upon the subject of his going abroad, that she might understand from himself the occasion of such a resolution. But he would by no means give or acknowledge that he had any occasion offered him of discontent. The Lords of the Council, being acquainted early next morning, that the king was just agoing to return to Stirling, they repaired to the queen's apartment, and no other persons being present, except their lordships and Monsieur de Croc, whom they prayed to assist with them, as being here on the part of your Majesty."

The occasion of their meeting together was then, with all humility and reverence due to their Majesties proposed, namely, to understand from the king, whether, according to advice imparted to the queen by the Earl of Lennox, he had formed a resolution to depart by sea out of the realm, and on what ground, and for what end. That if his resolution proceeded from some discontent, they were earnest to know what persons had afforded an occasion for the same? That if he could complain of any of the subjects of the realm, be they of what quality whatsoever, the fault should be immediately repaired to his satisfaction. "And here," they continued, "we did remonstrate to him, that his own honour, the queen's honour, the honour of us all were concerned; for if without just occasion ministered, he would retire from the place where he had received so much honour, and abandon the society of her, to whom he is so far obliged, that in order

to advance him she has humbled herself, and from being his sovereign had surrendered herself to be his wife; if he should act in this sort, the whole world would blame him as ingrate, regardless of the friendship the queen bare him, and utterly unworthy to possess the place to which she had exalted him. On the other hand, that if any just occasion had been given him, it behoved the same to be very important, since it inclined him to relinquish so beautiful a queen, and noble realm, and the same must have been afforded him either by the queen herself, or by us her ministers. As for us, we professed ourselves ready to do him all the justice he could demand. And for her Majesty, so far was she from ministering to him occasion of discontent, that, on the contrary, he had all the reason in the world to thank God for giving him so wise and virtuous a person, as she had showed herself in all her actions.”

“Then her Majesty,” so the letter goes, “was pleased to enter into the discourse, and spoke affectionately to him, beseeching him, that seeing he would not open his mind in private to her the last night, according to her most earnest request, he would at least be pleased to declare, before these lords, where she had offended him any thing. She likewise said, that she had a clear conscience, that in all her life she had done no action, which could any way prejudice either his or her own honour; but nevertheless, that as she might perhaps have given him offence without

design, she was willing to make amends as far as he should require, and therefore prayed him not to dissemble the occasion of his displeasure, if any he had, nor to spare her in the least matter. But though the queen and all others that were present, together with Monsieur de Croc, used all the interest they were able, to persuade him to open his mind, yet he would not at all own that he intended any voyage, or had any discontent, and declared freely that the queen had given him no occasion for any.”¹ Such is the account given of this important interview by the Lords of the Council; and Monsieur de Croc, in writing a week afterwards to the Archbishop of Glasgow, Mary’s ambassador in France, was equally explicit in describing the affectionate conduct of the queen, and the strange and wayward proceedings of Darnley. He then added this remarkable sentence. “It is in vain to imagine that he shall be able to raise any disturbance, for there is not one person in all this kingdom, from the highest to the lowest, that regards him any farther than is agreeable to the queen. And I never saw her Majesty so much beloved, esteemed, and honoured, nor so great a harmony amongst all her subjects as at present is, by her wise conduct; for I cannot perceive the smallest difference or division.”²

¹ Lords of the Privy Council to the Queen Mother, Keith, p. 347. The letter is dated Oct. 8, 1566.

² Letter from Monsr. de Croc to Archbishop Beaton, dated Oct. 15, 1566, published by Keith, p. 346, being a translation from the original then in the Scots College, Paris.

Yet neither the temperate conduct of the queen, the remonstrances of the Council, nor the neglect into which he found himself daily sinking, produced any amendment in Darnley. He persisted in his project of leaving the kingdom, denounced Lethington, the Justice Clerk, Bellenden, and Makgill the clerk register, as principal conspirators against Riccio, insisted that they should be deprived of their offices, and became an object of dislike and suspicion not only to Mary, but to all that powerful, and now united, party, by whom she was surrounded.¹ Its leaders Murray, Lethington, Argile, and Bothwell, saw in him the bitter opponent of Morton's pardon. The faction of the church hated him for his intrigues with Rome,² Cecil and the party of Elizabeth suspected him of practices with the English Roman Catholics,³ the Hamiltons had always looked on him with dislike, as an obstacle between them and their hopes of succession, and the queen bitterly repented that she was tied to a wayward and intemperate person, who had already endangered her life and her crown, and was constantly thwarting every measure which promised the restoration of tranquillity and good government.

When such was the state of matters between the

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. Foster to Cecil, May 16, 1566, Alnwick. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Randolph to Cecil, May 13, 1566, Berwick.

² Knox's History, p. 348. Glasgow edition, by M'Gavin, 1832.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Rogers to Cecil, July 5, 1566, Oxford.

king and queen, disturbances broke out upon the borders, and rendered it necessary for Mary to repair in person to these districts, for the purpose of holding courts for the trial of delinquents.¹ Her lieutenant or warden of the borders at this time, was the Earl of Bothwell, and him she dispatched at the head of a considerable force, to reduce the Elliotts, Armstrongs, and other offenders to something like subjection, before she herself repaired to the spot. So far as this task went, Bothwell was well fitted for it. He was of high rank, possessed a daring and martial spirit, and his unshaken attachment to her interests, at a time when the queen had suffered from the desertion of almost every other servant, made him a favourite with a princess who esteemed bravery and fidelity above all other virtues. But unfortunately for Mary, he possessed other and more dangerous qualities.² His ambition and audacity were unbounded. He was a man of notorious gallantry, and had spent a loose life on the Continent, from which it was said, he had imported some of its worst vices. In attaining the objects of his ambition, he was perfectly unscrupulous as to the means he employed, and he had generally about him a band of broken and desperate men, with whom his office of border warden made him familiar, hardened and murderous villains, who were ready on the moment to obey

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. Scrope to Cecil, Carlisle, Oct. 6, 1566. Also Ibid. B.C. Same to the same, Oct. 8, 1566.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Randolph to Cecil, Edin. Sep. 12, 1565.

every command of their master. In one respect Bothwell was certainly better than many of his brother nobles. There seems to have been little craft or hypocrisy about him, and he made no attempt to conceal his infirmities or vices under the cloak of religion. It is not unlikely, that for this reason, Mary, who had experienced his fidelity to the crown, was more disposed to trust him in any difficulty, than those stern and fanatical leaders, who, with religion on their lips, were often equally indifferent as to the means which they employed. It is certain, that from this time she began to treat him with great favour, and to be guided by a preference so predominant, that it was not unlikely to be mistaken for a more tender feeling. This partiality of the queen for Bothwell, was early detected by Murray, Lethington, and their associates: they observed that his vanity was flattered by the favour shown him by his sovereign, they artfully fanned the flame, and encouraged an ambition already daring enough, to aspire to a height which he had never dreamt of, and it is the opinion of Sir James Melvil, who spoke from personal observation, that Bothwell's plot for the murder of his sovereign, and the possession of the queen's person, had its origin about this time, when she despatched him to suppress the disturbances in Liddesdale.¹

¹ Melvil's Memoirs, pp. 170, 173. Melvil, who wrote probably from memory, erroneously places the baptism of the prince, before the skirmish in Liddesdale, when Bothwell was wounded.

After the singular scene before the privy council and the French ambassador, the king left the court, and the queen, accompanied by her ministers and the officers of her household, set out on her progress to the borders. At this moment, these districts were in a state of great disorder, a feud raged between the Armstrongs and the Johnstons, two of the fiercest and most numerous septs in that part of the country.¹ The arrival of Bothwell, the queen's lieutenant, with a commission to reduce them to obedience, rather increased the disturbances, and in an attempt to apprehend Elliot of Park, a notorious marauder, the earl was grievously wounded, and left for dead on the field. An account of the sanguinary skirmish in which this happened, was immediately sent by Lord Scrope to Secretary Cecil. "I have," said he, "presently gotten intelligence out of Scotland, that the Earl of Bothwell, being in Liddesdale for the apprehension of certain disordered persons there, had apprehended the lairds of Mangerton and Whitehaugh, with sundry other Armstrongs of their surname and kindred whom he had put within the Harmitage.² And yesterday, going about to take such like persons of the Elliotts, in pursuit of them his lordship being foremost, and far before his company, encountered one John Elliott of the Park, hand to hand, and shot

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Scrope to Cecil, Carlisle, Oct. 6, 1566.

² A strong castle in that district.

him through the thigh with a dag,¹ upon which wound the man feeling himself in peril of death, with a two-handed sword assailed the earl so cruelly, that he killed him 'ere he could get any rescue or succour of his men."² Bothwell, however, though severely wounded, was not slain as at first reported, but having revived, was carried off the field to his castle of the Harmitage.

This accident happened on the 7th of October, and on the next day the 8th, the queen arrived at Jedburgh, and opened her court.³ The proceedings against the various delinquents who were brought before it, occupied her uninterruptedly until the 15th, on which day she rode to the Harmitage, and visited the Earl of Bothwell, who lay there confined by his wounds. The object of the visit appears to have been to hold a conference with the earl on the state of that disturbed district of which he was the governor. Mary was accompanied by Murray and others of her officers, in whose presence she communicated with Bothwell: afterwards on the same day, she returned to Jedburgh;⁴ and Lord Scrope, who immediately informed Cecil of the visit, added the precise information, that she had remained two

¹ A pistol.

² MS. Letter. St. P. Off. B.C., Lord Scrope to Cecil, Carlisle, Oct. 8, 1566. Also MS. Letter, Ibid. Sir John Foster to Cecil, Oct. 23, 1566, Berwick.

³ Chalmers, vol. i. p. 190, 4to. edition.

⁴ Caligula, B. IV. 104 dorso.

hours at the castle, to Bothwell's great pleasure and contentment.¹

Such a visit was undoubtedly a flattering mark of regard paid by a sovereign to a subject, but he was of high rank and in high office, he had nearly lost his life in the execution of his duty, and he was a favourite with the queen.

Immediately after her return, Mary was seized with a dangerous fever, which ran its course with an alarming rapidity, and for ten days caused the physicians to despair of her life. Its origin was traced by some, to the fatigue of her long ride to the Harmitage, but her secretary Lethington, with greater probability, in a letter written to Beaton, the Scottish ambassador in France, ascribed her illness to distress of mind, occasioned by the cruel and ungrateful conduct of the king.² "The occasion of the queen's sickness," said he, "so far as I

"Sa majeste fut requise et conseillé d'aller visiter en une maison appellé Hermitage pour entendre de luy l'estat des affaires de pays de quel le dit Sieur (Bothwell) estait gouverneur hereditairement. Pour ceste occasion elle y alla en diligence accompane du Conte de Murray, et autres seigneurs, en presence desquelles elle communiqua avec le dit Sieur Compte, et s'en retourna le mesme jour à Jedwood ou le lendemain elle tomba malade * * *

¹ Laing in his account of this visit, and the arguments he deduces from it, has implicitly adopted the mistakes of Buchanan, and derides the account of my grandfather in his vindication of Queen Mary, which is far nearer the truth than his own. The letter of Lord Scrope to Cecil, written at the moment, and not known to either of these authors, gives us the whole truth.

² Sloan MSS., British Museum, 3199, fol. 141. Lethington to Archbishop Beaton, Oct. 24, 1566.

can understand, is caused of thought and displeasure, and I trow by what I could wring further of her own declaration to me, the root of it is the king. For she has done him so great honour without the advice of her friends, and contrary to the advice of her subjects, and he, on the other hand, has recompensed her with such ingratitude, and misuses himself so far towards her, that it is a heartbreak to her, to think that he should be her husband, and how to be free of him she has no out-gait."¹

During this alarming sickness, Mary believed herself dying, and an interesting account of her behaviour has come down to us from her confidential servants, who were present, Secretary Lethington, the Bishop of Ross, and the French ambassador de Croc. She expressed her entire resignation to the will of God, she exhorted her nobility in pathetic terms to remain in unity and peace with each other, employing their utmost diligence in the government of the kingdom and the education of her son; she sent her affectionate remembrances by de Croc, to the French king and her relatives in that country, and declared her constant mind to die in the Roman Catholic religion.² To the great joy

¹ *Ibid.* Out-gait—way of getting out.

² Letter, Lesly, Bishop of Ross, to the Archbishop of Glasgow, Jedburgh, Oct. 27, 1566. Keith, Appendix, No. XIV. p. 134. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Oct. 24, 1566, Lethington to Cecil; also the Council to Archbishop Beaton, Oct. 23, 1566. Keith, Appendix, No. XIV. p. 133.

of those around her at this moment, she recovered, and although much weakened, proceeded in her progress to Kelso, and thence by Dunbar to Craigmillar, near Edinburgh.

But if there was a recovery of bodily health, there was no return to peace of mind. During the height of her illness, the king had never come to see her, and a visit which he made when the danger was past, produced no effect in removing their unhappy estrangement.¹ At this moment her condition, as described by an eye-witness, Monsieur de Croc, was pitiable and affecting. She seemed to have fallen into a profound melancholy. "The queen," said this ambassador, writing to the Archbishop of Glasgow, on the 2nd December, "is for the present at Craigmillar, about a league distant from this city. She is in the hands of the physicians, and I do assure you is not at all well, and I do believe the principal part of her disease to consist of a deep grief and sorrow. Nor does it seem possible to make her forget the same. Still she repeats these words, 'I could wish to be dead.' You know very well, that the injury she has received is exceeding great, and her majesty will never forget it. The king her husband came to visit her at Jedburgh, the very day after Captain Hay went away. He remained there but one single night, and yet in that short time I had a great deal of conversation with him. He returned to see the queen about five or

¹ Extract in Keith, p. 352, from a letter of de Croc, dated 24 October, 1566.

six days ago; and the day before yesterday he sent word to desire me to speak with him half a league from this, which I complied with and found that things go still worse and worse. I think he intends to go away to-morrow, but in any event, I am much assured as I have always been, that he won't be present at the baptism. To speak my mind freely to you (but I beg you not to disclose what I say in any place, that may turn to my prejudice), I do not expect, upon several accounts, any good understanding between them, unless God effectually put to his hand. I shall only name two. The first reason is, the king will never humble himself as he ought: the other is, the queen can't perceive any one nobleman speaking with the king, but presently she suspects some contrivance among them."¹

At this moment, when matters between the king and queen were in so miserable a state, the faction opposed to Darnley, which was led by Murray, Lethington and Bothwell, held a consultation with Huntly and Argyle, at Craigmillar, and there proposed a scheme to Mary for putting an end to her sorrows. This was, to unite their efforts to procure a divorce between her and her husband, stipulating as a preliminary that she should pardon the Earl of Morton and his accomplices in the murder of Riccio. When their design was first intimated by

¹ Translation by Keith, from part of an original letter of Monsieur de Croc, dated 2 December, 1566, preserved at that time amongst the MSS. of the Scots College at Paris. Keith, p. 7 of his Prefatory matter.

these noblemen to the queen, she professed her willingness to consent to it, under the conditions that the process of divorce should be legal, and that its effect should not prejudice the rights of her son. It was remarked that after the divorce Darnley had better live in a remote part of the country, at a distance from the queen, or retire to France. Upon which Mary relenting, drew back from the proposal, expressed a hope that he might return to a better mind, and professed her own willingness to pass into France and remain there till he acknowledged his faults. To this Maitland, the secretary, made this remarkable reply, hinting darkly, that rather than subject their queen to such an indignity as retiring from her kingdom, it would be better to substitute murder for divorce, "Madam," said he, "soucy † ye not we are here of the principal of your grace's nobility and council, that shall not find the mean¹ well to make your majesty quit of him, without prejudice of your son; and albeit, that my lord of Murray here present, be little less scrupulous for a Protestant nor [than] your grace is for a Papist, I am assured he will look through his fingers thereto, and will behold our doings, and say nothing thereto."² This speech alarmed the queen, who instantly replied, that it was her pleasure nothing should be done by which any spot might be laid upon her honour; "better," said she, "permit the matter remain in the state it is, abiding

¹ In orig. the *moyen*.

² Anderson's Collections, vol. iv. p. 192; and contemporary copy, St. P. Off. [† French, mind ye not, *se soucier*.]

till God in his goodness put remedy thereto, [than] that ye believing to do me service may possibly turn to my hurt or displeasure." To this Lethington replied, "Madam, let us to guide the business among us, and your grace shall see nothing but good, and approved by parliament."¹

Such was this extraordinary conversation, and it is certainly difficult to determine its precise import. It appears to me that the first part alluded solely to the divorce, and that the second proposition hinted at the murder, though darkly, yet in terms which could scarcely have been misunderstood by any who were present.² It is certain that the queen commanded Murray, Bothwell, and their associates to abandon all thoughts of any such design; but it had been glanced at, she was put upon her guard, and difficult or impossible as it might have been, at once to dismiss these leading nobles from her councils, precautions might have been taken to defeat their abominable purpose. It is possible, however, that Mary considered her express command sufficient.

This, however, was but a feeble barrier in these cruel times. The conspiracy proceeded, and in the usual fashion of the age, a band or agreement for the murder of Darnley was drawn up at

¹ Anderson's Collections, vol. iv. p. 188., from a copy. Cotton, MS. Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. I. f. 282. Protestation of the Earls of Huntly and Argile, touching the murder of the king of Scots. There is a contemporary copy, varying in a few words in the St. P. Office.

² Instructions and Articles, by the Lords Huntly, Argile, &c., to John Bishop of Ross, Robert Lord Boyd, &c. Goodall, vol. ii. p. 359.

Craigmillar, of which instrument Bothwell kept possession. It was said to have been written by James Balfour, afterwards president of the Supreme Court, and then a daring and profligate follower of this nobleman; it was signed by Lethington, Huntly, Argile and Sir James Balfour; it declared their resolution to cut off the king as a young fool and tyrant, who was an enemy to the nobility, and had conducted himself in an intolerable manner to the queen, and stipulated that according to feudal usage, they should all stand by each other and defend the deed as a measure of state, resolved on by the chief councillors of the realm, and necessary for the preservation of their own lives.¹

¹ The existence of a Bond for the murder of the king is proved by Ormiston's confession, (Pitcairn's Criminal Trials, p. 512,) who says he saw the Bond in Bothwell's hands, and describes its contents, affirming that it was signed by Huntly, Argile, Lethington and Sir James Balfour, and that Bothwell told him many more had promised their assistance. This contract was, he adds, devised by Sir James Balfour, and subscribed by them all a quarter of a year before the deed was done. Ormiston in another part of his confession, observes, that Bothwell broke to him the purpose for the murder on the Friday before; and when he expressed reluctance to have any concern in it, he said, "Tush, Ormiston, ye need not take fear of this, for the whole lords have concluded the same lang syne, in Craigmillar, all that was there with the queen." The same Bond is minutely alluded to in a contemporary life of Mary, written in French, apparently by one of her domestics, who, although biassed, seems to have had good opportunities of observation. Caligula, B. IV. folio, 104 dorso. See also Answer of Lord Herries at York to Murray's "Eik," or Additional Accusation, Goodall, Appendix, vol. ii. p. 212.

Soon after this, the Earl of Bedford arrived from England, to attend the baptism of the young prince ; and it was remarked, that although Bothwell was a Protestant, the arrangement of the ceremony was committed to him.¹ The Scottish queen had requested Elizabeth to be godmother to her son ; and this princess having appointed the countess of Argile to be her representative,² despatched Bedford with a font of gold, which she expressed some fear that the little prince might have overgrown. “ If you find it so,” said she, “ you may observe that our good sister has only to keep it for the next, or some such merry talk.”³

On the 17th of December, the baptism of the young prince took place with much magnificence at Stirling. The ceremony was performed according to the Roman Catholic ritual, by the Archbishop of St. Andrew’s, and the royal infant received the names of Charles James.⁴

Mary upon this occasion exerted herself to throw off the melancholy by which she was oppressed, and received the foreign ambassadors and her noble guests, with those winning and delightful manners,

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Sir John Foster to Cecil, December 11, 1566, Berwick.

² MS. St. P. Off. ult. October, 1566. Minute in Cecil’s hand, from the Queen’s Majesty to the Countess of Argile.

³ Instructions to Bedford, November 7, 1566, Caligula, B. X. 384.

⁴ Letter from De Croc to the Archbishop of Glasgow, Stirling, 23 December, 1566. Keith, p. 7, of his prefatory matter.

of which even her enemies felt the fascination ; but the secret grief that prayed upon her could not be concealed. “ The queen,” said de Croc, writing to Beaton the Scottish ambassador at the French court, “ behaved herself admirably well all the time of the baptism, and showed so much earnestness to entertain all the goodly company in the best manner, that this made her forget in a good measure her former ailments. But I am of the mind that she will give us some trouble as yet ; nor can I be brought to think otherwise so long as she continues so pensive and melancholy. She sent for me yesterday, and I found her laid on a bed weeping sore, and she complained of a grievous pain in her side.”¹

From the baptism of his son the king absented himself, although he was then living in the palace. The causes of this strange conduct were no doubt to be found in his sullen and jealous temper ; the coldness between him and the queen, and the ill-disguised hostility with which he was regarded by Bothwell, Murray, and the ruling party at court, who were now busy labouring for the recal of Morton, so recently Darnley’s associate in the murder of Riccio, but now his most bitter enemy. De Croc, the French ambassador, in his letter to Bishop Beaton, describing the baptism, observed that the king’s conduct at this time was so incurable, that no good could be expected of him. It is of importance to

¹ Keith, preface, p. 7. De Croc, to Beaton ; from the original in the Scottish College, Paris.

mark his expressions. "The king," said he, "had still given out that he would depart two days before the baptism, but when the time came on he made no sign of removing at all, only he still kept close within his own apartment. The very day of the baptism he sent three several times, desiring me either to come and see him or to appoint him an hour that he might come to me in my lodgings. So that I found myself obliged at last to signify to him, that seeing he was in no good correspondence with the queen, I had it in charge from the most Christian king, to have no conference with him. And I caused tell him likewise, that as it would not be very proper for him to come to my lodgings, because there was such a crowd of company there, so he might know that there were two passages to it; and if he should enter by the one, I should be constrained to go out by the other. His bad deportment is incurable, nor can there be any good expected from him, for several reasons, which I might tell you, was I present with you. I can't pretend to foretell how all may turn, but I will say, that matters cannot subsist long as they are, without being accompanied with sundry bad consequences."¹

It had long been evident that Mary's enmity to the Earl of Morton, and his associates, who had been banished for the murder of Riccio, was much softened; and soon after the baptism she consented to pardon them at the earnest intreaty of Murray,

¹ De Croc to Beaton, Stirling, December 23, 1566, quoted by Keith in his prefatory matter, p. 7.

Bothwell, and their associates.¹ She excepted indeed from this act of mercy two marked delinquents, George Douglas, who had stabbed Riccio over her shoulder, and Andrew Car of Faudonside, who had presented a pistol to her breast; but Morton, Lindsay, Ruthven, and seventy-six other persons were pardoned; and so highly did the king resent and dread their return, that he abruptly left the court and took up his residence with his father, Lennox, at Glasgow. Soon after this he was seized with a disease which threw out pustules over his body; and a report arose that he had been poisoned. The rumour cannot excite wonder when we recollect the bond for the murder of the unhappy prince, which had been entered into at Craigmillar, and which its authors, who occupied the chief places about the queen, only awaited a safe opportunity to execute. But in the present case rumour spoke false, for the disease proved to be the small pox, and the queen immediately despatched her own physician to attend him.² It was impossible, however, that he should receive much sympathy, either from Mary or her ministers. His actions lately had been marked by continued perversity and weakness. Whilst the queen had been exerting herself for some months to reconcile her nobles, to secure the amity of England, and by a judicious extension of mercy to Morton and his friends, to restore

¹ Bedford to Cecil. Orig. St. P. Off. December 30, 1566.

² MS. letter, St. P. Off. Bedford to Cecil. Jan. 9, 1566, i. e. 1566-7.

tranquillity and peace to the country, Darnley appears to have been occupied with perpetual intrigues and plots. Not contented with his secret correspondence with Rome, and the Roman Catholics in England, he was reported to entertain a project for crowning the young prince and seizing the government; and he exhibited, with his father Lennox, a fixed resolution to thwart all the measures of the queen, and give her perpetual vexation and alarm.¹ In all these enterprises there was so much inconsistency and jealousy; so evident an inability to carry any plot into successful execution, and yet such a perverse desire to create mischief, that the queen, in addressing her ambassador in France at this moment, expressed herself towards him with much severity. "As for the king our husband," said she, "God knows always our part towards him; and his behaviour and thankfulness to us is equally well known to God and the world, especially our own indifferent subjects see it, and in their hearts we doubt not condemn the same. Always we perceive him occupied and busy enough to have inquiry of our doings, which God willing shall always be such as none shall have occasion to be offended with them, or to report of us any ways but honourably, however he, his father, and their fautors speak,

¹ Examination of William Rogers. Orig. St. P. Off. 16 January, 1566-7. Keith, p. 348, quoting Knox in note 6. Also Mary's letter to Beaton. January 20, 1566-7, in Keith's prefatory matter, p. 8.

which we know want no good will to make us have ado, if their power were equivalent to their minds. But God moderates their forces well enough, and takes the means of the execution of their pretences from them: for, as we believe, they shall find none or very few approvers of their councils and devices imagined to our displeasure and misliking.”¹

When this letter was written, the king, as we have seen, lay at Glasgow,² and much about the same time an incident occurred at Berwick, which appears to me to connect itself with the conspiracy, to which he soon after fell a victim. In Mary’s service there were two Italians, Joseph Riccio, and Joseph Lutyni. Joseph Riccio was brother to the unhappy secretary David. He had arrived in Scotland soon after his brother’s murder, and had been promoted by Mary to the office which it left vacant.³ All that we know regarding him is, that the queen treated him with favour, and Lennox, after the assassination of his son, the king, publicly named him as one of the murderers. Of Lutyni we know nothing, except that he was a gentleman in the queen’s household, and an intimate friend of Joseph Riccio. This Lutyni Mary

¹ Mary to Bishop Beaton, 20 January, ut supra.

² Bedford to Cecil. Berwick. Orig. St. P. Off. 9 Jan. 1566-7. “The estate of all things there (Scotland) is as it was wont to be, and the agreement between the queen and her husband, nothing amended, as you shall hear further when I come. The king is now at Glasgow with his father, and there lyeth full of the small pocks, to whom the queen hath sent her physician.”

³ MS. letter, St. P. Off. Randolph to Cecil. April 25, 1566.

now sent on a mission to France (6 Jan. 1566-7) but he had only reached Berwick, when she dispatched urgent letters, directing that he should be instantly apprehended, and brought back to Scotland, as he was a thief, and had absconded with money.¹ Sir William Drury, Marshal of Berwick, to whom these letters were addressed, on examining him, appears to have found upon his person, or some way to have got possession of a letter written to him by his friend Joseph Riccio—and its contents convinced Drury that the Scottish queen dreaded the disclosure of some important secret of which Lutyni had possessed himself. Alluding to Mary's letter and the discrepancy between the slight reasons assigned for his apprehension, and her great anxiety to have him again in her hands, Drury observed to Cecil, “And therefore giveth me to think by that I can gather as well of the matter, as of the gentleman, that it is not it [the money] that the queen seeketh so much, as to recover his person, for I have learned the man had credit there, and now the queen mistrusteth lest he should offer his service here in England and thereby might with better occasion, utter something either prejudicial to her, or that she would be loath should be disclosed but to those she pleaseth.”²

¹ Lutyni's passport is dated 6 Jan. 1566-7. Contemporary copy from Orig. St. P. Off. sent by Drury to Cecil, referred to in a MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. dated Jan. 23, 1566, i. e. 1566-7. He was ordered to be arrested by a letter from Mary, dated Jan. 17, 1566-7. Transcript from Orig. St. P. Off. and copy of passport.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, 23 January, 1566. Berwick.

Riccio's letter was certainly fitted to rouse these suspicions. He told Lutyni, that they were both vehemently blamed, that they were accused of acting a double part, and that Lutyni in particular, was railed at, as having been prying into the queen's private papers; and he implored him when examined on his return, as he valued his own safety and his friend's life, to adhere to a certain story, which he (Riccio) had already told the queen. On interrogating Lutyni, Drury found him in the greatest alarm, affirming, that if he were sent back to Scotland, it would be to "a prepared death."¹ Upon this he consulted Cecil, and received orders not to deliver him up, but to detain him at Berwick. The whole circumstances are exceedingly obscure, but it appears to me certain from Riccio's letter, that Lutyni had become acquainted through him with some secret, the betrayal of which was a matter of life or death—that Mary suspected that he had stolen or read some of her private papers, that she had determined to examine him herself upon this point, and that every thing depended on his deceiving the queen on his return, by adhering to the tale which had been already told her. In what other way are we to understand these expressions of Riccio to Lutyni. ** *Se voi dite cosi come vi mando sarete scusato, e io ancora. La Regina vi manda ci pigliare per parlar con voi, pigliate guardia a voi che voi la cognoscete pigliate guardia che non v'abuzzi delle sue parole come voi sapete bene; e m'ha detto che vuol parlare a voi in segreto e pigliate guardia delli dire come vi ho*

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, Feb. 7, 1566-7.

scritto, e non altramente, a fin che nostra parola si confronti l'una a l'altra, e ne voi ne io non saremo in pena nessuna, * * e vi prego di aver pieta di me, e non voler esser causa della mia morte.¹ When it is considered that at this moment Bothwell, Lethington and their accomplices had resolved on the king's death—when we recollect the conference at Craigmillar, in which they had hinted their intentions to the queen, and had been commanded by her to do nothing that would touch her honour, when we know that Bothwell who was at this time in the highest favour with Mary was the custodiar also of the written bond for the murder of Darnley, there appears to me to be a presumption that Joseph Riccio, who must have hated the king, as the principal assassin of his brother, had joined the plot, that his terrors arose out of his having revealed to Lutyni the conspiracy for Darnley's murder, and that the queen suspecting it, had resolved to secure his person. This, however, is only presumption, and the letter might relate to some other state secret. But we shall again meet with Lutyni and Riccio — and meanwhile I proceed to those dreadful scenes, which so soon followed the baptism of the prince and the pardon of the Earl of Morton.

When this nobleman returned in the beginning of January, 1566, from his banishment in

¹ See the whole Letter—Proofs and Illustrations, No. 2. It is in St. P. Off. Endorsed in Cecil's own hand, "Joseph Riccio, queen of Scots' Servant."

England, Darnley still lay in a weakly state of health, at Glasgow. On his road to Edinburgh, Morton took up his residence at Whittingham, the seat of Archibald Douglas, his near relative, and soon after was joined there by the Earl of Bothwell and secretary Lethington.¹ The object of this visit was immediately explained by Bothwell, who in presence of Archibald Douglas, acquainted him with their determination to murder the king, and added as an inducement for him to join the plot, that the queen had consented to his death. The atrocious proposal was declined by Morton, not influenced by any feelings of horror, which from his character, he was not likely to give way to, but on other grounds. He was unwilling, he said, to meddle with new troubles, when he had scarcely got rid of an old offence.² Archibald Douglas then earnestly exhorted him to join the plot, and Bothwell, in a second interview, to which Lethington was admitted, reiterated his arguments, and insisted that all was done at the queen's desire. Bring me then, said Morton, the queen's hand writ for a warrant, and you shall have my answer. Upon this, Douglas accompanied Lethington and Bothwell to Edinburgh, and soon after he received

¹ Morton to Cecil from Berwick. MS. Letter. St. P. Off. 10 Jan. 1566-7. MS. Letter B.C. Drury to Cecil, January 23, 1566-7. Morton arrived at Whittingham, some time between the 9th and the 23d of January.

² Morton's Confession in Bannatyne's Memorials, p. 317. Bannatyne Edition.

an order from Lethington to return to Whittingham, and tell Morton that the queen would receive no speech of the matter appointed unto him.¹ Douglas complaining of the brevity and obscurity of this message, Lethington replied, that Morton would have no difficulty in comprehending it, and it appears to me certain, that it related to the same subject already talked of between them, the king's murder, and the written warrant which Morton had required from the queen.

These secret interviews and conversations, took place at Whittingham and Edinburgh in the latter part of the month of January, and on the 22nd of the same month, Mary set out on a visit to the king at Glasgow. Darnley was now partially recovered from his late sickness, but he had received some private intelligence of the plots against him. He was aware of the return of Morton, who regarded him as the cause of all his late sufferings, he knew that amongst his mortal enemies who had never forgiven him his desertion of them in the conspiracy against Riccio, were some of the highest nobility who now enjoyed the confidence of the queen. He had recently heard from one of his servants, that Mary had spoken of him with much severity,² and her visit, therefore, took him by surprise. Under this

¹ Morton's confession before his death. Printed in Bannatyne's Memorials, p. 318. Archibald Douglas's Letter to Queen Mary, April 1586. Printed from the Harleian, by Robertson. Appendix XLVII.

² Thomas Crawford's Deposition. MS. St. P. Off. Endorsed by Cecil, but without date.

feeling the king sent Crawford one of his gentlemen to meet the queen, with a message, excusing himself for not waiting upon her in person.¹ He was still infirm, he said, and did not presume to come to her until he knew her wishes, and was assured of the removal of her displeasure. To this Mary briefly replied, that there was no medicine against fear; and passing forward to Glasgow, came into Darnley's bedchamber, when after greeting, and some indifferent talk, the subjects which had estranged them from each other were introduced. Darnley professed a deep repentance for his errors, pleaded his youth, and the few friends he now had, and declared to her his unalterable affection. Mary reminded him of his complaints and suspicions, spoke against his foolish plan of leaving the kingdom, and recalled to his mind the "purpose of Hiegate," a name given to a plot which Darnley affirmed he had discovered, and of which he was himself to be the victim. The queen demanded who was his informer. He replied the Laird of Minto, who had told him that a letter was presented to her in Craigmillar, made by her own device, and subscribed by certain others who desired her to sign it, which she refused.² Darnley then added, that he would never think that she, who was his own proper flesh, would do him any hurt, and if any others should do it, they should buy it dear, unless

¹ Anderson, vol. iv., pp. 168, 169, and MS. St. P. Off. Thomas Crawford's deposition.

² Crawford's deposition, ut supra.

they took him sleeping. He observed, however, that he suspected none, and only entreated her to bear him company, and not as she was wont, to withdraw herself from him. Mary then told him, that as he was still little able to travel, she had brought a litter with her to carry him to Craigmillar, and he declared his readiness to accompany her, if she would consent that they should again live together at bed and board. She promised it should be as he had spoken, and gave him her hand, but added, that before this, he must be thoroughly cleansed of his sickness, which she trusted he shortly would be, as she intended to give him the bath at Craigmillar. The queen also requested him to conceal the promises which had now passed between them, as the suddenness of their agreement might give umbrage to some of the lords; to which he replied, that he could see no reason why they should dislike it.

When Mary left him, Darnley called Crawford to him, and informing him fully of all that had passed at the interview, bade him communicate it to his father, the Earl of Lennox. He then asked him what he thought of the queen's taking him to Craigmillar? She treats your majesty, said Crawford, too like a prisoner. Why should you not be taken to one of your own houses in Edinburgh? It struck me much the same way, answered Darnley, and I have fears enough, but may God judge between us, I have her promise only to trust to; but I have put myself in her hands, and I shall go with her, though she

should murder me.¹ It is from Crawford's evidence, taken on oath, which was afterwards produced, and still exists, endorsed by Cecil, that we learn these minute particulars, nor have I been able to discover any sufficient ground to doubt its truth.²

Soon after this interview, the queen carried her husband by slow journies, from Glasgow to Edinburgh, where she arrived on the last day of January.³ It had been at first intended as we have seen, that Darnley should have taken up his residence at Craigmillar, but this purpose was changed, and as the palace of Holyrood was judged from its low situation to be unhealthy, and little fitted for an invalid, the king was brought to a suburb called the Kirk of Field, a more remote and airy site, occupied by the town residence of the Duke of Chastelherault, and other buildings, and gardens. On their arrival here, the royal attendants were about to proceed to the duke's lodging as it was called, but on alighting, Mary informed them, that the

¹ MS. St. P. Off. Thomas Crawford's Deposition. Crawford, a gentleman of the Earl of Lennox, was examined on oath before the Commissioners at York, Dec. 9, 1568, and then produced a paper which he had written immediately after the conversations between himself and the queen, and king. Wherein he did write what had taken place as nearly word for word as his memory would serve him. Anderson, vol. iv. p. 169. This paper is the Deposition endorsed by Cecil, from which I have taken the narrative in the text.

² Cecil's Diary. Anderson, vol. ii., p. 271.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, Jan. 26, 1566-7. Cecil's Diary. Anderson, vol. ii., p. 272.

king's apartments were to be in an adjoining house, which stood beside the town wall, not far from a ruinous Dominican Monastery, called the Black Friars.¹ To this place she led Darnley, and making every allowance for the rudeness of the domestic accommodations of these times, it appears to have been an insecure and confined mansion.² Its proprietor was Robert Balfour, a brother of that Sir James Balfour, whom we have already known as the deviser of the bond for the murder, which was drawn up at Craigmillar, and then a dependant of Bothwell's. This earl, whose influence was now nearly supreme at court, had recently returned from Liddesdale, and when he understood that Mary and the king were on their road from Glasgow, he met them with his attendants, a short way from the capital, and accompanied the party to the Kirk of Field.³

At this moment the reconciliation between the queen and her husband seemed to be complete. She assiduously superintended every little detail which could add to his comfort. She treated him not only with attention but tenderness, passed much of the day in his society, and had a chamber prepared for herself immediately below his, where she slept.⁴ The king was partially re-

¹ Evidence of Thomas Nelson. Anderson, vol. iv., p. 165.

² See a minute description of it in the Deposition of Nelson, printed in Anderson. Vol. iv. p. 165.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Scrope to Cecil, Jan. 28, 1566, Carlisle.

⁴ Nelson's Evidence. Anderson, vol. iv., p. 166.

assured by these marks of affection. He knew that plots had been entertained against his life, and, as we have seen, suspected many of the nobles to be his enemies. Yet he trusted to the promises of the queen, and, no doubt, believed that if she remained beside him, they would find it impossible to accomplish their cruel purpose. But when he indulged these hopes, the miserable prince was on the very brink of destruction.

Since their recent meeting at Whittingham, Bothwell, Morton, Lethington, and Sir James Balfour, had fully determined on the murder. The Earls of Huntly, Argyle, and Caithness, Archibald Douglas, with the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, and many others of the leading lords and legal officers in the country had joined the conspiracy, and some who did not choose directly to share in the plot, deemed it dangerous or impolitic to reveal it. Of this neutral sort, the greatest was Murray, whom from the evidence that yet remains, it is impossible to believe ignorant of the resolutions of his friends, but whose superior sagacity enabled him to avoid any direct connection with the atrocious design which they now hurried on to its accomplishment.

On Sunday the 9th of February, Bastian, a foreigner belonging to the household of the queen, was to be married at Holyrood. The bride, was one of her favourite women, and Mary, to honour their union, had promised them a masque. The greatest part of that day, she passed with the king. They appeared to be on the most affectionate terms,

and she declared her intention of remaining all night at the Kirk of Field. It was at this moment, when Darnley and the queen were engaged in conversation, that Hay of Tallo, Hepburn of Bolton, and other ruffians whom Bothwell had hired for the purpose, secretly entered the chamber which was under the king's, and deposited on the floor a large quantity of gunpowder in bags. They then laid a train, which was connected with a "lunt," or slow match, and placed every thing in readiness for its being lighted. Some of them now hurried away, but two of the conspirators remained on the watch, and in the meantime Mary, who still sat with her husband in the upper-chamber, recollected her promise of giving the masque at Bastian's wedding, and taking farewell of Darnley, embraced him and left the house with her suite.¹

Soon after, the king retired to his bed-chamber. Since his illness there appeared to have been a great change in him. He had become more thoughtful, and thought had brought with it repentance of his former courses. He lamented there were few near him whom he could trust, and at times he would say, that he knew he should be slain, complaining that he was hardly dealt with, but from these sorrows he had sought refuge in religion, and it was remarked that on this night, his last in this world, he had repeated the 55th Psalm, which he would often read and sing.² After his

¹ Nelson's Evidence, Anderson, vol. iv., p. 167.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. Drury to Cecil, about 18th April, 1567.

devotion, he went to bed and fell asleep, Taylor; his page, being beside him in the same apartment. This was the moment seized by the murderers, who still lurked in the lower room, to complete their dreadful purpose, but their miserable victim was awakened by the noise of their false keys in the lock of his apartment, and rushing down in his shirt and pelisse, endeavoured to make his escape, but he was intercepted and strangled after a desperate resistance, his cries for mercy being heard by some women in the nearest house; the page was also strangled, and their bodies carried into a small orchard, without the garden wall, where they were found, the king in his shirt only, and the pelisse by his side.¹ Amid the conflicting stories of the ruffians who were executed, it is difficult to arrive at the whole truth? But no doubt rests on the part acted by Bothwell, the arch-conspirator. He had quitted the king's apartments with the queen, and joined the festivities in the palace, from which about midnight he stole away, changed his rich dress, and rejoined the murderers who waited for him at the Kirk of Field. His arrival was the signal to complete their purpose; the match was lighted, but burnt too slow for their breathless impatience, and they were stealing forward to examine it, when it took effect. A loud noise like the bursting of a thunder-cloud, awoke the sleeping city; the king's

¹ See the Account of M. de Moret. Appendix, No. 4. MS. Letter, S. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil. Feb. 12, 1566-7. Ibid. Same to same, about 18th April, 1567.

house was torn in pieces and cast into the air, and the assassins, hurrying from the spot, under cover of the darkness regained the palace. Here Bothwell had scarcely undressed and gone to bed, when the cry arose in the city, that the Kirk of Field had been blown up, and the king murdered. The news flew quickly to Holyrood, and a servant rushing into his chamber imparted the dreadful tidings. He started up in well-feigned astonishment, and shouted "Treason!" He was joined next moment by Huntly, a brother conspirator, and immediately these two noblemen, with others belonging to the court, entered the queen's apartments, when Mary was made acquainted with the dreadful fate of her husband.¹ She was horror-struck, shut herself up in her bed-chamber, and seemed overwhelmed with sorrow.²

The murder had been committed on Monday, about two in the morning, and when day broke, multitudes crowded to examine the Kirk of Field. Any lengthened scrutiny, however, was not permitted, for Bothwell soon repaired to the spot with a guard, and the king's body was carried to a neighbouring house, where it lay till it was produced before the privy council. In the brief interval, however, it had been noted that the bodies

¹ Declaration of William Pourie. Anderson, vol. ii. p. 170.

² Examinations and Depositions of William Pourie, George Dalgleish, John Hay, younger of Talo, and John Hepburn of Bowton, concerning the murder of the king. Anderson, vol. ii., pp. 165, 192, inclusive.

both of Darnley and of his page, were unscathed by fire or powder, and that no blood wound appeared on either.¹

This gave rise to innumerable contradictory reports and conjectures, but all agreed, that instant inquiry promised the only hope of discovery, and men watched with intense interest, the conduct of the queen and her ministers. Two days, however, elapsed before any step was taken,² but on the Wednesday after the murder, a proclamation offered two thousand pounds reward, to any who would come forward with information; and scarce was this made public, when a paper was fixed during the night, on the door of the Tolbooth, or common prison. It denounced the Earl of Bothwell, Mr. James Balfour, and David Chambers, as guilty of the king's slaughter. Voices, too, were heard in the streets at dead of night, arraigning the same persons; and as the fate of the king had excited the deepest indignation in the people, Mary's friends looked with the utmost anxiety to the conduct she should pursue. To their mortification, it was anything but satisfactory. Instead of acting with that spirit, promptitude, and vigour which she had so recently exhibited under the most trying emergencies, she betrayed a deplorable apathy and remissness. After keeping her chamber for some days, she removed to the seat of Lord Seton, at

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Feb. 11, 1566-7. Enclosure by Drury to Cecil.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, Feb. 12, 1566-7.

a short distance from the capital, accompanied by Bothwell, Argyle, Huntly, the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, and Secretary Lethington.¹ On the preceding day, Darnley had been buried in the chapel of Holyrood, but with great privacy. None of the nobility attended the ceremony, and it was remarked, that, of the officers of state, the Justice Clerk Bellenden was alone present.²

Meantime, whilst the queen was at Seton, placards accusing Bothwell, were openly exposed in the capital. The first of these appeared on the 17th, another repeated the denunciation on the 19th, and on the succeeding day, the Earl of Lennox, father to the murdered king, commenced a correspondence with the queen, in which he implored her to apprehend the suspected persons, and to lose no time in investigating the circumstances of his son's slaughter.³ She replied that the placards contradicted each other, and that she was at a loss on which to proceed. He returned for answer, that the names of the persons suspected, were notorious to the world, and marvelled they should have been kept from her majesty's ears, but to prevent all mistakes, he should repeat them: the Earl Bothwell, Mr. James Balfour, Mr. David Cham-

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Office. Drury to Cecil. Berwick, Feb. 17, 1566, i. e. 1566-7.

² Birrel's Diary, Chalmers, vol. ii., p. 556.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, Feb. 19, 1566-7, Berwick. Also Ibid. Same to same, Berwick, Feb. 28, 1566-7. Cabala, p. 126. Norris to Cecil. Anderson's Collections, vol. i., p. 40.

bers, and black Mr. John Spens were denounced, he said, in the first placard ; in the second, Signor Francis, Bastian, John de Bourdeaux, and Joseph, David's brother ; and he finally besought the queen in the most earnest and touching terms, to take order for their immediate apprehension. But he besought her in vain.¹ At the moment he was writing, Bothwell continued in high favour, and enjoyed the most familiar intercourse with Mary. Although the reports of his guilt as the principal assassin became daily stronger ; nay, as if to convince Lennox, that all remonstrances would be inefficacious, Sir James Balfour, the very man who was named as his fellow-murderer, was suffered to be at large.

It was at this time, that Lutyni the Italian, Joseph Riccio's companion, was sent back by Drury to the Queen of Scots. Riccio himself, as we have just seen, had been accused as one of the murderers of the king ; but that Lutyni's secret, of which Riccio so much dreaded the discovery, related to the plot, can only be conjectured. On his arrival, the queen did not see him (it was scarce a week after Darnley's death), but directed that he should be examined by Bothwell. This baron was apparently satisfied with the reasons which he gave for his flight, and after a courteous interview, permitted him to return to Berwick. The queen, at the same time, sent him a present of thirty crowns, and he soon after

¹ Anderson, vol. i., pp. 40, 44, 47, 48. Also Enclosure in MS. Letter. B.C. St. P. Off. Forster to Cecil, 28 February, 1566-7.

left the country, expressing the utmost satisfaction at his escape.¹

Had the queen entertained any serious idea of discovering the perpetrators of the murder, the steps to be pursued were neither dubious nor intricate. If she was afraid to seize the higher delinquents, it was at least no difficult matter to have apprehended and examined the persons who had provided the lodging in which the king was slain. The owner of the house Robert Balfour, was well known, her own servants who had been entrusted with the keys, and the king's domestics who had absented themselves before the explosion, or were preserved from its effects, were still on the spot, and might have been arrested and brought before the privy council.² But nothing of this kind took place, and in this interval of delay and apparent indecision, many persons from whom information might have been elicited, and some who were actually accused, took the opportunity of leaving the country. On the 19th of February, only ten days after the explosion, Sir W. Drury addressed an interesting letter to Cecil from Berwick, in which he men-

¹ Whether guilty or no, Lutyni had been so well tutored by his friend, that no suspicion was raised. It is evident, however, that fears were felt for him, as Drury had procured a promise from Mary and Lethington, that he should be dismissed in safety; and sent a gentleman of the garrison with him, to see that it was fulfilled. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil, B.C., Feb. 19, 1566-7. Same to same, B. C., Feb. 28, 1566-7.

² Laing, p. 52.

tioned that Dolu, the queen's treasurer, had arrived in that town with eight others, amongst whom was Bastian, one of those denounced in the placards. Francis the Italian steward, the same person whose name had been also publicly posted up as engaged in the murder, was expected, he added, to pass that way within a few days, and other Frenchmen had left Scotland by sea.¹

In the midst of these events, the Earl of Bothwell continued to have the chief direction of affairs, and to share with Lethington, Argile, and Huntly, the confidence of the queen. The Earls of Murray and Morton, who were absent from the capital at the time of the murder, showed no disposition to return, and Lennox, when requested by Mary to repair to court, dismissed her messenger without an answer.²

Meanwhile rumour was busy, and some particulars were talked of amongst the people, which, if any real solicitude on the subject had existed, might have still given a clue to trace the assassins. A smith was spoken of in a bill fastened on the Tron,³ who had furnished the false keys to the king's apartment, and who, on due security, promised to come forward and point out his employers.⁴ A person was said to be discovered in Edinburgh, from whom

¹ St. P. Off. B. C. Berwick. Drury to Cecil. Feb. 19, 1566-7. Ibid. Drury to Cecil, Berwick, Feb. 19, 1566-7.

² Ibid. Same to same, February 19, 1566-7.

³ A post in the public market, where goods were weighed.

⁴ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C., Drury to Cecil, 28 Feb. 1566-7.

Sir J. Balfour had purchased a large quantity of powder, and other placards and drawings appeared, in which the queen herself and Bothwell were plainly pointed at. But the only effect produced by such intimations was to rouse this daring man to a passionate declaration of vengeance. Accompanied by fifty guards, he rode to the capital from Seton, and with furious oaths and gestures declared publicly, that if he knew who were the authors of the bills or drawings, he would "wash his hands in their blood."¹ It was remarked, that as he passed through the streets, his followers kept a jealous watch, and crowded round him as if they apprehended an attack, whilst he himself spoke to no one of whom he was not assured, without his hand on the hilt of his dagger. His deportment and fierce looks were much noted by the people, who began, at the same time, to express themselves openly and bitterly against the queen.² It was observed that Captain Cullen and his company were the guards nearest her person, and he was well known to be a sworn follower of Bothwell's; it was remarked, that whilst all inquiry into the murder appeared to be forgotten, an active investigation took place as to the authors of the placards,³ and minuter circumstances were noted, which seemed to argue a light and indifferent

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, Feb. 28, 1566-7. Berwick.

² MS. Letter, Drury to Cecil, February 28, 1566-7.

³ Keith, p. 374.

behaviour, at a time when her manner should have been especially circumspect and guarded. It did not escape attention, that scarce two weeks after her husband's death, whilst in the country and in the city all were still shocked at the late occurrences, and felt them as a stain on their national character, the Court at Seton was occupied in gay amusements. Mary and Bothwell would shoot at the butts against Huntly and Seton, and on one occasion after winning the match, they forced these lords to pay the forfeit in the shape of a dinner at Tranent.² On the evening of the day in which the earl had exhibited so much fury in the streets of the capital, two more placards were hung up. On the one were written the initials, M. R., with a hand holding a sword. On the other, Bothwell's initials, with a mallet painted above, an obscure allusion to the only wound found upon the unhappy prince, which appeared to have been given by a blunt instrument.

These symptoms of suspicion and dissatisfaction were not confined to the people. Movements began to be talked of amongst the nobles. It was reported that Murray and some friends had held a meeting at Dunkeld, where they were joined by Caithness, Athol, and Morton,³ and as this nobleman had absented

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil, Feb. 28, 1566-7.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, Berwick, Feb. 28, 1566-7.

³ Ibid.

himself from court, and kept aloof amongst his dependents, the queen became at length convinced that something must be done to prevent a coalition against her, and to satisfy the people that she was determined to institute a public inquiry into the murder.

To this, indeed, she had been urged in the most solemn and earnest terms by Bishop Beaton, her ambassador at Paris. The day after Darnley's death, she had written to this prelate, giving a brief description of the late dreadful events, and lamenting that his affectionate warning to beware of some sudden danger had arrived too late. In his answer he had implored her to lose no time in prosecuting its authors and vindicating herself in the eyes of the world. He had even gone so far as to repeat the common opinion then current in France, that she was herself the principal cause of the king's death, and that nothing had been done without her consent. His expressions upon this point were very remarkable. "Of this deed, if I should write all that is spoken here, and also in England, of the miserable estate of [the] realm by the dishonour of the nobility, mistrust, and treason of your whole subjects, yea, that yourself is greatly and wrongously calumniated to be the motive principal of the whole, and all done by your command, I can conclude nothing besides that which your Majesty writes to me yourself, that since it hath pleased God to preserve you to take a rigorous vengeance

thereof, that rather than it be not actually taken, it appears to me better, in this world, that you had lost life and all.* * * Here it is needful that you show forth now, rather than ever before, the great virtue, magnanimity and constancy, which God has granted you, by whose grace I hope you shall overcome this most heavy envy and displeasure of the committing thereof, and preserve that reputation in all godliness which you have acquired long since, which can appear no ways more clearly than that you do such justice as the whole world may declare your innocence and give testimony for ever, of their treason that have committed, without fear of God or man, so cruel and ungodly a murder.”¹

This honest letter was written on the 8th of March, about a month after the king's murder, and on the same day Mary received a message of condolence and advice from Elizabeth. It was brought by Sir Henry Kyllgrew, who, on his arrival, after dining with Bothwell, Morton, Lethington, and Argyle (all of them, as was afterwards proved, participant in this cruel deed), was admitted to the queen. To see her face was impossible, for the chamber was dark, but, by her voice and manner, she seemed in profound grief; and not only assured the envoy of her desire to satisfy the Queen of England's wishes regarding

¹ Keith, Preface, p. 9. Extract from the Orig. in the Scottish College, Paris.

the treaty of Leith and the matters of the borders, but promised him that the Earl of Bothwell should be brought to a public trial.¹

During his stay in the capital, which lasted but a few days, Kylligrew found the people clamorous for inquiry into the assassination, which they regarded as a shame to the whole nation, whilst the preachers solemnly exhorted all men to prayer and repentance, and in their pulpits appealed to God, that he would be pleased "to reveal and revenge."² Scarce, however, had this envoy departed, when the queen seemed to have forgotten her good resolutions, and, infatuated in her predilection for Bothwell, admitted him to greater power and favour than ever. The Earl of Mar was induced to give up the Castle of Edinburgh, and it was given to Bothwell. Morton, after a secret and midnight interview with his royal mistress, received the Castle of Tantallon and other lands which he had forfeited by his rebellion, and it was remarked, that in return for this, his whole power and interest were assured to Bothwell. The Castle of Blackness, the Inch, and the Superiority of Leith, were conferred on the same favourite, and so completely did he rule every thing at court, that Murray, although he judged it prudent to keep on friendly terms, became dis-

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Kylligrew to Cecil, 8th March, 1566-7. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. 30 March, 1567. Drury to Cecil. Berwick.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Kylligrew to Cecil, ut supra.

gusted with the inferior part he now acted, and requested permission to leave the kingdom.¹

In the midst of these transactions, it was observed that the queen was wretched. She attended a solemn dirge for the soul of her husband—and they who were near her on this occasion, remarked a melancholy change from her former health and beauty. Nor were these feelings likely to be soothed by the letters which she now received from France, in which the queen mother, and the cardinal, her uncle, addressed her with bitter reproaches, and declared, that if she failed to avenge the death of the king, their cousin, and to clear herself from the imputations brought against her, they would not only consider her as utterly disgraced, but become her enemies.²

Urged by these repeated appeals, she at last resolved that Bothwell should be brought to a public trial, but the circumstances which attended this tardy exhibition of justice were little calculated to justify her in the opinion of her people. He had now become so powerful by the favour of the crown, and the many offices conferred upon him, that it was evident as long as he remained at large and ruled every thing at court, no person dared be

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil, B.C. 17th March, 1566-7. Same to same, 14th March, 1566-7. B.C. Same to same, B.C. 21st March, 1566-7. Same to same, 29th and 30th March, 1567. B.C. See also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil, 4th April, 1567.

² Drury's letter to Cecil. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. March 29th 1567, B.C.

so hardy as accuse him. His trial accordingly was little else than a mock ceremonial, directed by himself, and completely overruled by his creatures. The Earl of Lennox, who at an earlier period had in vain implored the queen to investigate the murder, and to collect, whilst it was attainable, such evidence as might bring the guilt home to its authors, now as earnestly and justly pleaded the necessity of delay. He had been summoned to appear and make good his accusation against Bothwell, but he declared that it was in vain to expect him to come singly, opposed to a powerful adversary, who enjoyed the royal favour, and commanded the town and the castle. He conjured the queen to grant him some time, that he might assemble his friends; he observed, that when the suspected persons were still at liberty, powerful at court, and about her majesty's person, no fair trial could take place, and when all was in vain, he applied to Elizabeth, who wrote to Mary in the strongest terms, and besought her, as she hoped to save herself from the worst suspicions, to listen to so just a request. It was forcibly urged by the English queen, that Lennox was well assured of a combination to acquit Bothwell, and to accomplish by force, what could never be attained by law; and she advised her, in the management of a cause which touched her so nearly, to use that sincerity and prudence which might convince the whole world, that she was guiltless.¹

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. Drury to Cecil, 4th April 1567.

It is not certain that the Scottish queen received this letter in time to stay the proceedings, for it was only written four days previous to the trial, and the Provost Marshal of Berwick, to whom its delivery was entrusted, arrived at the capital early in the morning of the 12th of April, the very day on which the trial took place. The state in which he found the city, soon convinced him that his message would be fruitless. When he entered the palace, the friends of the Earl of Bothwell were assembled. They and their followers mustered four thousand men, besides a guard of two hundred hackbutters. This formidable force kept possession of the streets, and filled the outer court of the palace, and as the castle was at his devotion, it was evident that Bothwell completely commanded the town.

It was scarcely to be expected that a messenger whose errand was suspected to be a request for delay should be welcome, and although he announced himself to be bearer of a letter from Elizabeth, he was rudely treated, reproached as an English villain, who had come to stay the "assize,"¹ and assured that the queen was too busy with the matters of the day, to attend to other business. At that moment Bothwell himself, with the secretary Lethington, came out of the palace, and the Provost Marshal delivered the Queen of England's letters to the secretary, who, accompanied by Bothwell, carried them to

¹ The trial by a jury.—MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. 15th April, 1567. Berwick. Drury to Cecil.

Mary. No answer, however, was brought back, and after a short interval, the earl and the secretary again came out, and mounted their horses, when he eagerly pressed forward for his answer. Lethington then assured him that his royal mistress was asleep, and could not receive the letter; but the excuse was hardly uttered, before it was proved to be false, for at this moment, a servant of de Croc, the French ambassador, who stood beside the English envoy, looking up, saw, and pointed out the queen and Mary Fleming, wife of the secretary, standing at a window of the palace; nor did it escape their notice, that as Bothwell rode past, Mary gave him a friendly greeting for a farewell. The cavalcade then left the court, and proceeded to the Tolbooth, where the trial was to take place, Bothwell's hackbutters surrounding the door, and permitting none to enter who were suspected of being unfavourable to the accused.¹

From the previous preparations, the result of such a trial might have been anticipated with certainty. The whole proceedings had already been arranged in a council, held some little time before, in which Bothwell had taken his seat, and given directions regarding his own arraignment.² The jury consisted principally, if not wholly, of the favourers of the earl; the law officers of the crown were

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil. April 15th, 1567. Berwick, B.C. Also a fragment, MS. Letter. St. P. Off. undated. Drury to Cecil, April, 1567.

² Anderson's Collections, vol. i. p. 50.

either in his interest, or overawed into silence, no witnesses were summoned, the indictment was framed with a flaw too manifest to be accidental, and his accuser, the Earl of Lennox, who was on his road to the city, surrounded by a large force of his friends, had received an order not to enter the town with more than six in his company.¹ All this showed too manifestly what was intended, and Lennox as might have been anticipated, declined to come forward in person. When summoned to make good his accusation, a gentleman named Cunningham appeared, and stated, that he had been sent by the earl his master to reiterate the charge of murder, but to request delay, as his friends who had intended to have accompanied him both for his honour and security had changed their resolution.² On this being refused to Lennox's envoy, he publicly protested against the validity of any sentence of acquittal, and withdrew. The jury were then chosen, the earl pleaded not guilty, and in the absence of all evidence, a unanimous verdict of acquittal was pronounced. Bothwell then by a public cartel challenged any gentleman who should still brand him with the murder. On hearing of this defiance, Sir William Drury requested Cecil to intercede with Elizabeth that he might be permitted to accept it, professing himself absolutely convinced of the earl's guilt, and next day a paper

¹ Anderson, vol. ii. p. 98. MS. Letter. St. P. Off. B.C. Forster to Cecil, 15 April, 1567. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil, 15 April, 1567.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. Sir John Forster to Cecil. 15th April, 1567, Alnwick. Anderson's Collections, vol. ii. p. 107.

was set up, declaring that if a day were fixed, a gentleman should appear—but as no name was given the matter dropped.¹

It was evident to all the world, that this famous trial was collusive, nor could it well be otherwise; Argyle, Morton, Huntly, and Lethington, were all more or less participant in the king's murder, they were the sworn and leagued friends of Bothwell, and they conducted the whole proceedings. It has been argued by Mary's advocates, that she was a passive instrument in the hands of this faction, and could not, even if willing, have insisted on a fair trial. But, however anxious to lean to every presumption in favour of innocence, I have discovered no proofs of this servitude, and such imbecility appears to me inconsistent with the vigour, decision, and courage which were striking features in her character.

The acquittal, although countenanced by the nobles, was loudly reprobated by the common people, and as rumours began to rise of a divorce between Bothwell and his countess, a sister of Huntly, their indignation and disgust were strongly expressed. Even in the public streets, and in the queen's presence, these feelings betrayed themselves, and the market women, as Mary passed, would cry out, "God preserve your grace, if you are sackless² of the king's death." It was

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. a fragment. Drury to Cecil. April 1567. Anderson's Collections, vol. ii. p. 158.

² Sackless, innocent.

noted too, that this daring man had insulted the general feeling by riding to his trial on Darnley's favourite horse, it was reported to Drury that the queen had sent him a token and message during the proceedings,¹ and every thing must have united to show Mary that her late conduct was viewed with the utmost sorrow and indignation. Yet, instead of opening her eyes to the perils of her situation, she seems to have resigned herself to the influence of one strong and engrossing passion, and her history at this moment hurried forward with something so like an irresistible fatality, as to make it currently reported amongst the people that Bothwell was dealing in love philtres, and had employed the sorceries of his old paramour, the lady Buccleugh.

Immediately after the trial Parliament assembled, and the queen, irritated, perhaps, at the open censures of the city, declined the ancient custom of being guarded by the magistrates and trained bands, preferring a company of hackbutters. The acquittal of Bothwell was then confirmed by the three estates, the conduct of the jury was approved of, the estates of Huntly and his friends restored, a rigid inquiry instituted against the authors of all bills in which Bothwell had been accused: and, as if to complete his triumph, Mary now selected him to bear the crown and sceptre before her when she

¹ Drury to Cecil. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. 10th April 1567 and April 19th 1567. Also April 1567.—No date of the day is given, but the month is certain.

rode to parliament.¹ It is worthy of remark also, that in this same parliament the Roman Catholic partialities of the queen seemed to be modified; and it is by no means improbable, that owing to the influence of Bothwell, who was a Protestant, the reformed party were treated with greater favour than before. Mary willingly agreed to abolish all laws affecting the lives of her subjects, on the score of their religion, she passed an act securing a provision to the poorer ministers; and it is likely more would have been granted if their assembly had refrained from recommending a rigid enquiry into the king's murder, which she resented and declined.²

So completely did she espouse the cause of her profligate favourite, that although all already dreaded his power, he now received from her the lordship and castle of Dunbar, with an enlargement of his office of High Admiral, and it was evident, that by the favour of the crown, and his "Bands" with the greater nobles, he had shot up to a strength which none would dare to resist.³ Murray, from his power and popularity was the only man who could have opposed him, but he now shunned the contest. We have already seen, that he had abstained from implicating himself in

¹ Keith, p. 378.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Sir W. Kirkaldy to Bedford, 20th, April, 1567. Ibid. MS. Letter, Same to same, 8 May 1567.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil, B. C. April 19, 1567; also Same to same, April 27th, 1567.

the Bond for the king's murder: the very day that preceded it, he had left the capital; since that time he seldom attended the meetings of the council, and shortly previous to the trial, with the queen's permission, he retired to France.¹ The friends, indeed, with whom he had long and intimately acted, Morton, Argile, Huntly, Lethington, and their associates, were all of them conspirators in the king's death;² and they now appeared firm adherents of Bothwell; but, in the meantime, it is certain, that for some time all open intercourse between them and Murray was suspended.

After his departure the events of every day exhibited some new proofs of the infatuated predilection of the queen. Happy had it been for this unfortunate princess, had she listened for a moment to the calm and earnest advice of her ambassador, at the court of France, when he implored her to punish her husband's murderers, and warned her in such solemn terms, that the eyes of Europe were fixed upon her conduct; but his letter appears to have made little impression; the collusive trial of Bothwell gave a shock to her best friends, and the extraordinary events which now rapidly succeeded confirmed the worst suspicions of her enemies.

On the evening of the day on which the parliament rose (April 19), Bothwell invited the principal nobility to supper, in a tavern kept by a person named

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, April 9 and 10, 1567.

² This was afterwards clearly established.

Ansley. They sat drinking till a late hour ; and during the entertainment a band of two hundred hackbutters surrounded the house and overawed its inmates.¹ The earl then rose and proposed his marriage with the queen, affirming that he had gained her consent, and even (it is said) producing her written warrant, empowering him to propose the matter to her nobility. Of the guests some were his sworn friends, others were terrified and irresolute ; and in the confusion one nobleman, the Earl of Eglinton, contrived to make his escape ; but the rest, both Papist and Protestant, were overawed into compliance, and affixed their signatures to a Bond, in which they declared their conviction of Bothwell's innocence, and recommended " this noble and mighty lord " as a suitable husband for the queen, whose continuance in solitary widowhood they declared was injurious to the interests of the commonwealth. The most influential persons who signed this disgraceful instrument were the Earls of Morton, Argyle, Huntly, Cassillis, Sutherland, Glencairn, Rothes, and Caithness ; and of the lords, Herries, Hume, Boyd, Seton and Sinclair.²

The perfection to which the system of paid informers was now carried in Scotland, and the rapid

¹ Anderson, vol. iv. p. 60. Elizabeth's Commissioners to the Queen, 11th October, 1568, from Caligula, C. I. fol. 198.

² Anderson, vol. i. p. 107, from a copy in the Cottonian Library. Caligula, C. I. fol. 1. Keith, p. 381. There is a contemporary copy of the Bond in the St. P. Office, it is dated April 19, 1567, and bears this endorsement in Randolph's hand, " Upon this was grounded the accusation of the Earl Morton."

communication of secret intelligence to England and the continent, have been already frequently remarked in the course of this history ; but at no time did Elizabeth possess more certain information than at the present. She knew and watched with intent interest every step taken by Mary ; her far-reaching and sagacious eye had, it is probable, already detected the ruin of her beautiful and envied rival, in that career of passion upon which it was now too apparent to all, that she had entered ; and her ministers, Cecil and Bedford, who managed the affairs of Scotland, availed themselves with indefatigable assiduity of every possible source of information. Nor did they want assistants in that country, where a party was now secretly organising for the protection of the prince and the government, against the audacious designs of Bothwell.

Of this confederacy the most powerful at this moment were Argyle, Athol, Morton, and Sir William Kirkaldy, or, as he was commonly called, the Laird of Grange, a person of great influence, reputed the best military leader in Scotland, intimately acquainted with the politics of England and the continent, and, as we have already seen, strongly attached to the Protestant cause. The audacity and success of Bothwell naturally roused such a man, and all who professed the same principles ; they justly believed, that he who had murdered the father would have little scruple in removing the son ; they were aware of the infa-

mous Bond for the queen's marriage, some of them indeed had signed it, and they asserted that the unhappy princess, who should have watched over the preservation of her child, was no longer mistress of her own actions. To declare themselves prematurely, would have been ruin, considering the power of their opponent; they therefore secretly collected their strength, and gave warning to their friends, but determined to take no open step till they had consulted the wishes of Elizabeth.

For this purpose Grange addressed a letter to the Earl of Bedford on the day after Ansley's supper. He informed him of the miserable servitude of the nobles, and the infatuation of the queen, but assured her in strong terms, that even now, if Elizabeth would assist him and his friends, the murder of their sovereign should not long be unavenged. He enlarged on the imminent danger of the prince, and predicted Mary's speedy marriage to Bothwell, of whom he added, she had become so shamelessly enamoured that she had been heard to say, "she cared not to lose France, England, and her own country, for him, and shall go with him to the world's end in a white petticoat, before she leave him." He concluded his letter in these severe words, "Whatever is dishonest reigns presently in our court; God deliver them from their evil."¹

This letter from Grange was soon after followed by a still more remarkable anonymous communi-

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Office, B. C. Grange to Bedford, 20 April, 1567.

cation. Whilst Mary and Bothwell believed their secret plans were safe, their confidential agents had betrayed them to this informer, by whom instant intelligence was sent to England, that the Countess of Bothwell, Huntly's sister, was about to divorce the earl; and that the queen had projected with her favourite, that seizure of her person, in which she was to be carried with a show of violence to Dunbar. The letter which was probably addressed to Cecil, is too remarkable to be omitted.

“ This is to advertise you, that the Earl Bothwell's wife is going to part with her husband; and a great part of our lords have subscribed the marriage between the queen and him. The queen rode to Stirling this last Monday and returns this Thursday. I doubt not but you have heard how the Earl of Bothwell has gathered many of his friends, and, as some say, to ride in Liddesdale, but I believe it is not, for he is minded to meet the queen this day called Thursday, and to take her by the way and bring her to Dunbar. Judge you gif¹ it be with her will or no? but you will hear at more length on Friday or Saturday, if you will find it good that I continue in writing as occasion serves. I wald ye reif this² after the reading; this bearer knows nothing of this matter. There is no other thing presently to write of; but after all you will please receive my heartly commendations by him

that is your's, that took you by the hand. At midnight."¹

The intelligence given in this letter proved true. Mary, on Monday, the 21st April, repaired to Stirling to visit the prince, her son, and was much offended with the Earl of Mar, his governor, who, from some suspicion which he entertained, refused to allow the queen to enter the royal apartments with more than two of her ladies.² In the mean season Bothwell had assembled his friends to the number of eight hundred spears, and meeting her at Almond Bridge, six miles from Edinburgh, he suddenly surrounded her attendants, and with a show of violence conducted her to Dunbar, his own castle, which he had prepared for her reception.³ In the royal cavalcade thus surprised, were Lethington, Huntly, Sir James Melvil, and some others. The three last were carried prisoners to Dunbar with the queen, the rest were suffered to pursue their journey, but when Melvil remonstrated against such usage, he was informed by Captain Blacater, a confidential servant of Bothwell, that all had been done with the queen's own consent.⁴ And it cannot

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Office; this Letter, though undated, contains internal proof that it was written on Thursday, the 24th April, at midnight, the day Bothwell carried off the queen to Dunbar. Cecil's Journal in Anderson, vol. ii. p. 275. Keith, p. 383.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil, B.C. 27 April, 1567.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, 27 April, 1567. Ibid. Same to same, B. C. 25 April, 1567. Ibid. B. C. Same to same, 30 April, 1567.

⁴ Melvil's Memoirs, p. 80.

be denied that every thing which now happened seemed strongly to confirm this assertion.

On the 26th of April, only two days after the event, Grange addressed this indignant letter to Bedford:

“ This queen will never cease unto such time as she have wrecked all the honest men of this realm. She was minded to cause Bothwell ravish her¹, to the end that she may the sooner end the marriage whilk she promised before she caused Bothwell murder her husband. There is many that would revenge the murder, but they fear your mistress. I am so suted to for to enterprise the revenge, that I must either take it upon hand, or else I man² leave the country, the whilk³ I am determined to do, if I can obtain license, but Bothwell is minded to cut me off, if he may, ere I obtain it, and is returned out of Stirling to Edinburgh. She minds hereafter to take the prince out of the Earl of Mar’s hands, and put him in his hands that murdered his father, as I writ in my last. I pray your lordship let me know what your mistress will do, for if we will seek France, we may find favour at their hands, but I would rather persuade to lean to England. This meckle⁴ in haste from my house, the 26th of April.⁵

¹ Used here in the sense of forcibly to seize—*rapio*.

² Must.

³ Which.

⁴ Much.

⁵ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Copy of the time, backed in the handwriting of Cecil’s clerk, “ Copy of the Laird of Grange’s letter to the Earl of Bedford.”

Mary was now swept forward by the current of a blind and infatuated passion. A divorce between Bothwell and his countess, Lady Jane Gordon, was procured with indecent haste, and it was suspected that the recent restoration of his consistorial rights to the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, had been made with this object. The process was hurried through the Court of that Prelate, and the Commissariat or reformed court, in two days.¹ After a brief residence at Dunbar, under the roof of the man accused of the murder of her husband, and the forcible seizure of her person, the queen and Bothwell rode to the capital.² As she entered the town, his followers cast away their spears, to save themselves, as was conjectured, from any charge of treason, and their master, with apparent courtesy, dismounting, took the queen's bridle, and led her into the castle under a salvo of artillery.³ It was a sight which her friends beheld with the deepest sorrow, and her enemies with triumph and derision.

A few days after this, Sir Robert Melvil, who had joined the coalition for the revenge of the king's murder and the delivery of the queen, wrote secretly to Cecil. His object was to warn the English minister that France was ready to join the lords against Bothwell, and to excuse, as far as he plausibly could, the unaccountable

¹ Keith, p. 384. Also Orig. St. P. Off. B.C. Drury to Cecil, 2nd May, 1567.

² On the 3rd of May.

³ Anderson, vol. ii., p. 276.

conduct of his mistress. They were resolved, he said, never to consider their sovereign at liberty so long as she remained in the company of that traitor, who had committed so detestable a murder, whatever he might persuade or compel her to say to the contrary. "I understand," said he, "that the nobility are of mind to sute assistance of the queen your mistress, in consideration that the king, who is with God, as well as the queen our sovereign, and the prince her son, are so near of blood to her highness. I believe easy help shall obtain the queen's liberty, and in like manner have the murderers of the king punished. Thus far I will make your honour privy of, that France has offered to enter in band with the nobility of the realm, and to enlist the company of men at arms, and to give divers pensions to noblemen and gentlemen of their realm, which some did like well, but the honest sort has concluded, and brought the rest to the same effect, that they will do nothing which may offend your sovereign, without the fault be in her Majesty, and it appears both Papist and Protestant join together with an earnest affection for the weal of their country."** He then added, that Bothwell, as all thought, would soon end the marriage, and pass to Stirling to seize the prince. He intreated Cecil to consider the queen his sovereign's conduct as rather the effect of the evil counsel of those about her, than proceeding from herself, and lastly begged him to destroy his letter.¹

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Melvil to Cecil, 7th May, 1567. Dated Kerny in Fife.

Next day Grange wrote on the same subject to Bedford, and in still more striking terms:—“All such things,” said he, “as were done before the Parliament, I did write unto your lordship at large.** At that time the most part of the nobility, for fear of their lives, did grant to sundry things both against their honours and consciences—who since have convened themselves at Stirling, where they have made a ‘band’ to defend [each] other in all things that shall concern the glory of God and commonweal of their country. The heads that presently they agreed upon is, first, to seek the liberty of the queen, who is ravished and detained by the Earl of Bothwell, who was the ravisher, and hath the strengths, munitions, and men of war at his commandment. The next head is the preservation and keeping of the prince. The third is to pursue them that murdered the king. For the pursuit of these three heads, they have promised to bestow their lives, lands, and goods. And to that effect their lordships have desired me to write unto your lordship, to the end they might have your sovereign’s aid and support for suppressing of the cruel murderer Bothwell, who, at the queen’s last being in Stirling, suborned certain to have poisoned the prince, for that barbarous tyrant is not contented to have murdered the father, but he would also cut off the son, for fear that he hath to be punished hereafter. The names of the lords that convened in Stirling was the Earls of Argile, Morton, Athol, and Mar. Those forenamed, as said is, have desired me to write unto your lordship

to the end that I might know by you, if your sovereign would give them support concerning these three heads above written.*** Wherefore I beseech your lordship, who I am assured loveth the quietness of these two realms, to let me have a direct answer, and that with haste, for presently the fore-said lords are suited unto by Monsieur de Croc, who offereth unto them in his master the King of France's name, if they will follow his advice and counsel, that they shall have aid and support to suppress the Earl Bothwell and his faction.*** Also he hath admonished her [Mary] to desist from the Earl Bothwell, and not to marry him, for if she do he hath assured her, that she shall neither have friendship nor favour out of France, if she shall have to do¹—but his saying is, she will give no ear.***

“ There is to be joined with the four forenamed lords, the Earls of Glencairn, Cassillis, Eglinton, Montrose, Caithness; the Lords Boyd, Ochiltree, Ruthven, Drummond, Gray, Glammis, Innermeith, Lindsay, Hume, and Herries, with all the whole West Merse and Tiviotdale, the most part of Fife, Angus, and Merns. And for this effect the Earl of Argyle is ridden in the west, the Earl of Athol to the north, and the Earl of Morton to Fife, Angus, and Montrose. The Earl of Mar remaineth still about the prince, and if the queen will pursue him, the whole lords have promised, upon their faiths and honour, to relieve him.***

¹ If she shall have to resist her enemies.

“In this meantime the queen is come to the Castle of Edinburgh, conveyed by the Earl Bothwell, where she intendeth to remain until she have levied some forces of footmen and horsemen, that is, she minds to levy 500 footmen and 200 horsemen. The money that she hath presently to do this, which is five thousand crowns, came from the font your lordship brought unto the baptism, the rest is to be reft and borrowed of Edinburgh, or the men of Lothian. ***

“It will please your lordship also to haste these other letters to my Lord of Murray, and write unto him to come back again into Normandy, that he may be in readiness against my lords write unto him.”¹

These important letters of Melvil and Kirkaldy, hitherto quite unknown, establish some new facts in this portion of our history. We see clearly from them that the formidable coalition against the queen, which our historians describe as arising after the marriage with Bothwell, was fully formed nearly a month before that event, that its ramifications were extensive and deep, that Sir Robert Melvil, in whom the Scottish queen reposed implicit confidence, had joined the confederacy, in the hope of rescuing his royal mistress from what he represents as an unwilling servitude; that the plot was well known to Monsieur de Croc, the French ambassador, who after having in vain remonstrated

¹ Copy of the time, St. P. Off. 8th May, 1567, Grange to Bedford. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. Bedford to Cecil, 11th May 1567.

with Mary against her predilection for Bothwell, gave it his cordial support, and lastly, that it had been communicated to Elizabeth, whose assistance was earnestly solicited.

But the English princess cherished high and peculiar ideas of prerogative, and while she blamed in severe terms the conduct of the Scottish queen, she was incensed at the bold and scurrilous tone in which Grange had dared to arraign the proceedings of his sovereign. Upon this point, a remarkable conversation took place between her and Randolph in the palace garden, of which, fortunately, this minister on the same day that it occurred, wrote an account to Leicester. His expressions are forcible. "These news," said he (meaning Mary's intended marriage), "it pleased her majesty to tell me this day (May 10th) walking in her garden, with great misliking of that queen's doing, which now she doth so much detest, that she is ashamed of her. Notwithstanding her majesty doth not like, that her subjects should by any force withstand that which they do see her bent unto, and yet doth she greatly fear, lest that Bothwell having the upper hand, he will rein again with the French, and either make away with the prince, or send him into France, which deliberation her majesty would gladly have stayed, but is very uncertain how it may be brought to pass.

"Her majesty also told me that she had seen a writing sent from Grange to my Lord of Bedford, despitefully written against that queen, in such vile

terms as she could not abide the hearing of it, wherein he made her worse than any common woman. She would not that any subject, what cause soever there be proceeding from the prince, or whatsoever her life and behaviour is, should discover that unto the world, and thereof so utterly misliketh of Grange's manner of writing and doing, that she condemns him for one of the worst in that realm, seeming somewhat to warn me of my familiarity with him, and willing that I should admonish him of her misliking. In this manner of talk, it pleased her majesty to retain me almost an hour."¹

It is now time that we return to the extraordinary course of events in Scotland, which fulfilled the predictions of Melvil and Grange. The church was ordered to proclaim the banns of the queen's marriage. This they peremptorily refused. Craig, one of the ministers, Knox being now absent, alleged as his excuse, that Mary had sent no written command, and stated the common report that she had been ravished, and was kept captive by Bothwell. Upon this, the Justice Clerk brought him a letter signed by the queen herself, asserting the falsehood of such a story, and requiring his obedience. He still resisted, demanded to be confronted

¹ This Letter has never before been published, but is printed in the Appendix to the anonymous privately printed work already mentioned, entitled "Maitland's Narrative. The Appendix consists of letters and other papers relating to the History of Mary Queen of Scotland."

with the parties, and in presence of the privy council, where Bothwell sat, this undaunted minister laid to his charge the dreadful crimes of which he was suspected, rape, adultery, and murder. To the accusation no satisfactory answer was returned, but Craig, having exonerated his conscience, did not deem himself entitled to disobey the express command of his sovereign. He therefore proclaimed the banns in the High Church, but from the pulpit, and in presence of the congregation, added these appalling words: "I take heaven and earth to witness, that I abhor and detest this marriage, as odious and slanderous to the world, and I would exhort the faithful to pray earnestly that a union against all reason and good conscience, may yet be overruled by God, to the comfort of this unhappy realm."¹

This solemn warning, with the deep and general detestation of Bothwell, appeared to produce so little effect upon the queen, that the people considered the whole events as strange and supernatural; the report revived of this abandoned man having employed witchcraft, no uncommon resource in that age, and it was currently asserted, that the marriage day had been fixed by sorcerers.²

On the 12th of May, Mary came in person into

¹ Anderson, vol. iv., p. 280. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, May 14, 1567. Also Orig. St. P. Off. May 12, 1567, B. C. Drury to Cecil.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, 12th or 13th May, 1567. See also, MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Same to same, May 20th.

the high court at Edinburgh, and addressed the chancellor, the judges, and the nobility whom she had summoned for the occasion. Having understood, she said, that some doubts had been entertained by the lords, whether they ought to sit for the administration of the laws, their sovereign being detained in captivity at Dunbar by Lord Bothwell, she informed them that they might now dismiss their scruples, for although at first incensed at the conduct of that nobleman in the seizure of her person, she had forgiven him his offence in consequence of his subsequent good conduct, and meant to promote him to still higher honour.¹ On the same day, accordingly, he was created Duke of Orkney and Shetland, the queen with her own hands placing the coronet on his head,² and on the 15th of May, the marriage took place at four in the morning in the presence chamber at Holyrood. It was remarked that Mary was married in her mourning weeds. The ceremony was performed after the rite of the Protestant church by the Bishop of Orkney; Craig, the minister of Edinburgh, being also present. In the sermon which he preached on the occasion, the bishop professed Bothwell's penitence for his former evil life, and his resolution to amend and conform himself to the church.³ Few of the leading

¹ Anderson, vol. i. p. 87.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, 14, May, 1567. Berwick, with its enclosure.

³ MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, May 16, 1567. Also B. C. Same to the same. Berwick, 20th May, 1567.

nobility were present, the event was unattended with the usual pageants and rejoicings, the people looked on in stern and gloomy silence, and next morning a paper with this ominous verse was fixed to the palace gates.

Mense malas Maio nubere vulgus ait.¹

¹ The line is from Ovid, *Fastorum*, Lib. V. l. 490.