THE

HISTORY OF SCOTLAND.

THE SEVENTH BOOK.

1584. WHILE Scotland was torn by intestine factions, Elizabeth was alarmed with the rumour of a project in agitation for setting Mary at liberty. Francis Throkmorton, a Cheshire gentleman, was suspected of being deeply concerned in the design, and on that suspicion he was taken into custody. Among his papers were found two lists, one of the principal harbours in the kingdom, with an account of their situation, and of the depth of water in each; the other, of all the eminent Roman catholics in England. This circumstance confirmed the suspicion against him, and some dark and desperate conspiracy was supposed just ready to break out. At first he boldly avowed his innocence, and declared that the two papers were forged by the queen's ministers, in order to intimidate or ensnare him; and he even endured the rack with the utmost fortitude. But being brought a second time to the place of torture, his resolution failed him, and he not only acknowledged that he had held a secret correspondence with the queen of Scots, but discovered a design that was formed to invade England. The duke of Guise, he said, undertook to furnish troops, and to conduct the enterprise. The pope and king of Spain were to supply the money necessary for carrying it on; all the English exiles were ready to take arms; many of the catholics at home would be ready to join them at their landing; Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, who was

Throkmorton's conspiracy against Elizabeth.

the life of the conspiracy, spared no pains in fomenting the spirit of disaffection among the English, or in hastening the preparations on the continent; and by his command, he made the two lists, the copies whereof had been found in his possession. This confession he retracted at his trial; returned to it again after sentence was passed on him; and retracted it once more at the place of execution[a]. 1584.

To us in the present age, who are assisted in forming our opinion of this matter by the light which time and history have thrown upon the designs and characters of the princes of Guise, many circumstances of Throkmorton's confession appear to be extremely remote from truth, or even from probability. The duke of Guise was, at that juncture, far from being in a situation to undertake foreign conquests. Without either power or office at court; hated by the king, and persecuted by the favourites; he had no leisure for any thoughts of disturbing the quiet of neighbouring states; his vast and ambitious mind was wholly occupied in laying the foundation of that famous league which shook the throne of France. But at the time when Elizabeth detected this conspiracy, the close union between the house of Guise and Philip was remarkable to all Europe; and as their great enterprise against Henry the third was not yet disclosed, as they endeavoured to conceal that under their threatenings to invade England, Throkmorton's discovery appeared to be extremely probable; and Elizabeth, who knew how ardently all the parties mentioned by him wished her downfal, thought that she could not guard her kingdom with too much care. The indiscreet zeal of the English exiles increased her fears. Not satisfied with incessant outcries against her severity towards the Scottish queen, and her cruel persecution of her catholic subjects, not thinking it enough that one pope

Designs of Mary's adherents against Elizabeth.

[a] Hollingshed, 1370.

1584. had threatened her with the sentence of excommunication, and another had actually pronounced it, they now began to disperse books and writings, in which they endeavoured to persuade their disciples, that it would be a meritorious action to take away her life; they openly exhorted the maids of honour to treat her as Judith did Holofernes, and, by such an illustrious deed, to render their own names honourable and sacred in the church throughout all future ages[b]. For all these reasons, Elizabeth not only inflicted the punishment of a traitor on Throkmorton, but commanded the Spanish ambassador instantly to leave England; and that she might be in no danger of being attacked within the island, she determined to use her utmost efforts in order to recover that influence over the Scottish councils, which she had for some time entirely lost.

She endeavours to re-establish her influence in Scotland by gaining Arran.

There were three different methods by which Elizabeth might hope to accomplish this; either by furnishing such effectual aid to the banished nobles, as would enable them to resume the chief direction of affairs; or by entering into such a treaty with Mary, as might intimidate her son, who, being now accustomed to govern, would not be averse from agreeing to any terms rather than resign the sceptre, or admit an associate in the throne; or by gaining the earl of Arran, to secure the direction of the king his master. The last was not only the easiest and speediest, but most likely to be successful. This Elizabeth resolved to pursue; but without laying the other two altogether aside. With this view she sent Davison, one of her principal secretaries, a man of abilities and address, into Scotland. A minister so venal as Arran, hated by his own countrymen, and holding his power by the most precarious of all tenures, the favour of a young prince, accepted Elizabeth's offers without hesitation,

[b] Camd. 497.

and deemed the acquisition of her protection to be the most solid foundation of his own greatness. Soon after he consented to an interview with lord Hunsdon, the governor of Berwick, and being honoured with the pompous title of lieutenant general for the king, he appeared at the place appointed with a splendid train. In Hunsdon's presence he renewed his promises of an inviolable and faithful attachment to the English interest, and assured him that James should enter into no negotiation which might tend to interrupt the peace between the two kingdoms; and as Elizabeth began to entertain the same fears and jealousies concerning the king's marriage, which had formerly disquieted her with regard to his mother's, he undertook to prevent James from listening to any overture of that kind, until he had previously obtained the queen of England's consent [c]. 1584. August 13.

Severe proceedings against the banished lords;

The banished lords and their adherents soon felt the effects of Arran's friendship with England. As Elizabeth had permitted them to take refuge in her dominions, and several of her ministers were of opinion that she ought to employ her arms in defence of their cause, the fear of this was the only thing which restrained James and his favourite from proceeding to such extremities against them, as might have excited the pity or indignation of the English, and have prompted them to exert themselves with vigour in their behalf. But every apprehension of this kind being now removed, they ventured to call a parliament, in which an act was passed, attainting Angus, Mar, Glamis, and a great number of their followers. Their estates devolved to the crown; and according to the practice of the Scottish monarchs, who were obliged to reward the faction which adhered to them, by dividing with it the spoils of the vanquished, James dealt out the greater part of these to Arran and his associates [d]. August 22.

[c] Cald. iii. 491. Melv. 315. See Appendix, No. XLIII.
[d] Cald. iii. 527.

1684. Nor was the treatment of the clergy less rigorous.
against the clergy. All ministers, readers, and professors in colleges, were enjoined to subscribe, within forty days, a paper testifying their approbation of the laws concerning the church enacted in last parliament. Many, overawed or corrupted by the court, yielded obedience; others stood out. The stipends of the latter were sequestered, some of the more active committed to prison, and numbers compelled to fly the kingdom. Such as complied, fell under the suspicion of acting from mercenary or ambitious motives. Such as adhered to their principles, and suffered in consequence of it, acquired a high reputation, by giving this convincing evidence of their firmness and sincerity. The judicatories of the church were almost entirely suppressed. In some places scarce as many ministers remained, as to perform the duties of religious worship; they soon sunk in reputation among the people; and being prohibited not only from discoursing of public affairs, but obliged, by the jealousy of the administration, to frame every sentiment and expression in such a manner as to give the court no offence, their sermons were deemed languid, insipid, and contemptible; and it became the general opinion, that, together with the most virtuous of the nobles and the most faithful of the clergy, the power and vigour of religion were now banished out of the kingdom[c].

Meanwhile, Elizabeth was carrying on one of those fruitless negotiations with the queen of Scots, which it had become almost matter of form to renew every year. They served not only to amuse that unhappy princess with some prospect of liberty, but furnished an apology for eluding the solicitations of foreign powers in her behalf; and were of use to overawe James, by showing him that she could at any time set free a dangerous rival to dispute his authority. These treaties she suf-

[c] Cald. iii. 589.

fered to proceed to what length she pleased, and never wanted a pretence for breaking them off, when they became no longer necessary. The treaty now on foot was not, perhaps, more sincere than many which preceded it; the reasons, however, which rendered it ineffectual were far from being frivolous. 1584.

As Crichton, a jesuit, was sailing from Flanders towards Scotland, the ship on board of which he was a passenger happened to be chased by pirates, who, in that age, often infested the narrow seas. Crichton, in great confusion, tore in pieces some papers in his custody, and threw them away; but, by a very extraordinary accident, the wind blew them back into the ship, and they were immediately taken up by some of the passengers, who carried them to Wade, the clerk of the privy council. He, with great industry and patience, joined them together, and they were found to contain the account of a plot, said to have been formed by the king of Spain and the duke of Guise, for invading England. The people were not yet recovered from the fear and anxiety occasioned by the conspiracy in which Throkmorton had been engaged; and as his discoveries appeared now to be confirmed by additional evidence, not only all their former apprehensions recurred, but the consternation became general and excessive. As all the dangers, with which England had been threatened for some years, flowed either immediately from Mary herself, or from such as made use of her name to justify their insurrections and conspiracies, this gradually diminished the compassion due to her situation, and the English, instead of pitying, began to fear and to hate her. Elizabeth, under whose wise and pacific reign the English enjoyed tranquillity, and had opened sources of wealth unknown to their ancestors, was extremely beloved by all her people; and regard to her safety, not less than to their own interest, animated them against the Scottish queen. In order to discourage her adherents, it was thought ne- New conspiracy against Elizabeth

occasions an association in op-

1584. cessary to convince them, by some public deed, of the attachment of the English to their own sovereign, and that any attempt against her life would prove fatal to her rival. With this view an 'association' was framed, the subscribers of which bound themselves by the most solemn oaths, "to defend the queen against all her enemies, foreign and domestic; and if violence should be offered to her life, in order to favour the title of any pretender to the crown, they not only engaged never to allow or acknowledge the person or persons by whom, or for whom, such a detestable act should be committed, but vowed, in the presence of the eternal God, to prosecute such person or persons to the death, and to pursue them, with their utmost vengeance, to their utter overthrow and extirpation[f]." Persons of all ranks subscribed this combination with the greatest eagerness and unanimity[g].

position to Mary, October 19.

Mary considered this association, not only as an avowed design to exclude her from all right of succession, but as the certain and immediate forerunner of her destruction. In order to avert this, she made such feeble efforts as were still in her power, and sent Naué, her secretary, to court, with offers of more entire resignation to the will of Elizabeth, in every point, which had been the occasion of their long enmity, than all her sufferings hitherto had been able to extort[h]. But whether Mary adhered inflexibly to her privileges as an independent sovereign, or, yielding to the necessity of her situation, endeavoured, by concessions, to sooth her rival, she was equally unsuccessful. Her firmness was imputed to obstinacy, or to the secret hope of foreign assistance; her concessions were either believed to be insincere, or to flow from the fear of some imminent danger. Her present willingness, however, to comply with any terms was so great, that Walsingham warmly urged his mistress to come to a final

which greatly alarms her.

[f] State Trials, i. 122. [g] Camd. 409. [h] Idem. ibid.

agreement with her[i]. But Elizabeth was persuaded, that it was the spirit raised by the association which had rendered her so passive and compliant. She always imagined that there was something mysterious and deceitful in all Mary's actions, and suspected her of carrying on a dangerous correspondence with the English catholics, both within and without the kingdom. Nor were her suspicions altogether void of foundation. Mary had, about this time, written a letter to sir Francis Inglefield, urging him to hasten the execution of what she calls the 'great plot or designment,' without hesitating on account of any danger in which it might involve her life, which she would most willingly part with, if, by that sacrifice, she could procure relief for so great a number of the oppressed children of the church[k]. Instead, therefore, of hearkening to the overtures which the Scottish queen made, or granting any mitigation of the hardships of which she complained, Elizabeth resolved to take her out of the hands of the earl of Shrewsbury, and to appoint sir Amias Paulet and sir Drue Drury to be her keepers. Shrewsbury had discharged his trust with great fidelity, during fifteen years, but, at the same time, had treated Mary with gentleness and respect, and had always sweetened harsh commands by the humanity with which he put them in execution. The same politeness was not to be expected from men of an inferior rank, whose severe vigilance, perhaps, was their chief recommendation to that employment, and the only merit by which they could pretend to gain favour or preferment[l]. 1584. She is treated with greater rigour.

As James was no less eager than ever to deprive the banished nobles of Elizabeth's protection, he appointed the master of Gray his ambassador to the court of England, and intrusted him with the conduct of a negotiation for that purpose. For this honour he was indebted Gray, a new favourite of the king's.

[i] See Appendix, No. XLIV. [k] Strype, iii. 246. [l] Camd. 500.

1584. to the envy and jealousy of the earl of Arran. Gray possessed all the talents of a courtier; a graceful person, an insinuating address, boundless ambition, and a restless and intriguing spirit. During his residence in France, he had been admitted into the most intimate familiarity with the duke of Guise, and, in order to gain his favour, had renounced the protestant religion, and professed the utmost zeal for the captive queen, who carried on a secret correspondence with him, from which she expected great advantages. On his return into Scotland, he paid court to James with extraordinary assiduity, and his accomplishments did not fail to make their usual impression on the king's heart. Arran, who had introduced him, began quickly to dread his growing favour; and flattering himself, that absence would efface any sentiments of tenderness, which were forming in the mind of a young prince, pointed him out, by his malicious praises, as the most proper person in the kingdom for an embassy of such importance, and contributed to raise him to that high dignity, in order to hasten his fall. Elizabeth, who had an admirable dexterity in discovering the proper instruments for carrying on her designs, endeavoured, by caresses and by presents, to secure Gray to her interest. The former flattered his vanity, which was great; the latter supplied his profuseness, which was still greater. He abandoned himself without reserve to Elizabeth's direction, and not only undertook to retain the king under the influence of England, but acted as a spy upon the Scottish queen, and betrayed to her rival every secret that he could draw from her by his high pretensions of zeal in her service [m].

His interest with the court of England.

Gray's credit with the English court was extremely galling to the banished nobles. Elizabeth no longer thought of employing her power to restore them; she found it easier to govern Scotland by corrupting the

[m] Strype, iii. 302. Melv. 316.

king's favourites; and, in compliance with Gray's solicitations, she commanded the exiles to leave the north of England, and to remove into the heart of the kingdom. This rendered it difficult for them to hold any correspondence with their partisans in Scotland, and almost impossible to return thither without her permission. Gray, by gaining a point which James had so much at heart, riveted himself more firmly than ever in his favour; and, by acquiring greater reputation, became capable of serving Elizabeth with greater success [n]. 1584. Dec. 31.

Arran had now possessed for some time all the power, the riches, and the honours, that his immoderate ambition could desire, or the fondness of a prince, who set no limits to his liberality towards his favourites, could bestow. The office of lord chancellor, the highest and most important in the kingdom, was conferred upon him, even during the life of the earl of Argyll, who succeeded Athol in that dignity [o]; and the public beheld, with astonishment and indignation, a man educated as a soldier of fortune, ignorant of law, and a contemner of justice, appointed to preside in parliament, in the privy council, in the court of session, and intrusted with the supreme disposal of the property of his fellow-subjects. He was, at the same time, governor of the castles of Stirling and Edinburgh, the two principal forts in Scotland; provost of the city of Edinburgh; and as if by all these accumulated dignities his merits were not sufficiently recompensed, he had been created lieutenant general over the whole kingdom. No person was admitted into the king's presence without his permission; no favour could be obtained but by his mediation. James, occupied with youthful amusements, devolved upon him the whole regal authority. Such unmerited elevation increased his natural arrogance, and rendered it intolerable. He was no longer 1585. Arran's corruption and insolence.

[n] Cald. iii. 643. [o] Crawf. Offic. of State, Append. 447.

1585. content with the condition of a subject, but pretended to derive his pedigree from Murdo, duke of Albany; and boasted openly, that his title to the crown was preferable to that of the king himself. But, together with these thoughts of royalty, he retained the meanness suitable to his primitive indigence. His venality as a judge was scandalous, and was exceeded only by that of his wife, who, in defiance of decency, made herself a party in almost every suit which came to be decided, employed her influence to corrupt or overawe the judges, and almost openly dictated their decisions [p]. His rapaciousness as a minister was insatiable. Not satisfied with the revenues of so many offices; with the estate and honours which belonged to the family of Hamilton; or with the greater part of Gowrie's lands, which had fallen to his share; he grasped at the possessions of several of the nobles. He required lord Maxwell to exchange part of his estate, for the forfeited lands of Kinneil; and because he was unwilling to quit an ancient inheritance for a possession so precarious, he stirred up against him his hereditary rival, the laird of Johnston, and involved that corner of the kingdom in a civil war. He committed to prison the earl of Athol, lord Home, and the master of Cassils; the first, because he would not divorce his wife, the daughter of the earl of Gowrie, and entail his estate on him; the second, because he was unwilling to part with some lands adjacent to one of Arran's estates; and the third, for refusing to lend him money. His spies and informers filled the whole country, and intruded themselves into every company. The nearest neighbours distrusted and feared each other. All familiar society was at an end. Even the common intercourses of humanity were interrupted, no man knowing in whom to confide, or where to utter his complaints. There is not, perhaps, in history an example of a minister so

[p] Cald. iii. 331. Scotstarvet's Staggering State, 7.

universally detestable to a nation, or who more justly deserved its detestation[q]. 1585.

Arran, notwithstanding, regardless of the sentiments and despising the murmurs of the people, gave a loose to his natural temper, and proceeded to acts still more violent. David Home of Argaty, and Patrick his brother, having received letters from one of the banished lords, about private business, were condemned and put to death, for holding correspondence with rebels. Cunninghame of Drumwhasel, and Douglas of Mains, two gentlemen of honour and reputation, were accused of having conspired with the exiled nobles to seize the king's person. A single witness only appeared; the evidence they produced of their innocence was unanswerable; their accuser himself not long after acknowledged that he had been suborned by Arran; and all men believed the charge against them to be groundless: they were found guilty, notwithstanding, and suffered the death of traitors[r]. Feb. 9.

About the same time that these gentlemen were punished for a pretended conspiracy, Elizabeth's life was endangered by a real one. Parry, a doctor of laws, and a member of the house of commons, a man vain and fantastic, but of a resolute spirit, had lately been reconciled to the church of Rome; and, fraught with the zeal of a new convert, he offered to demonstrate the sincerity of his attachment to the religion which he had embraced, by killing Elizabeth. Cardinal Allen had published a book, to prove the murder of an excommunicated prince to be not only lawful, but a meritorious action. The pope's nuncio at Venice, the jesuits both there and at Paris, the English exiles, all approved of the design. The pope himself exhorted him to persevere; and granted him for his encouragement a plenary indulgence, and remission of his sins. Cardinal di Como wrote to him a letter to the same Parry's conspiracy against Elizabeth.

[q] Spotsw. 337, 338. [r] Ibid. 338. Cald. iii. 794.

1585. purpose; but though he often got access to the queen, fear, or some remaining sense of duty, restrained him from perpetrating the crime. Happily his intention was at last discovered by Nevil, the only person in England to whom he had communicated it; and having himself voluntarily confessed his guilt, he suffered the punishment which it deserved[s].

March 2.

A severe statute, which proved fatal to Mary.

These repeated conspiracies against their sovereign awakened the indignation of the English parliament, and produced a very extraordinary statute, which, in the end, proved fatal to the queen of Scots. By this law the association in defence of Elizabeth's life was ratified; and it was further enacted, "That if any rebellion shall be excited in the kingdom, or any thing attempted to the hurt of her majesty's person, 'by or for' any person pretending a title to the crown, the queen shall empower twenty-four persons, by a commission under the great seal, to examine into, and pass sentence upon, such offences; and after judgment given, a proclamation shall be issued, declaring the persons whom they find guilty, excluded from any right to the crown; and her majesty's subjects may lawfully pursue every one of them to the death, with all their aiders and abettors; and if any design against the life of the queen take effect, the persons 'by or for' whom such a detestable act is executed, and 'their issues,' being in any wise assenting or privy to the same, shall be disabled for ever from pretending to the crown, and be pursued to death in the like manner[t]." This act was plainly levelled at the queen of Scots; and, whether we consider it as a voluntary expression of the zeal and concern of the nation for Elizabeth's safety, or whether we impute it to the influence which that artful princess preserved over her parliaments, it is no easy matter to reconcile it with the general principles of justice or humanity. Mary was thereby rendered accountable

[s] State Trials, i. 103. [t] Ibid. i. 123.

not only for her own actions, but for those of others; in consequence of which, she might forfeit her right of succession, and even her life itself. 1585.

Mary justly considered this act as a warning to prepare for the worst extremities. Elizabeth's ministers, it is probable, had resolved by this time to take away her life; and suffered books to be published, in order to persuade the nation that this cruel and unprecedented measure was not only necessary, but just[u]. Even that short period of her days which remained, they rendered uncomfortable, by every hardship and indignity which it was in their power to inflict. Almost all her servants were dismissed, she was treated no longer with the respect due to a queen; and, though the rigour of seventeen years' imprisonment had broken her constitution, she was confined to two ruinous chambers, scarcely habitable, even in the middle of summer, by reason of cold. Notwithstanding the scantiness of her revenue, she had been accustomed to distribute regularly some alms among the poor in the village adjoining to the castle. Paulet now refused her liberty to perform this pious and humane office, which had afforded her great consolation amidst her own sufferings. The castle in which she resided was converted into a common prison; and a young man, suspected of popery, was confined there, and treated under her eye with such rigour, that he died of the ill usage. She often complained to Elizabeth of these multiplied injuries, and expostulated as became a woman and a queen; but as no political reason now obliged that princess to amuse her any longer with fallacious hopes, far from granting her any redress, she did not even deign to give her any answer. The king of France, closely allied to Elizabeth, on whom he depended for assistance against his rebellious subjects, was afraid of espousing Mary's cause with any warmth; and all his

The rigour, with which she was treated, increased.

[u] Strype, iii. 299.

1586. solicitations in her behalf were feeble, formal, and inefficacious. But Castelnau, the French ambassador, whose compassion and zeal for the unhappy queen supplied the defects in his instructions, remonstrated with such vigour against the indignities to which she was exposed, that, by his importunity, he prevailed at length to have her removed to Tuthbury; though she was confined the greater part of another winter in her present wretched habitation[x].

A breach between Mary and her son.

Neither the insults of her enemies, nor the neglect of her friends, made such an impression on Mary, as the ingratitude of her son. James had hitherto treated his mother with filial respect, and had even entered into negotiations with her, which gave umbrage to Elizabeth. But as it was not the interest of the English queen that his good correspondence should continue, Gray, who, on his return to Scotland, found his favour with the king greatly increased by the success of his embassy, persuaded him to write a harsh and undutiful letter to his mother, in which he expressly refused to acknowledge her to be queen of Scotland, or to consider his affairs as connected, in any wise, with hers. This cruel requital of her maternal tenderness

March 24. overwhelmed Mary with sorrow and despair. "Was it for this," said she, in a letter to the French ambassador, "that I have endured so much, in order to preserve for him the inheritance to which I have a just right? I am far from envying his authority in Scotland. I desire no power there; nor wish to set my foot in that kingdom, if it were not for the pleasure of once embracing a son, whom I have hitherto loved with too tender affection. Whatever he either enjoys or expects, he derived it from me. From him I never received assistance, supply, or benefit of any kind. Let not my allies treat him any longer as a king: he holds that dignity by my consent; and if a speedy repentance

[x] Jebb, vol. ii. 576—598.

do not appease my just resentment, I will load him with a parent's curse, and surrender my crown, with all my pretensions, to one who will receive them with gratitude, and defend them with vigour[y]." The love which James bore to his mother, whom he had never known, and whom he had been early taught to consider as one of the most abandoned persons of her sex, cannot be supposed ever to have been ardent; and he did not now take any pains to regain her favour. But whether her indignation at his undutiful behaviour, added to her bigoted attachment to popery, prompted Mary at any time to think seriously of disinheriting her son; or whether these threatenings were uttered in a sudden sally of disappointed affection, it is now no easy matter to determine. Some papers which are still extant seem to render the former not improbable[z]. 1585.

Cares of another kind, and no less disquieting, occupied Elizabeth's thoughts. The calm which she had long enjoyed, seemed now to be at an end; and such storms were gathering in every quarter, as filled her with just alarm. All the neighbouring nations had undergone revolutions extremely to her disadvantage. The great qualities which Henry the third had displayed in his youth, and which raised the expectations of his subjects so high, vanished on his ascending the throne; and his acquiring supreme power seems not only to have corrupted his heart, but to have impaired his understanding. He soon lost the esteem and affection of the nation; and a life divided between the austerities of a superstitious devotion, and the extravagancies of the most dissolute debauchery, rendered him as contemptible as he was odious on account of his rapaciousness, his profusion, and the fondness with which he doted on many unworthy minions. On the death of his only brother, those sentiments of the people burst out with violence. Henry had no children, Dangerous situation of Elizabeth;

[y] Murdin, 566. Jebb, ii. 571. See Appendix, No. XLV.

[z] See Appendix, No. XLVI.

1585. and though but thirty-two years of age, the succession of the crown was already considered as open. The king of Navarre, a distant descendant of the royal family, but the undoubted heir to the crown, was a zealous protestant. The prospect of an event so fatal to their religion, as his ascending the throne of France, alarmed all the catholics in Europe; and induced the duke of Guise, countenanced by the pope, and aided by the king of Spain, to appear as the defender of the Romish faith, and the asserter of the cardinal of Bourbon's right to the crown. In order to unite the party, a bond of confederacy was formed, distinguished by the name of the 'holy league.' All ranks of men joined in it with emulation. The spirit spread with the irresistible rapidity which was natural to religious passions in that age. The destruction of the reformation, not only in France, but all over Europe, seemed to be the object and wish of the whole party; and the duke of Guise, the head of this mighty and zealous body, acquired authority in the kingdom, far superior to that which the king himself possessed. Philip the second, by the conquest of Portugal, had greatly increased the naval power of Spain, and had at last reduced under his dominion all that portion of the continent which lies beyond the Pyrenean mountains, and which nature seems to have destined to form one great monarchy. William, prince of Orange, who first encouraged the inhabitants of the Netherlands to assert their liberties, and whose wisdom and valour formed and protected the rising commonwealth, had fallen by the hands of an assassin. The superior genius of the prince of Parma had given an entire turn to the fate of war in the Low Countries; all his enterprises, concerted with consummate skill, and executed with equal bravery, had been attended with success; and the Dutch, reduced to the last extremity, were on the point of falling under the dominion of their ancient master.

from the progress of the league;

from the power of Philip the second.

None of those circumstances, to which Elizabeth had

hitherto owed her security, existed any longer. She could derive no advantage from the jealousy which had subsisted between France and Spain; Philip, by means of his confederacy with the duke of Guise, had an equal sway in the councils of both kingdoms. The hugonots were unable to contend with the power of the league; and little could be expected from any diversion which they might create. Nor was it probable that the Netherlands could long employ the arms, or divide the strength, of Spain. In this situation of the affairs of Europe, it became necessary for Elizabeth to form a new plan of conduct; and her wisdom in forming it was not greater than the vigour with which she carried it on. The measures most suitable to her natural temper, and which she had hitherto pursued, were cautious and safe; those which she now adopted were enterprising and hazardous. She preferred peace, but was not afraid of war; and was capable, when compelled by necessity, not only of defending herself with spirit, but of attacking her enemies with a boldness which averted danger from her own dominions. She immediately furnished the hugonots with a considerable supply in money. She carried on a private negotiation with Henry the third, who, though compelled to join the league, hated the leaders of it, and wished for their destruction. She openly undertook the protection of the Dutch commonwealth, and sent a powerful army to its assistance. She endeavoured to form a general confederacy of the protestant princes, in opposition to the popish league. She determined to proceed with the utmost rigour against the queen of Scots, whose sufferings and rights afforded her enemies a specious pretence for invading her dominions. She resolved to redouble her endeavours, in order to effect a closer union with Scotland, and to extend and perpetuate her influence over the councils of that nation.

1585. Her wise and vigorous conduct.

Resolves to punish Mary, and to gain the king.

She found it no difficult matter to induce most of

1585. the Scottish courtiers to promote all her designs. Gray, sir John Maitland, who had been advanced to the office of secretary, which his brother formerly held, sir Lewis Bellenden, the justice clerk, who had succeeded Gray as the king's resident at London, were the persons in whom she chiefly confided. In order
May 29. to direct and quicken their motions, she despatched sir Edward Wotton along with Bellenden into Scotland. This man was gay, well-bred, and entertaining; he excelled in all the exercises for which James had a passion, and amused the young king by relating the adventures which he had met with, and the observations he had made, during a long residence in foreign countries; but, under the veil of these superficial qualities, he concealed a dangerous and intriguing spirit. He soon grew into high favour with James; and, while he was seemingly attentive only to pleasure and diversions, he acquired influence over the public councils, to a degree which was indecent for a stranger to possess[a].

Proposes a league with Scotland. Nothing, however, could be more acceptable to the nation, than the proposal which he made of a strict alliance between the two kingdoms, in defence of the reformed religion. The rapid and alarming progress of the popish league seemed to call on all protestant princes to unite for the preservation of their common
July 29. faith. James embraced the overture with warmth, and a convention of estates empowered him to conclude such a treaty, and engaged to ratify it in parliament[b]. The alacrity with which James concurred in this measure must not be wholly ascribed either to his own zeal, or to Wotton's address; it was owing in part to Elizabeth's liberality. As a mark of her motherly affection for the young king, she settled on him an annual pension of five thousand pounds; the same sum which her father had allotted her, before she as-

[a] Melv. 317. [b] Spotsw. 339.

cended the throne. This circumstance, which she took care to mention, rendered a sum, which in that age was far from being inconsiderable, a very acceptable present to the king, whose revenues, during a long minority, had been almost totally dissipated [c]. 1585.

But the chief object of Wotton's intrigues was to ruin Arran. While a minion so odious to the nation continued to govern the king, his assistance could be of little advantage to Elizabeth. And though Arran, ever since his interview with Hunsdon, had appeared extremely for her interest, she could place no great confidence in a man whose conduct was so capricious and irregular, and who, notwithstanding his protestations to the contrary, still continued a secret correspondence both with Mary and with the duke of Guise. The banished lords were attached to England from affection as well as principle, and were the only persons among the Scots whom, in any dangerous exigency, she could thoroughly trust. Before Bellenden left London, they had been summoned thither, under colour of vindicating themselves from his accusations, but, in reality, to concert with him the most proper measures for restoring them to their country. Wotton pursued this plan, and endeavoured to ripen it for execution; and it was greatly facilitated by an event neither uncommon nor considerable. Sir John Forster, and Ker of Ferniherst, the English and Scottish wardens of the middle marches, having met, according to the custom of the borders, about midsummer, a fray arose, and lord Russel, the earl of Bedford's eldest son, happened to be killed. This scuffle was purely accidental; but Elizabeth chose to consider it as a design formed by Ker, at the instigation of Arran, to involve the two kingdoms in war. She insisted that both should be delivered up to her; and though James eluded that demand, he was obliged to confine Arran in St. An- Undermines Arran's power.

[c] Cald. iii. 505.

1585. drew's, and Ker in Aberdeen. During his absence from court, Wotton and his associates carried on their intrigues without interruption. By their advice, the banished nobles endeavoured to accommodate their differences with lord John and lord Claud, the duke of Chatelherault's two sons, whom Morton's violence had driven out of the kingdom. Their common sufferings, and common interest, induced both parties to bury in oblivion the ancient discord which had subsisted between the houses of Hamilton and Douglas. By Elizabeth's permission, they returned in a body to the borders of Scotland. Arran, who had again recovered favour, insisted on putting the kingdom in a posture of defence; but Gray, Bellenden, and Maitland, secretly thwarted all his measures. Some necessary orders they prevented from being issued; others they rendered ineffectual by the manner of execution; and all of them were obeyed slowly, and with reluctance[d].

Assists the banished nobles.

Oct. 16.

Wotton's fertile brain was, at the same time, big with another and more dangerous plot. He had contrived to seize the king, and to carry him by force into England. But the design was happily discovered; and, in order to avoid the punishment which his treachery merited, he departed without taking leave[e].

They return into Scotland, and are reconciled to the king.

Meanwhile, the banished lords hastened the execution of their enterprise; and, as their friends and vassals were now ready to join them, they entered Scotland. Wherever they came, they were welcomed as the deliverers of their country, and the most fervent prayers were addressed to heaven for the success of their arms. They advanced, without losing a moment, towards Stirling, at the head of ten thousand men. The king, though he had assembled an army superior in number, could not venture to meet them in the field,

[d] Spotsw. 340. [e] Melv. 335.

with troops whose loyalty was extremely dubious, and who, at best, were far from being hearty in the cause; nor was either the town or castle provided for a siege. The gates, however, of both were shut, and the nobles encamped at St. Ninian's. That same night they surprised the town, or, more probably, it was betrayed into their hands; and Arran, who had undertaken to defend it, was obliged to save himself by a precipitate flight. Next morning they invested the castle, in which there were not provisions for twenty-four hours; and James was necessitated immediately to hearken to terms of accommodation. They were not so elated with success, as to urge extravagant demands, nor was the king unwilling to make every reasonable concession. They obtained a pardon, in the most ample form, of all the offences which they had committed; the principal forts in the kingdom were, by way of security, put into their hands; Crawford, Montrose, and colonel Stewart, were removed from the king's presence; and a parliament was called, in order to establish tranquillity in the nation[f]. 1585. Nov. 2.

Though a great majority in this parliament consisted of the confederate nobles and their adherents, they were far from discovering a vindictive spirit. Satisfied with procuring an act, restoring them to their ancient honours and estates, and ratifying the pardon granted by the king, they seemed willing to forget all past errours in the administration, and spared James the mortification of seeing his ministers branded with any public note of infamy. Arran alone, deprived of all his honours, stripped of his borrowed spoils, and declared an enemy to his country by public proclamation, sunk back into obscurity, and must henceforth be mentioned by his primitive title of captain James Stewart. As he had been, during his unmerited prosperity, the object of the hatred and indignation of his countrymen, they A parliament. Dec. 10.

[f] Cald. iii. 795.

1585. beheld his fall without pity, nor did all his sufferings mitigate their resentment in the least degree.

Church affairs. The clergy were the only body of men who obtained no redress of their grievances by this revolution. The confederate nobles had all along affected to be considered as guardians of the privileges and discipline of the church. In all their manifestos they had declared their resolution to restore these, and by that popular pretence had gained many friends. It was now natural to expect some fruit of these promises, and some returns of gratitude towards many of the most eminent preachers who had suffered in their cause, and who demanded the repeal of the laws passed the preceding year. The king, however, was resolute to maintain these laws in full authority; and as the nobles were extremely solicitous not to disgust him, by insisting on any disagreeable request, the claims of the church in this, as well as in many other instances, were sacrificed to the interest of the laity. The ministers gave vent to their indignation in the pulpit, and their impatience under the disappointment broke out in some expressions extremely disrespectful even towards the king himself[s].

The archbishop of St. Andrew's, too, felt the effects of their anger. The provincial synod of Fife summoned him to appear, and to answer for his contempt of the decrees of former assemblies, in presuming to exercise the functions of a bishop. Though he refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the court, and appealed from it to the king, a sentence of excommunication, equally indecent and irregular, was pronounced against him. Adamson, with no less indecency, thundered his archiepiscopal excommunication against Melvil, and some other of his opponents.

April 13. Soon after, a general assembly was held, in which the king, with some difficulty, obtained an act, per-

[s] Spotsw. 343.

mitting the name and office of bishop still to continue in the church. The power of the order, however, was considerably retrenched. The exercise of discipline, and the inspection of the life and doctrine of the clergy, were committed to presbyteries, in which bishops should be allowed no other preeminence but that of presiding as perpetual moderators. They themselves were declared to be subject, in the same manner as other pastors, to the jurisdiction of the general assembly. As the discussion of the archbishop's appeal might have kindled unusual heats in the assembly, that affair was terminated by a compromise. He renounced any claim of supremacy over the church, and promised to demean himself suitably to the character of a bishop, as described by St. Paul. The assembly, without examining the foundations of the sentence of excommunication, declared that it should be held of no effect, and restored him to all the privileges which he enjoyed before it was pronounced. Notwithstanding the extraordinary tenderness shown for the honour of the synod, and the delicacy and respect with which its jurisdiction was treated, several members were so zealous as to protest against this decision [h]. 1586.

The court of Scotland was now filled with persons so warmly attached to Elizabeth, that the league between the two kingdoms, which had been proposed last year, met with no interruption, but from d'Esneval, the French envoy. James himself first offered to renew the negotiations. Elizabeth did not suffer such a favourable opportunity to slip, and instantly despatched Randolph to conclude a treaty, which she so much desired. The danger to which the protestant religion was exposed, by the late combination of the popish powers for its destruction, and the necessity of a strict confederacy among those who had embraced the reformation, in order to obstruct their pernicious designs, A league with England concluded. July 5.

[h] Cald. iii. 894. Spotsw. 346.

1586. were mentioned as the foundation of the league. The chief articles in it were, that both parties should bind themselves to defend the evangelical religion; that the league should be offensive and defensive against all who shall endeavour to disturb the exercise of religion in either kingdom; that if one of the two parties be invaded, the other, notwithstanding any former alliance, should not, directly or indirectly, assist the invader; that if England be invaded in any part remote from Scotland, James should assist the queen with two thousand horse and five thousand foot; that if the enemy landed or approached within sixty miles of Scotland, the king should take the field with his whole forces, in the same manner as he would do in defence of his own kingdom. Elizabeth, in return, undertook to act in defence of Scotland, if it should be invaded. At the same time she assured the king that no step should be taken, which might derogate in any degree from his pretensions to the English crown[i]. Elizabeth expressed great satisfaction with a treaty, which rendered Scotland an useful ally, instead of a dangerous neighbour, and afforded her a degree of security on that side, which all her ancestors had aimed at, but none of them had been able to obtain. Zeal for religion, together with the blessings of peace, which both kingdoms had enjoyed during a considerable period, had so far abated the violence of national antipathy, that the king's conduct was universally acceptable to his own people[k].

The acquittal of Archibald Douglas, at this time, exposed James to much and deserved censure. This man was deeply engaged in the conspiracy against the life of the king his father. Both Morton and Binny, one of his own servants, who suffered for that crime, had accused him of being present at the murder[l]. He

[i] Spotsw. 351.
[k] Camd. 513.
[l] See Appendix, No. XLVII. Arnot, Crim. Trials, 7, etc.

had escaped punishment by flying into England, and James had often required Elizabeth to deliver up a person so unworthy of her protection. He now obtained a license, from the king himself, to return into Scotland; and, after undergoing a mock trial, calculated to conceal rather than to detect his guilt, he was not only taken into favour by the king, but sent back to the court of England, with the honourable character of his ambassador. James was now of such an age, that his youth and inexperience cannot be pleaded in excuse for this indecent transaction. It must be imputed to the excessive facility of his temper, which often led him to gratify his courtiers at the expense of his own dignity and reputation[m]. 1586.

Not long after, the inconsiderate affection of the English catholics towards Mary, and their implacable resentment against Elizabeth, gave rise to a conspiracy which proved fatal to the one queen, left an indelible stain on the reputation of the other, and presented a spectacle to Europe, of which there had been hitherto no example in the history of mankind. Rise of Babington's conspiracy against Elizabeth.

Doctor Gifford, Gilbert Gifford, and Hodgson, priests educated in the seminary at Rheims, had adopted an extravagant and enthusiastic notion, that the bull of Pius the fifth, against Elizabeth, was dictated immediately by the Holy Ghost. This wild opinion they instilled into Savage, an officer in the Spanish army, noted for his furious zeal and daring courage; and persuaded him that no service could be so acceptable to heaven, as to take away the life of an excommunicated heretic. Savage, eager to obtain the crown of martyrdom, bound himself by a solemn vow to kill Elizabeth. Ballard, a pragmatical priest of that seminary, had at that time come over to Paris, and solicited Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador there, to procure an invasion of England, while the affairs of the league April 26.

[m] Spotsw. 348. Cald. iii. 917.

1586. were so prosperous, and the kingdom left naked, by sending so many of the queen's best troops into the Netherlands. Paget and the English exiles demonstrated the fruitlessness of such an attempt, unless Elizabeth were first cut off, or the invaders secured of a powerful concurrence on their landing. If it could be hoped that either of these events would happen, effectual aid was promised; and in the mean time Ballard was sent back to renew his intrigues.

May 15. He communicated his designs to Anthony Babington, a young gentleman in Derbyshire, of a large fortune and many amiable qualities, who having contracted, during his residence in France, a familiarity with the archbishop of Glasgow, had been recommended by him to the queen of Scots. He concurred with Paget, in considering the death of Elizabeth as a necessary preliminary to any invasion. Ballard gave him hopes that an end would soon be put to her days, and imparted to him Savage's vow, who was now in London waiting for an opportunity to strike the blow. But Babington thought the attempt of too much importance, to rely on a single hand for the execution of it, and proposed that five resolute gentlemen should be joined with Savage in an enterprise, the success of which was the foundation of all their hopes. He offered to find out persons willing to undertake the service, whose honour, secrecy, and courage, they might safely trust. He accordingly opened the matter to Edward Windsor, Thomas Salisbury, Charles Tinley, Chidioc Tichbourne, Robert Gage, John Travers, Robert Barnwell, John Charnock, Henry Dun, John Jones, and Robert Polly; all of them, except Polly, whose bustling forward zeal introduced him into their society, gentlemen of good families, united together in the bonds of private friendship, strengthened by the more powerful tie of religious zeal. Many consultations were held; their plan of operations was at last settled; and

June. their different parts assigned. Babington himself was

appointed to rescue the queen of Scots; Salisbury, with some others, undertook to excite several counties to take arms; the murder of the queen, the most dangerous and important service of all, fell to Tichbourne and Savage, with four associates. So totally had their bigoted prejudices extinguished the principles of honour, and the sentiments of humanity suitable to their rank, that, without scruple or compunction, they undertook an action which is viewed with horrour, even when committed by the meanest and most profligate of mankind. This attempt, on the contrary, appeared to them no less honourable than it was desperate; and in order to perpetuate the memory of it, they had a picture drawn, containing the portraits of the six assassins, with that of Babington in the middle, and a motto intimating that they were jointly embarked in some hazardous design. 1586. The scheme of the conspirators.

The conspirators, as appears by this wanton and imprudent instance of vanity, seem to have thought a discovery hardly possible, and neither distrusted the fidelity of their companions, nor doubted the success of their undertaking. But while they believed that their machinations were carried on with the most profound and impenetrable secrecy, every step they took was fully known to Walsingham. Polly was one of his spies, and had entered into the conspiracy with no other design than to betray his associates. Gilbert Gifford too, having been sent over to England to quicken the motions of the conspirators, had been gained by Walsingham, and gave him sure intelligence of all their projects. That vigilant minister immediately imparted the discoveries which he had made to Elizabeth; and, without communicating the matter to any other of the counsellors, they agreed, in order to understand the plot more perfectly, to wait until it was ripened into some form, and brought near the point of execution. Discovered by Walsingham.

At last, Elizabeth thought it dangerous and criminal

1586. to expose her own life, and to tempt providence any farther. Ballard, the prime mover in the whole conspiracy, was arrested. His associates, disconcerted and struck with astonishment, endeavoured to save themselves by flight. But within a few days, all of them, except Windsor, were seized in different places of the kingdom, and committed to the Tower. Though they had undertaken the part, they wanted the firm and determined spirit of assassins; and, influenced by fear or by hope, at once confessed all that they knew. The indignation of the people, and their impatience to revenge such an execrable combination against the life of their sovereign, hastened their trial, and all of them suffered the death of traitors [n].

They are seized and punished. August 4.

Sept. 20.

Thus far Elizabeth's conduct may be pronounced both prudent and laudable, nor can she be accused of violating any law of humanity, or of taking any precautions beyond what were necessary for her own safety. But a tragical scene followed, with regard to which posterity will pass a very different judgment.

Mary is accused of being an accomplice in the conspiracy.

The frantic zeal of a few rash young men accounts sufficiently for all the wild and wicked designs which they had formed. But this was not the light in which Elizabeth and her ministers chose to place the conspiracy. They wished to persuade the nation, that Babington and his associates should be considered merely as instruments employed by the queen of Scots, the real though secret author of so many attempts against the life of Elizabeth, and the peace of her kingdoms. They produced letters, which they ascribed to her, in support of this charge. These, as they gave out, had come into their hands by the following singular and mysterious method of conveyance. Gifford, on his return into England, had been trusted by some of the exiles with letters to Mary; but, in order to make a trial of his fidelity and address, they were

[n] Camd. 515. State Trials, vol. i. 110.

only blank papers made up in that form. These being safely delivered by him, he was afterwards employed without further scruple. Walsingham having found means to gain this man, he, by the permission of that minister, and the connivance of Paulet, bribed a tradesman in the neighbourhood of Chartley, whither Mary had been conveyed, who deposited the letters in a hole in the wall of the castle, covered with a loose stone. Thence they were taken by the queen, and in the same manner her answers returned. All these were carried to Walsingham, opened by him, deciphered, sealed again so dexterously that the fraud could not be perceived, and then transmitted to the persons to whom they were directed. Two letters to Babington, with several to Mendoza, Paget, Englefield, and the English fugitives, were procured by this artifice. It was given out, that in these letters Mary approved of the conspiracy, and even of the assassination; that she directed them to proceed with the utmost circumspection, and not to take arms, until foreign auxiliaries were ready to join them; that she recommended the earl of Arundel, his brothers, and the young earl of Northumberland, as proper persons to conduct and to add reputation to their enterprise; that she advised them, if possible, to excite at the same time some commotion in Ireland; and, above all, besought them to concert with care the means of her own escape, suggesting to them several expedients for that purpose. 1586.

The indignation of the English against her on that account.

All these circumstances were opened at the trial of the conspirators; and while the nation was under the influence of those terrours which the association had raised, and the late danger had augmented, they were believed without hesitation or inquiry, and spread a general alarm. Mary's zeal for her religion was well known; and, in that age, examples of the violent and sanguinary spirit which it inspired were numerous. All the cabals against the peace of the kingdom for many years had been carried on in her name; and it now

1586. appears evidently, said the English, that the safety of the one queen is incompatible with that of the other. Why then, added they, should the tranquillity of England be sacrificed for the sake of a stranger? Why is a life so dear to the nation, exposed to the repeated assaults of an exasperated rival? The case supposed in the association has now happened, the sacred person of our sovereign has been threatened, and why should not an injured people execute that just vengeance which they had vowed?

Elizabeth resolves to proceed to the utmost extremities against her.

No sentiments could be more agreeable than these to Elizabeth and her ministers. They themselves had at first propagated them among the people, and they now served both as an apology and a motive for their proceeding to such extremities against the Scottish queen as they had long meditated. The more numerous the injuries were which Elizabeth had heaped on Mary, the more she feared and hated that unhappy queen, and came at last to be persuaded that there could be no other security for her own life, but the death of her rival. Burleigh and Walsingham had promoted so zealously all Elizabeth's measures with regard to Scottish affairs, and had acted with so little reserve in opposition to Mary, that they had reason to dread the most violent effects of her resentment, if ever she should mount the throne of England. From this additional consideration they endeavoured, with the utmost earnestness, to hinder an event so fatal to themselves, by confirming their mistress's fear and hatred of the Scottish queen.

Her domestics, papers, etc. seized.

Meanwhile, Mary was guarded with unusual vigilance, and great care was taken to keep her ignorant of the discovery of the conspiracy. Sir Thomas Gorges was at last sent from court to acquaint her both of it, and of the imputation with which she was loaded as accessory to that crime; and he surprised her with the account, just as she had got on horseback to ride out along with her keepers. She was struck with astonish-

ment, and would have returned to her apartment, but she was not permitted; and, in her absence, her private closet was broke open, her cabinet and papers were seized, sealed, and sent up to court. Her principal domestics too were arrested, and committed to different keepers. Naué and Curle, her two secretaries, the one a native of France, the other of Scotland, were carried prisoners to London. All the money in her custody, amounting to little more than two thousand pounds, was secured[o]. And, after leading her about for some days, from one gentleman's house to another, she was conveyed to Fotheringay, a strong castle in Northamptonshire[p]. 1586.

No farther evidence could now be expected against Mary, and nothing remained but to decide what should be her fate. With regard to this, Elizabeth, and those ministers in whom she chiefly confided, seem to have taken their resolution; but there was still great variety of sentiments among her other counsellors. Some thought it sufficient to dismiss all Mary's attendants, and to keep her under such close restraint, as would cut off all possibility of corresponding with the enemies of the kingdom; and as her constitution, broken by long confinement, and her spirit, dejected with so many sorrows, could not long support such an additional load, the queen and nation would soon be delivered from all their fears. But, though it might be easy to secure Mary's own person, it was impossible to diminish the reverence which the Roman catholics had for her name, or to extinguish the compassion with which they viewed her sufferings; while such sentiments continued, insurrections and invasions would never be wanting for her relief, and the only effect of any new rigour would be to render these attempts more frequent and more dangerous. For this reason the expedient was rejected. Deliberates concerning the method of proceeding.

[o] See Appendix, No. XLVIII. [p] Camd. 517.

1586. A public and legal trial, though the most unexampled, was judged the most unexceptionable method of proceeding; and it had, at the same time, a semblance of justice, accompanied with an air of dignity. It was in vain to search the ancient records for any statute or precedent to justify such an uncommon step, as the trial of a foreign prince, who had not entered the kingdom in arms, but had fled thither for refuge. The proceedings against her were founded on the act of last parliament, and by applying it in this manner, the intention of those who had framed that severe statute became more apparent [q].

Determines to try her publicly.

Elizabeth resolved that no circumstance of pomp or solemnity should be wanting, which could render this transaction such as became the dignity of the person to be tried. She appointed, by a commission under the great seal, forty persons, the most illustrious in the kingdom by their birth or offices, together with five of the judges, to hear and decide this great cause. Many difficulties were started by the lawyers about the name and title by which Mary should be arraigned; and while the essentials of justice were so grossly violated, the empty forms of it were the objects of their care. They at length agreed that she should be styled "Mary, daughter and heir of James the fifth, late king of Scots, commonly called queen of Scots, and dowager of France [r]."

After the many indignities which she had lately suffered, Mary could no longer doubt but that her destruction was determined. She expected every moment to end her days by poison, or by some of those secret means usually employed against captive princes. Lest the malice of her enemies, at the same time that it deprived her of life, should endeavour likewise to blast her reputation, she wrote to the duke of Guise, and vindicated herself, in the strongest terms, from the im-

[q] Camd. 519. Johnst. Hist. 113. [r] Strype, iii. 362.

putation of encouraging or of being accessory to the conspiracy for assassinating Elizabeth[a]. In the solitude of her prison, the strange resolution of bringing her to a public trial had not reached her ears, nor did the idea of any thing so unprecedented, and so repugnant to regal majesty, once enter into her thoughts. 1586.

The trial at Fotheringay.

On the eleventh of October, the commissioners appointed by Elizabeth arrived at Fotheringay. Next morning they delivered a letter from their sovereign to Mary, in which, after the bitterest reproaches and accusations, she informed her, that regard for the happiness of the nation had at last rendered it necessary to make a public inquiry into her conduct, and, therefore, required her, as she had lived so long under the protection of the laws of England, to submit now to the trial which they ordained to be taken of her crimes.

Mary refuses at first to plead.

Mary, though surprised at this message, was neither appalled at the danger, nor unmindful of her own dignity. She protested, in the most solemn manner, that she was innocent of the crime laid to her charge, and had never countenanced any attempt against the life of the queen of England; but, at the same time, refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of her commissioners. "I came into the kingdom," said she, "an independent sovereign, to implore the queen's assistance, not to subject myself to her authority. Nor is my spirit so broken by its past misfortunes, or so intimidated by present dangers, as to stoop to any thing unbecoming the majesty of a crowned head, or that will disgrace the ancestors from whom I am descended, and the son to whom I shall leave my throne. If I must be tried, princes alone can be my peers. The queen of England's subjects, however noble their birth may be, are of a rank inferior to mine. Ever since my arrival in this kingdom I have been confined as a prisoner. Its laws never afforded me any protection. Let them not now be perverted, in order to take away my life."

[a] Jebb, ii. 283.

1586. The commissioners employed arguments and entreaties to overcome Mary's resolution. They even threatened to proceed according to the forms of law, and to pass sentence against her on account of her contumacy in refusing to plead; she persisted, however, for two days, to decline their jurisdiction. An argument, used by Hatton, the vicechamberlain, at last prevailed. He told her that, by avoiding a trial, she injured her own reputation, and deprived herself of the only opportunity of setting her innocence in a clear light; and that nothing would be more agreeable to them, or more acceptable to the queen their mistress, than to be convinced, by undoubted evidence, that she had been unjustly loaded with foul aspersions.

Consents, however, to do so. No wonder pretexts so plausible should impose on the unwary queen, or that she, unassisted at that time by any friend or counsellor, should not be able to detect and elude all the artifices of Elizabeth's ablest ministers. In a situation equally melancholy, and under circumstances nearly similar, her grandson, Charles the first, refused, with the utmost firmness, to acknowledge the usurped jurisdiction of the high court of justice; and posterity has approved his conduct, as suitable to the dignity of a king. If Mary was less constant in her resolution, it must be imputed solely to her anxious desire of vindicating her own honour.

Oct. 14. At her appearance before the judges, who were seated in the great hall of the castle, where they received her with much ceremony, she took care to protest, that by condescending to hear and to give an answer to the accusations which should be brought against her, she neither acknowledged the jurisdiction of the court, nor admitted the validity and justice of those acts by which they pretended to try her.

The chancellor, by a counterprotestation, endeavoured to vindicate the authority of the court.

The accusation against her. Then Elizabeth's attorney and solicitor opened the charge against her, with all the circumstances of the

late conspiracy. Copies of Mary's letters to Mendoza, Babington, Englefield, and Paget, were produced. Babington's confession, those of Ballard, Savage, and the other conspirators, together with the declarations of Naué and Curle, her secretaries, were read, and the whole ranged in the most specious order which the art of the lawyers could devise, and heightened by every colour their eloquence could add. 1586.

Mary listened to their harangues attentively, and without emotion. But at the mention of the earl of Arundel's name, who was then confined in the Tower, she broke out into this tender and generous exclamation: "Alas, how much has the noble house of Howard suffered for my sake!"

When the queen's counsel had finished, Mary stood up, and with great magnanimity, and equal presence of mind, began her defence. She bewailed the unhappiness of her own situation, that after a captivity of nineteen years, during which she had suffered treatment no less cruel than unmerited, she was at last loaded with an accusation, which tended not only to rob her of her right of succession, and to deprive her of life itself, but to transmit her name with infamy to future ages: That, without regarding the sacred rights of sovereignty, she was now subjected to laws framed against private persons; though an anointed queen, commanded to appear before the tribunal of subjects; and, like a common criminal, her honour exposed to the petulant tongues of lawyers, capable of wresting her words, and of misrepresenting her actions: That, even in this dishonourable situation, she was denied the privileges usually granted to criminals, and obliged to undertake her own defence, without the presence of any friend with whom to advise, without the aid of counsel, and without the use of her own papers. Her defence.

She then proceeded to the particular articles in the accusation. She absolutely denied any correspondence with Babington or Ballard: copies only of her pre-

1586. tended letters to them were produced; though nothing less than her handwriting or subscription was sufficient to convict her of such an odious crime: no proof could be brought that their letters were delivered into her hands, or that any answer was returned by her direction; the confessions of wretches condemned and executed for such a detestable action, were of little weight; fear or hope might extort from them many things inconsistent with truth, nor ought the honour of a queen to be stained by such vile testimony. The declaration of her secretaries was not more conclusive: promises and threats might easily overcome the resolution of two strangers; in order to screen themselves, they might throw the blame on her; but they could discover nothing to her prejudice, without violating, in the first place, the oath of fidelity which they had sworn to her; and their perjury, in one instance, rendered them unworthy of credit in another: the letters to the Spanish ambassador were either nothing more than copies, or contained only what was perfectly innocent: "I have often," continued she, "made such efforts for the recovery of my liberty, as are natural to a human creature. Convinced, by the sad experience of so many years, that it was vain to expect it from the justice or generosity of the queen of England, I have frequently solicited foreign princes, and called upon all my friends to employ their whole interest for my relief. I have likewise endeavoured to procure for the English catholics some mitigation of the rigour with which they are now treated; and if I could hope, by my death, to deliver them from oppression, am willing to die for their sake. I wish, however, to imitate the example of Esther, not of Judith, and would rather make intercession for my people, than shed the blood of the meanest creature, in order to save them. I have often checked the intemperate zeal of my adherents, when either the severity of their own persecutions, or indignation at the unheard-of injuries which I have en-

dured, were apt to precipitate them into violent councils. I have even warned the queen of dangers to which these harsh proceedings exposed herself. And worn out, as I now am, with cares and sufferings, the prospect of a crown is not so inviting, that I should ruin my soul in order to obtain it. I am no stranger to the feelings of humanity, nor unacquainted with the duties of religion, and abhor the detestable crime of assassination, as equally repugnant to both. And, if ever I have given consent by my words, or even by my thoughts, to any attempt against the life of the queen of England, far from declining the judgment of men, I shall not even pray for the mercy of God[t]." 1586.

Two different days did Mary appear before the judges, and in every part of her behaviour maintained the magnanimity of a queen, tempered with the gentleness and modesty of a woman.

The commissioners, by Elizabeth's express command, adjourned, without pronouncing any sentence, to the starchamber in Westminster. When assembled in that place, Naué and Curle were brought into court, and confirmed their former declaration upon oath; and, after reviewing all their proceedings, the commissioners unanimously declared Mary "to be accessory to Babington's conspiracy, and to have imagined divers matters tending to the hurt, death, and destruction of Elizabeth, contrary to the express words of the statute made for the security of the queen's life[u]." Sentence against her. Oct. 25.

It is no easy matter to determine whether the injustice in appointing this trial, or the irregularity in conducting it, were greatest and most flagrant. By what right did Elizabeth claim authority over an independent queen? Was Mary bound to comply with the laws of a foreign kingdom? How could the subjects of another prince become her judges? or, if such an insult on royalty were allowed, ought not the common Irregularities in the trial.

[t] Camd. 520, etc. [u] Ibid. 525.

1586. forms of justice to have been observed? If the testimony of Babington and his associates were so explicit, why did not Elizabeth spare them for a few weeks, and, by confronting them with Mary, overwhelm her with the full conviction of her crimes? Naué and Curle were both alive, wherefore did not they appear at Fotheringay? and for what reason were they produced in the starchamber, where Mary was not present to hear what they deposed? Was this suspicious evidence enough to condemn a queen? Ought the meanest criminal to have been found guilty upon such feeble and inconclusive proofs?

It was not, however, on the evidence produced at her trial, that the sentence against Mary was founded. That served as a pretence to justify, but was not the cause of the violent steps taken by Elizabeth and her ministers towards her destruction; and was employed to give some appearance of justice to what was the offspring of jealousy and fear. The nation, blinded with resentment against Mary, and solicitous to secure the life of its own sovereign from every danger, observed no irregularities in the proceedings, and attended to no defects in the proof, but grasped at suspicions and probabilities, as if they had been irrefragable demonstrations.

The parliament confirm the sentence.

The parliament met a few days after sentence was pronounced against Mary. In that illustrious assembly more temper and discernment than are to be found among the people, might have been expected. Both lords and commons, however, were equally under the dominion of popular prejudices and passions, and the same excess of zeal, or of fear, which prevailed in the nation, is apparent in all their proceedings. They entered with impatience upon an inquiry into the conspiracy, and the danger which threatened the queen's life, as well as the peace of the kingdom. All the papers which had been produced at Fotheringay, were laid before them; and, after many violent invectives

against the queen of Scots, both houses unanimously ratified the proceedings of the commissioners by whom she had been tried, and declared the sentence against her to be just and well founded. Not satisfied with this, they presented a joint address to the queen, beseeching her, as she regarded her own safety, the preservation of the protestant religion, the welfare and wishes of her people, to publish the sentence; and without further delay to inflict on a rival, no less irreclaimable than dangerous, the punishment which she had merited by so many crimes. This request, dictated by fears unworthy of that great assembly, was enforced by reasons still more unworthy. They were drawn not from justice, but from conveniency. The most rigorous confinement, it was pretended, could not curb Mary's intriguing spirit; her address was found, by long experience, to be an overmatch for the vigilance and jealousy of all her keepers; the severest penal laws could not restrain her adherents, who, while they believed her person to be sacred, would despise any danger to which themselves alone were exposed; several foreign princes were ready to second their attempts, and waited only a proper opportunity for invading the kingdom, and asserting the Scottish queen's title to the crown. Her life, they contended, was, for these reasons, incompatible with Elizabeth's safety; and if she were spared out of a false clemency, the queen's person, the religion and liberties of the kingdom, could not be one moment secure. Necessity required that she should be sacrificed in order to preserve these; and to prove this sacrifice to be no less just than necessary, several examples in history were produced, and many texts of scripture quoted; but both the one and the other were misapplied, and distorted from their true meaning. 1586. and demand the execution of it.

Nothing, however, could be more acceptable to Elizabeth, than an address in this strain. It extricated her out of a situation extremely embarrassing; and, Elizabeth's dissimulation.

1586. without depriving her of the power of sparing, it enabled her to punish her rival with less appearance of blame. If she chose the former, the whole honour would redound to her own clemency. If she determined on the latter, whatever was rigorous might now seem to be extorted by the solicitations of her people, rather than to flow from her own inclination. Her answer, however, was in a style which she often used, ambiguous and evasive, under the appearance of openness and candour; full of such professions of regard for her people, as served to heighten their loyalty; of such complaints of Mary's ingratitude, as were calculated to excite their indignation; and of such insinuations that her own life was in danger, as could not fail to keep alive their fears. In the end, she besought them to save her the infamy and the pain of delivering up a queen, her nearest kinswoman, to punishment; and to consider whether it might not still be possible to provide for the public security, without forcing her to imbrue her hands in royal blood.

The true meaning of this reply was easily understood. The lords and commons renewed their former request with additional importunity, which was far from being either unexpected or offensive. Elizabeth did not return any answer more explicit; and, having obtained such a public sanction of her proceedings, there was no longer any reason for protracting this scene of dissimulation; there was even some danger that her feigned difficulties might at last be treated as real ones; she, therefore, prorogued the parliament, and reserved in her own hands the sole disposal of her rival's fate[x].

France interposes feebly in behalf of Mary.

All the princes in Europe observed the proceedings against Mary with astonishment and horrour; and even Henry the third, notwithstanding his known aversion to the house of Guise, was obliged to interpose on her behalf, and to appear in defence of the common rights

[x] Camd. 526. D'Ewes, 375.

of royalty. Aubespine, his resident ambassador, and Bellievre, who was sent with an extraordinary commission to the same purpose, interceded for Mary with great appearance of warmth. They employed all the arguments which the cause naturally suggested; they pleaded from justice, from generosity, and humanity; they intermingled reproaches and threats. But to all these Elizabeth continued deaf and inexorable; and having received some intimation of Henry's real unconcern about the fate of the Scottish queen, and knowing his antipathy to all the race of Guise, she trusted that these loud remonstrances would be followed by no violent resentment[y]. 1586.

James endeavours to save his mother's life.

She paid no greater regard to the solicitations of the Scottish king, which, as they were urged with greater sincerity, merited more attention. Though her commissioners had been extremely careful to sooth James, by publishing a declaration that their sentence against Mary did, in no degree, derogate from his honour, or invalidate any title which he formerly possessed; he beheld the indignities to which his mother had been exposed with filial concern, and with the sentiments which became a king. The pride of the Scottish nation was roused, by the insult offered to the blood of their monarchs, and called upon him to employ the most vigorous efforts, in order to prevent or to revenge the queen's death.

At first, he could hardly believe that Elizabeth would venture upon an action so unprecedented, which tended so visibly to render the persons of princes less sacred in the eyes of the people, and which degraded the regal dignity, of which, at other times, she was so remarkably jealous. But as soon as the extraordinary steps which she took discovered her intention, he despatched sir William Keith to London; who, together with Douglas, his ambassador in ordinary, remonstrated,

[y] Camd. 531.

1586. in the strongest terms, against the injury done to an independent queen, in subjecting her to be tried like a private person, and by laws to which she owed no obedience; and besought Elizabeth not to add to this injury, by suffering a sentence unjust in itself, as well as dishonourable to the king of Scots, to be put into execution [a].

Elizabeth returning no answer to these remonstrances of his ambassador, James wrote to her with his own hand, complaining in the bitterest terms of her conduct, not without threats that both his duty and his honour would oblige him to renounce her friendship, and to act as became a son when called to revenge his mother's wrongs [a]. At the same time he assembled the nobles, who promised to stand by him in so good a cause. He appointed ambassadors to France, Spain, and Denmark, in order to implore the aid of these courts; and took other steps towards executing his threats with vigour. The high strain of his letter enraged Elizabeth to such a degree, that she was ready to dismiss his ambassadors without any reply. But his preparations alarmed and embarrassed her ministers, and at their entreaty she returned a soft and evasive answer, promising to listen to any overture from the king, that tended to his mother's safety; and to suspend the execution of the sentence, until the arrival of new ambassadors from Scotland [b].

Dec. 6. The sentence against Mary published.

Meanwhile, she commanded the sentence against Mary to be published, and forgot not to inform the people, that this was extorted from her by the repeated entreaty of both houses of parliament. At the same time she despatched lord Buckhurst and Beale to acquaint Mary with the sentence, and how importunately the nation demanded the execution of it; and though she had not hitherto yielded to these solicitations, she

[a] See Appendix, No. XLIX. Murdin, 573, etc. Birch. Mem. i. 52.
[a] Birch. Mem. i. 52. [b] Spotsw. 251. Cald. iv. 5.

advised her to prepare for an event which might become necessary for securing the protestant religion, as well as quieting the minds of the people. Mary received the message not only without symptoms of fear, but with expressions of triumph. "No wonder," said she, "the English should now thirst for the blood of a foreign prince; they have often offered violence to their own monarchs. But after so many sufferings, death comes to me as a welcome deliverer. I am proud to think that my life is deemed of importance to the catholic religion, and as a martyr for it I am now willing to die[c]." 1586.

After the publication of the sentence, Mary was stripped of every remaining mark of royalty. The canopy of state in her apartment was pulled down; Paulet entered her chamber, and approached her person without any ceremony; and even appeared covered in her presence. Shocked with these indignities, and offended at this gross familiarity, to which she had never been accustomed, Mary once more complained to Elizabeth; and at the same time, as her last request, entreated that she would permit her servants to carry her dead body into France, to be laid among her ancestors in hallowed ground; that some of her domestics might be present at her death, to bear witness of her innocence, and firm adherence to the catholic faith; that all her servants might be suffered to leave the kingdom, and to enjoy those small legacies which she should bestow on them, as testimonies of her affection; and that, in the mean time, her almoner, or some other catholic priest, might be allowed to attend her, and to assist her in preparing for an eternal world. She besought her, in the name of Jesus, by the soul and memory of Henry the seventh, their common progenitor, by their near consanguinity, and the royal dignity with which they were both invested, to gratify her in these

She is treated with the utmost rigour.

Dec. 19.

[c] Camd. 528. Jebb, 291.

1586. particulars, and to indulge her so far as to signify her compliance by a letter under her own hand. Whether Mary's letter was ever delivered to Elizabeth is uncertain. No answer was returned, and no regard paid to her requests. She was offered a protestant bishop or dean to attend her. Them she rejected, and, without any clergyman to direct her devotions, she prepared, in great tranquillity, for the approach of death, which she now believed to be at no great distance[d].

1587. James renews his solicitations in her behalf. January 1. James, without losing a moment, sent new ambassadors to London. These were the master of Gray, and sir Robert Melvil. In order to remove Elizabeth's fears, they offered that their master would become bound that no conspiracy should be undertaken against her person, or the peace of the kingdom, with Mary's consent; and, for the faithful performance of this, would deliver some of the most considerable of the Scottish nobles as hostages. If this were not thought sufficient, they proposed that Mary should resign all her rights and pretensions to her son, from whom nothing injurious to the protestant religion, or inconsistent with Elizabeth's safety, could be feared. The former proposal Elizabeth rejected as insecure; the latter, as dangerous. The ambassadors were then instructed to talk in a higher tone; and Melvil executed the commission with fidelity and with zeal. But Gray, with his usual perfidy, deceived his master, who trusted him with a negotiation of so much importance, and betrayed the queen whom he was employed to save. He encouraged and urged Elizabeth to execute the sentence against her rival. He often repeated the old proverbial sentence, "The dead cannot bite." And whatever should happen, he undertook to pacify the king's rage, or at least to prevent any violent effects of his resentment[e].

[d] Camd. 528. Jebb, ii. 295.

[e] Spotsw. 352. Murdin, 568. See Appendix, No. I.

Elizabeth, meanwhile, discovered all the symptoms of the most violent agitation and disquietude of mind. She shunned society, she was often found in a melancholy and musing posture, and repeating with much emphasis these sentences, which she borrowed from some of the devices then in vogue; 'aut fer aut feri; ne feriare, feri.' Much, no doubt, of this apparent uneasiness must be imputed to dissimulation; it was impossible, however, that a princess, naturally so cautious as Elizabeth, should venture on an action, which might expose her memory to infamy, and her life and kingdom to danger, without reflecting deeply, and hesitating long. The people waited her determination in suspense and anxiety; and, lest their fear or their zeal should subside, rumours of danger were artfully invented, and propagated with the utmost industry. Aubespine, the French ambassador, was accused of having suborned an assassin to murder the queen. The Spanish fleet was said by some to be already arrived at Milfordhaven. Others affirmed that the duke of Guise had landed with a strong army in Sussex. Now it was reported that the northern counties were up in arms; next day, that the Scots had entered England with all their forces; and a conspiracy, it was whispered, was on foot for seizing the queen and burning the city. The panic grew every day more violent; and the people, astonished and enraged, called for the execution of the sentence against Mary, as the only thing which could restore tranquillity to the kingdom[f]. 1587. Elizabeth's anxiety and dissimulation.

While these sentiments prevailed among her subjects, Elizabeth thought she might safely venture to strike the blow, which she had so long meditated. She commanded Davison, one of the secretaries of state, to bring to her the fatal warrant; and her behaviour on that occasion plainly showed, that it is not Warrant for Mary's execution signed. Feb. 1.

[f] Camd. 533, 534.

1587. to humanity that we must ascribe her forbearance hitherto. At the very moment she was signing the writ which gave up a woman, a queen, and her own nearest relation, into the hands of the executioner, she was capable of jesting. "Go," says she to Davison, "and tell Walsingham what I have now done, though I am afraid he will die for grief when he hears it." Her chief anxiety was how to secure the advantages which would arise from Mary's death, without appearing to have given her consent to a deed so odious. She often hinted to Paulet and Drury, as well as to some other courtiers, that now was the time to discover the sincerity of their concern for her safety, and that she expected their zeal would extricate her out of her present perplexity. But they were wise enough to seem not to understand her meaning. Even after the warrant was signed, she commanded a letter to be written to Paulet in less ambiguous terms, complaining of his remissness in sparing so long the life of her capital enemy, and begging him to remember at last what was incumbent on him as an affectionate subject, as well as what he was bound to do by the oath of association, and to deliver his sovereign from continual fear and danger, by shortening the days of his prisoner. Paulet, though rigorous and harsh, and often brutal in the discharge of what he thought his duty, as Mary's keeper, was nevertheless a man of honour and integrity. He rejected the proposal with disdain; and lamenting that he should ever have been deemed capable of acting the part of an assassin, he declared that the queen might dispose of his life at her pleasure, but that he would never stain his own honour, nor leave an everlasting mark of infamy on his posterity, by lending his hand to perpetrate so foul a crime. On the receipt of this answer, Elizabeth became extremely peevish; and calling him a 'dainty' and 'precise fellow,' who would promise much, but perform nothing, she proposed to employ one Wingfield, who had both courage and in-

clination to strike the blow[g]. But Davison remonstrating against this, as a deed dishonourable in itself, and of dangerous example, she again declared her intention that the sentence pronounced by the commissioners should be executed according to law; and as she had already signed the warrant, she begged that no further application might be made to her on that head. By this, the privy counsellors thought themselves sufficiently authorized to proceed; and prompted, as they pretended, by zeal for the queen's safety, or instigated, as is more probable, by the apprehension of the danger to which they would themselves be exposed, if the life of the queen of Scots were spared, they assembled in the council chamber; and by a letter under all their hands, empowered the earls of Shrewsbury and Kent, together with the high sheriff of the county, to see the sentence put in execution[h]. 1587.

Mary's behaviour at her death.

On Tuesday the seventh of February, the two earls arrived at Fotheringay, and demanded access to the queen, read in her presence the warrant for execution, and required her to prepare to die next morning. Mary heard them to the end without emotion, and crossing herself in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, "That soul," said she, "is not worthy the joys of heaven, which repines because the body must endure the stroke of the executioner; and though I did not expect that the queen of England would set the first example of violating the sacred person of a sovereign prince, I willingly submit to that which providence has decreed to be my lot;" and laying her hand on a bible, which happened to be near her, she solemnly protested that she was innocent of that conspiracy which Babington had carried on against Elizabeth's life[i]. She then mentioned the requests contained in her letter to Elizabeth, but ob-

[g] Biog. Britan. article Davison.
[h] Camd. 534. Strype, iii. 361. 364.
[i] Jebb, ii. 301.

1587. tained no satisfactory answer. She entreated with particular earnestness, that now in her last moments her almoner might be suffered to attend her, and that she might enjoy the consolation of those pious institutions prescribed by her religion. Even this favour, which is usually granted to the vilest criminal, was absolutely denied.

Her attendants, during this conversation, were bathed in tears, and, though overawed by the presence of the two earls, with difficulty suppressed their anguish; but no sooner did Kent and Shrewsbury withdraw, than they ran to their mistress, and burst out into the most passionate expressions of tenderness and sorrow. Mary, however, not only retained perfect composure of mind herself, but endeavoured to moderate their excessive grief; and falling on her knees with all her domestics round her, she thanked heaven that her sufferings were now so near an end, and prayed that she might be enabled to endure what still remained with decency and with fortitude. The greater part of the evening she employed in settling her worldly affairs. She wrote her testament with her own hand. Her money, her jewels, and her clothes, she distributed among her servants, according to their rank or merit. She wrote a short letter to the king of France, and another to the duke of Guise, full of tender but magnanimous sentiments, and recommended her soul to their prayers, and her afflicted servants to their protection. At supper she ate temperately, as usual, and conversed not only with ease, but with cheerfulness; she drank to every one of her servants, and asked their forgiveness, if ever she had failed in any part of her duty towards them. At her wonted time she went to bed, and slept calmly a few hours. Early in the morning she retired into her closet, and employed a considerable time in devotion. At eight o'clock the high sheriff and his officers entered her chamber, and found her still kneeling at the altar. She immediately started up, and with a

majestic mien, and a countenance undismayed, and even cheerful, advanced towards the place of execution, leaning on two of Paulet's attendants. She was dressed in a mourning habit, but with an elegance and splendour which she had long laid aside, except on a few festival days. An 'Agnus Dei' hung by a pomander chain at her neck; her beads at her girdle; and in her hand she carried a crucifix of ivory. At the bottom of the stairs, the two earls, attended by several gentlemen from the neighbouring counties, received her; and there sir Andrew Melvil, the master of her household, who had been secluded for some weeks from her presence, was permitted to take his last farewell. At the sight of a mistress whom he tenderly loved, in such a situation, he melted into tears; and as he was bewailing her condition, and complaining of his own hard fate, in being appointed to carry the account of such a mournful event into Scotland, Mary replied, "Weep not, good Melvil, there is at present great cause for rejoicing. Thou shalt this day see Mary Stewart delivered from all her cares, and such an end put to her tedious sufferings, as she has long expected. Bear witness that I die constant in my religion; firm in my fidelity towards Scotland; and unchanged in my affection to France. Commend me to my son. Tell him I have done nothing injurious to his kingdom, to his honour, or to his rights; and God forgive all those who have thirsted, without cause, for my blood!" 1587.

With much difficulty, and after many entreaties, she prevailed on the two earls to allow Melvil, together with three of her men servants and two of her maids, to attend her to the scaffold. It was erected in the same hall where she had been tried, raised a little above the floor, and covered, as well as a chair, the cushion, and block, with black cloth. Mary mounted the steps with alacrity, beheld all this apparatus of death with an unaltered countenance, and signing herself with the cross, she sat down in the chair. Beale

1587. read the warrant for execution with a loud voice, to which she listened with a careless air, and like one occupied in other thoughts. Then the dean of Peterborough began a devout discourse, suitable to her present condition, and offered up prayers to heaven in her behalf; but she declared that she could not in conscience hearken to the one, nor join with the other; and kneeling down, repeated a Latin prayer. When the dean had finished his devotions, she, with an audible voice, and in the English tongue, recommended unto God the afflicted state of the church, and prayed for prosperity to her son, and for a long life and peaceable reign to Elizabeth. She declared that she hoped for mercy only through the death of Christ, at the foot of whose image she now willingly shed her blood; and lifting up and kissing the crucifix, she thus addressed it: "As thy arms, O Jesus, were extended on the cross; so with the outstretched arms of thy mercy receive me, and forgive my sins."

She then prepared for the block, by taking off her veil and upper garments; and one of the executioners rudely endeavouring to assist, she gently checked him, and said with a smile, that she had not been accustomed to undress before so many spectators, nor to be served by such valets. With calm but undaunted fortitude, she laid her neck on the block; and while one executioner held her hands, the other, at the second stroke, cut off her head, which falling out of its attire, discovered her hair already grown quite grey with cares and sorrows. The executioner held it up, still streaming with blood, and the dean crying out, "So perish all queen Elizabeth's enemies!" the earl of Kent alone answered Amen. The rest of the spectators continued silent, and drowned in tears; being incapable, at that moment, of any other sentiments but those of pity or admiration [k].

[k] Camd. 534. Spotsw. 355. Jebb, ii. 300. Strype, iii. 383 See Appendix, No. LI.

Such was the tragical death of Mary, queen of Scots, after a life of forty-four years and two months, almost nineteen years of which she passed in captivity. The political parties which were formed in the kingdom, during her reign, have subsisted under various denominations, ever since that time. The rancour, with which they were at first animated, hath descended to succeeding ages, and their prejudices, as well as their rage, have been perpetuated, and even augmented. Among historians, who were under the dominion of all these passions, and who have either ascribed to her every virtuous and amiable quality, or have imputed to her all the vices of which the human heart is susceptible, we search in vain for Mary's real character. She neither merited the exaggerated praises of the one, nor the undistinguished censure of the other. 1587. Sentiments of historians concerning her.

To all the charms of beauty, and the utmost elegance of external form, she added those accomplishments which render their impression irresistible. Polite, affable, insinuating, sprightly, and capable of speaking and of writing with equal ease and dignity. Sudden, however, and violent in all her attachments; because her heart was warm and unsuspicious. Impatient of contradiction; because she had been accustomed from her infancy to be treated as a queen. No stranger, on some occasions, to dissimulation; which, in that perfidious court where she received her education, was reckoned among the necessary arts of government. Not insensible of flattery, or unconscious of that pleasure with which almost every woman beholds the influence of her own beauty. Formed with the qualities which we love, not with the talents that we admire; she was an agreeable woman, rather than an illustrious queen. The vivacity of her spirit, not sufficiently tempered with sound judgment, and the warmth of her heart, which was not at all times under the restraint of discretion, betrayed her both into errours and into crimes. To say that she was always unfor- Her character.

1587. tunate, will not account for that long and almost uninterrupted succession of calamities which befell her; we must likewise add, that she was often imprudent. Her passion for Darnly was rash, youthful, and excessive; and though the sudden transition to the opposite extreme, was the natural effect of her ill-requited love, and of his ingratitude, insolence, and brutality; yet neither these, nor Bothwell's artful address and important services, can justify her attachment to that nobleman. Even the manners of the age, licentious as they were, are no apology for this unhappy passion; nor can they induce us to look on that tragical and infamous scene which followed upon it, with less abhorrence. Humanity will draw a veil over this part of her character which it cannot approve, and may, perhaps, prompt some to impute some of her actions to her situation, more than to her dispositions; and to lament the unhappiness of the former, rather than excuse the perverseness of the latter. Mary's sufferings exceed, both in degree and in duration, those tragical distresses which fancy has feigned to excite sorrow and commiseration; and while we survey them, we are apt altogether to forget her frailties; we think of her faults with less indignation, and approve of our tears, as if they were shed for a person who had attained much nearer to pure virtue.

With regard to the queen's person, a circumstance not to be omitted in writing the history of a female reign, all contemporary authors agree in ascribing to Mary the utmost beauty of countenance, and elegance of shape, of which the human form is capable. Her hair was black, though, according to the fashion of that age, she frequently wore borrowed locks, and of different colours. Her eyes were a dark grey; her complexion was exquisitely fine; and her hands and arms remarkably delicate, both as to shape and colour. Her stature was of an height that rose to the majestic. She danced, she walked, and rode with equal grace.

Her taste for music was just, and she both sung and played upon the lute with uncommon skill. Towards the end of her life, long confinement, and the coldness of the houses, in which she had been imprisoned, brought on a rheumatism, which often deprived her of the use of her limbs. No man, says Brantome, ever beheld her person without admiration and love, or will read her history without sorrow. 1587.

None of her women were suffered to come near her dead body, which was carried into a room adjoining to the place of execution, where it lay for some days, covered with a coarse cloth torn from a billiard table. The block, the scaffold, the aprons of the executioners, and every thing stained with her blood, were reduced to ashes. Not long after, Elizabeth appointed her body to be buried in the cathedral of Peterborough with royal magnificence. But this vulgar artifice was employed in vain; the pageantry of a pompous funeral did not efface the memory of those injuries which laid Mary in her grave. James, soon after his accession to the English throne, ordered her body to be removed to Westminster Abbey, and to be deposited among the monarchs of England.

Elizabeth affected to receive the accounts of Mary's death with the most violent emotions of surprise and concern. Sighs, tears, lamentations, and mourning, were all employed to display the reality and greatness of her sorrow. Evident marks of dissimulation and artifice may be traced through every period of Elizabeth's proceedings against the life of the Scottish queen. The commission for bringing Mary to a public trial was seemingly extorted from her by the entreaties of her privy counsellors. She delayed publishing the sentence against her till she was twice solicited by both houses of parliament. Nor did she sign the warrant for execution without the utmost apparent reluctance. One scene more of the boldest and most solemn deceit remained to be exhibited. She undertook to make the

Elizabeth affects to lament Mary's death.

1587. world believe that Mary had been put to death without her knowledge, and against her will. Davison, who neither suspected her intention nor his own danger, was her instrument in carrying on this artifice, and fell a victim to it.

It was his duty, as secretary of state, to lay before her the warrant for execution, in order to be signed; and, by her command, he carried it to the great seal. She pretended, however, that she had charged him not to communicate what she had done to any person, nor to suffer the warrant to go out of his hands, without her express permission; that, in contempt of this order, he had not only revealed the matter to several of her ministers, but had, in concert with them, assembled her privy counsellors, by whom, without her consent or knowledge, the warrant was issued, and the earls of Shrewsbury and Kent empowered to put it in execution. Though Davison denied all this, and with circumstances which bear the strongest marks of truth and credibility; though it can scarcely be conceived that her privy council, composed of the persons in whom she most confided, of her ministers and favourites, would assemble within the walls of her palace, and venture to transact a matter of so much importance without her privity, and contrary to her inclination; yet so far did she carry her dissimulation, that, with all the signs of displeasure and of rage, she banished most of her counsellors out of her presence, and treated Burleigh, in particular, so harshly, and with such marks of disgust, that he gave himself up for lost, and in the deepest affliction wrote to the queen, begging leave to resign all his places, that he might retire to his own estate. Davison she instantly deprived of his office,
March. and committed him a close prisoner to the Tower. He was soon after brought to a solemn trial in the star-chamber, condemned to pay a fine of ten thousand pounds, and to be imprisoned during the queen's pleasure. He languished several years in confinement, and

never recovered any degree of favour or of power. As her jealousy and fear had bereaved the queen of Scots of life, in order to palliate this part of her conduct, Elizabeth made no scruple of sacrificing the reputation and happiness of one of the most virtuous and able men in her kingdom[1]. 1587.

This solemn farce, for it deserves no better name, furnished Elizabeth, however, with an apology to the king of Scots. As the prospect of his mother's danger had excited the king's filial care and concern, the account of her death filled him with grief and resentment. His subjects felt the dishonour done to him and to the nation. In order to sooth both, Elizabeth instantly despatched Robert Cary, one of lord Hunsdon's sons, with a letter expressing her extreme affliction on account of that miserable accident, which, as she pretended, had happened far contrary to her appointment or intention. James would not permit her messenger to enter Scotland, and with some difficulty received a memorial which he sent from Berwick. It contained the tale concerning Davison, dressed up with all the circumstances which tended to exculpate Elizabeth, and to throw the whole blame on his rashness or treachery. Such a defence gave little satisfaction, and was considered as mockery added to insult; and many of the nobles, as well as the king, breathed nothing but revenge. Elizabeth was extremely solicitous to pacify them, and she wanted neither able instruments nor plausible reasons, in order to accomplish this. Leicester wrote to the king, and Walsingham to secretary Maitland. They represented the certain destruction to which James would expose himself, if, with the forces of Scotland alone, he should venture to attack a kingdom so far superior in power; that the history of past ages, as well as his mother's sad experience, might convince him, that nothing could be more

Elizabeth endeavours to sooth James.

[1] Camd. 536. Strype, iii. 370. See Appendix, No. LII. Cabbala, 229, etc.

1587. dangerous or deceitful, than dependence on foreign aid; that the king of France would never wish to see the British kingdoms united under one monarch, nor contribute to invest a prince so nearly allied to the house of Guise with such formidable power; that Philip might be a more active ally, but would certainly prove a more dangerous one; and, under pretence of assisting him, would assert his own right to the English crown, which he already began openly to claim; that the same statute, on which the sentence of death against his mother had been founded, would justify the excluding him from the succession to the crown; that the English, naturally averse from the dominion of strangers, would not fail, if exasperated by his hostilities, to apply it in that manner; that Elizabeth was disposed to repair the wrongs which the mother had suffered by her tenderness and affection towards the son; and that, by engaging in a fruitless war, he would deprive himself of a noble inheritance, which, by cultivating her friendship, he must infallibly obtain. These representations, added to the consciousness of his own weakness, to the smallness of his revenues, to the mutinous spirit of some of the nobles, to the dubious fidelity of others, and to the influence of that faction which was entirely at Elizabeth's devotion, convinced James that a war with England, however just, would in the present juncture be altogether impolitical. All these considerations induced him to stifle his resentment; to appear satisfied with the punishment inflicted on Davison; and to preserve all the semblances of friendship with the English court[m]. In this manner did the cloud which threatened such a storm pass away. Mary's death, like that of a common criminal, remained unavenged by any prince; and, whatever infamy Elizabeth might incur, she was exposed to no new danger on that account.

[m] Spotsw. 362. Cald. iv. 13, 14. Strype, 377.

Mary's death, however, proved fatal to the master of Gray, and lost him the king's favour, which he had for some time possessed. He was become as odious to the nation as favourites, who acquire power without merit, and exercise it without discretion, usually are. The treacherous part which he had acted during his late embassy was no secret, and filled James, who at length came to the knowledge of it, with astonishment. The courtiers observed the symptoms of disgust arising in the king's mind, his enemies seized the opportunity, and sir William Stewart, in revenge of the perfidy with which Gray had betrayed his brother, captain James, publicly accused him before a convention of nobles, not only of having contributed, by his advice and suggestions, to take away the life of the queen, but of holding correspondence with popish princes, in order to subvert the religion established in the kingdom. Gray, unsupported by the king, deserted by all, and conscious of his own guilt, made a feeble defence. He was condemned to perpetual banishment, a punishment very unequal to his crimes. But the king was unwilling to abandon one whom he had once favoured so highly, to the rigour of justice; and lord Hamilton, his near relation, and the other nobles who had lately returned from exile, in gratitude for the zeal with which he had served them, interceded warmly in his behalf.

1587. Disgrace of the master of Gray. May 10.

Having thus accomplished the destruction of one of his enemies, captain James Stewart thought the juncture favourable for prosecuting his revenge on them all. He singled out secretary Maitland, the most eminent both for abilities and enmity to him; and offered to prove that he was no less accessory than Gray to the queen's death, and had even formed a design of delivering up the king himself into the hands of the English. But time and absence had, in a great measure, extinguished the king's affection for a minion who so little deserved it. All the courtiers combined against him as a common enemy; and, instead of gaining his

1587. point, he had the mortification to see the office of chancellor conferred upon Maitland, who, together with that dignity, enjoyed all the power and influence of a prime minister.

In the assembly of the church, which met this year, the same hatred to the order of bishops, and the same jealousy and fear of their encroachments, appeared. But as the king was now of full age, and a parliament was summoned on that occasion, the clergy remained satisfied with appointing some of their number to represent their grievances to that court, from which great things were expected.

The king attempts to unite the nobles.

Previous to this meeting of parliament, James attempted a work worthy of a king. The deadly feuds which subsisted between many of the great families, and which were transmitted from one generation to another, weakened the strength of the kingdom; contributed, more than any other circumstance, to preserve a fierce and barbarous spirit among the nobles; and proved the occasion of many disasters to themselves and to their country. After many preparatory negotiations, he invited the contending parties to a royal entertainment in the palace of Holyrood house; and partly by his authority, partly by his entreaties, obtained their promise to bury their dissensions in perpetual oblivion. From thence he conducted them, in solemn procession, through the streets of Edinburgh, marching by pairs, each hand in hand with his enemy. A collation of wine and sweetmeats was prepared at the public cross, and there they drank to each other, with all the signs of reciprocal forgiveness and of future friendship. The people, who were present at a spectacle so unusual, conceived the most sanguine hopes of seeing concord and tranquillity established in every part of the kingdom, and testified their satisfaction by repeated acclamations[n]. Unhappily, the effects of this

[n] Spotsw. 164. Cald. iv. 13.

reconciliation were not correspondent either to the pious endeavours of the king, or to the fond wishes of the people. 1587.

The first care of the parliament was the security of the protestant religion. All the laws passed in its favour, since the reformation, were ratified; and a new and severe one was enacted against seminary priests and jesuits, whose restless industry in making proselytes, brought many of them into Scotland about this time. Two acts of this parliament deserve more particular notice, on account of the consequences with which they were followed.

General annexation of church lands.

The one respected the lands of the church. As the public revenues were not sufficient for defraying the king's ordinary charges; as the administration of the government became more complicated and more expensive; as James was naturally profuse, and a stranger to economy; it was necessary, on all these accounts, to provide some fund proportioned to his exigencies. But no considerable sum could be levied on the commons, who did not enjoy the benefit of an extensive commerce. The nobles were unaccustomed to bear the burthen of heavy taxes. The revenues of the church were the only source whence a proper supply could be drawn. Notwithstanding all the depredations of the laity since the reformation, and the various devices which they had employed to seize the church lands, some considerable portion of them remained still unalienated, and were held either by the bishops who possessed the benefices, or were granted to laymen during pleasure. All these lands were in this parliament annexed, by one general law[o], to the crown, and the king was empowered to apply the rents of them to his own use. The tithes alone were reserved for the maintenance of the persons who served the cure, and the principal mansion house, with a few acres of land, by way of glebe, allotted for their

[o] Parl. 11. Jac. VI. c. 29.

1587. residence. By this great accession of property, it is natural to conclude that the king must have acquired a vast increase of power, and the influence of the nobles have suffered a proportional diminution. The very reverse of this seems, however, to have been the case. Almost all grants of church lands, prior to this act, were thereby confirmed; and titles, which were formerly reckoned precarious, derived thence the sanction of parliamentary authority. James was likewise authorized, during a limited time, to make new alienations; and such was the facility of his temper, ever ready to yield to the solicitations of his servants, and to gratify their most extravagant demands, that not only during the time limited, but throughout his whole reign, he was continually employed in bestowing, and his parliament in ratifying, grants of this kind to his nobles: hence little advantage accrued to the crown from that which might have been so valuable an addition to its revenues. The bishops, however, were great sufferers by the law. But at this juncture neither the king nor his ministers were solicitous about the interests of an order of men, odious to the people, and persecuted by the clergy. Their enemies promoted the law with the utmost zeal. The prospect of sharing in their spoils induced all parties to consent to it; and after a step so fatal to the wealth and power of the dignified clergy, it was no difficult matter to introduce that change in the government of the church which soon after took place[p].

Lesser barons admitted into parliament by their representatives.

The change which the other statute produced in the civil constitution was no less remarkable. Under the feudal system, every freeholder, or immediate vassal of the crown, had a right to be present in parliament. These freeholders were originally few in number, but possessed of great and extensive property. By degrees these vast possessions were divided by the proprietors themselves, or parcelled out by the prince, or split by

[p] Spotsw. 365.

other accidents. The number of freeholders became greater, and their condition more unequal; besides the ancient barons, who preserved their estates and their power unimpaired, there arose another order, whose rights were the same, though their wealth and influence were far inferior. But, in rude ages, when the art of government was extremely imperfect, when parliaments were seldom assembled, and deliberated on matters little interesting to a martial people, few of the 'lesser barons' took their seats, and the whole parliamentary jurisdiction was exercised by the 'greater barons,' in conjunction with the ecclesiastical order. James the first, fond of imitating the forms of the English constitution, to which he had been long accustomed, and desirous of providing a counterpoise to the power of the great nobles, procured an act in the year one thousand four hundred and twenty-seven, dispensing with the personal attendance of the lesser barons, and empowering those in each county to choose two commissioners to represent them in parliament. This law, like many other regulations of that wise prince, produced little effect. All the king's vassals continued, as formerly, possessed of a right to be present in parliament; but, unless in some extraordinary conjunctures, the greater barons alone attended. But, by means of the reformation, the constitution had undergone a great change. The aristocratical power of the nobles had been much increased, and the influence of the ecclesiastical order, which the crown usually employed to check their usurpation, and to balance their authority, had diminished in proportion. Many of the abbeys and priories had been erected into temporal peerages; and the protestant bishops, an indigent race of men, and odious to the nation, were far from possessing the weight and credit which their predecessors derived from their own exorbitant wealth, and the superstitious reverence of the people. In this situation, the king had recourse to the expedient em- 1587.

1587. ployed by James the first, and obtained a law reviving the statute of one thousand four hundred and twenty-seven; and from that time the commons of Scotland have sent their representatives to parliament. An act, which tended so visibly to abridge their authority, did not pass without opposition from many of the nobles. But as the king had a right to summon the lesser barons to attend in person, others were apprehensive of seeing the house filled with a multitude of his dependents, and consented the more willingly to a law which laid them under the restriction of appearing only by their representatives.

1588. The approach of the Spanish armada.

The year one thousand five hundred and eighty-eight began with an universal expectation throughout all Europe, that it was to be distinguished by wonderful events and revolutions. Several astrologers, according to the accounts of contemporary historians, had predicted this; and the situation of affairs in the two principal kingdoms of Europe was such, that a sagacious observer, without any supernatural intelligence, might have hazarded the prediction, and have foreseen the approach of some grand crisis. In France, it was evident, from the astonishing progress of the league, conducted by a leader whose ambition was restrained by no scruples, and whose genius had hitherto surmounted all difficulties; as well as from the timid, variable, and impolitic councils of Henry the third, that either that monarch must submit to abandon the throne, of which he was unworthy, or by some sudden and daring blow cut off his formidable rival. Accordingly, in the beginning of the year, the duke of Guise drove his master out of his capital city, and forced him to conclude a peace, which left him only the shadow of royalty; and before the year expired, he himself fell a victim to the resentment and fear of Henry, and to his own security. In Spain the operations were such as promised something still more uncommon. During three years Philip had employed all the power of his

European dominions, and exhausted the treasures of the Indies, in vast preparations for war. A fleet, the greatest that had ever appeared in the ocean, was ready to sail from Lisbon, and a numerous land army was assembled to embark on board of it. Its destination was still unknown, though many circumstances made it probable that the blow was aimed, in the first place, against England. Elizabeth had long given secret aid to the revolted provinces in the Low Countries, and now openly afforded them her protection. A numerous body of her troops was in their service; the earl of Leicester commanded their armies; she had great sway in the civil government of the republic; and some of its most considerable towns were in her possession. Her fleets had insulted the coasts of Spain, intercepted the galleons from the West Indies, and threatened the colonies there. Roused by so many injuries, allured by views of ambition, and animated by a superstitious zeal for propagating the Romish religion, Philip resolved not only to invade, but to conquer England, to which his descent from the house of Lancaster and the donation of pope Sixtus the fifth, gave him, in his own opinion, a double title. 1588.

Conduct of James on that occasion.

Elizabeth saw the danger approach, and prepared to encounter it. The measures for the defence of her kingdom were concerted and carried on with the wisdom and vigour which distinguished her reign. Her chief care was to secure the friendship of the king of Scots. She had treated the queen his mother with a rigour unknown among princes; she had often used himself harshly, and with contempt; and though he had hitherto prudently suppressed his resentment of these injuries, she did not believe it to be altogether extinguished, and was afraid that, in her present situation, it might burst out with fatal violence. Philip, sensible how much an alliance with Scotland would facilitate his enterprise, courted James with the utmost assiduity. He excited him to revenge his mother's

1588. wrong; he flattered him with the hopes of sharing his conquests; and offered him in marriage his daughter, the infanta Isabella. At the same time, Scotland swarmed with priests, his emissaries, who seduced some of the nobles to popery, and corrupted others with bribes and promises. Huntly, Errol, Crawford, were the heads of a faction which openly espoused the interest of Spain. Lord Maxwell, arriving from that court, began to assemble his followers, and to take arms, that he might be ready to join the Spaniards. In order to counterbalance all these, Elizabeth made the warmest professions of friendship to the king; and Ashby, her ambassador, entertained him with magnificent hopes and promises. He assured him, that his right of succession to the crown should be publicly acknowledged in England; that he should be created a duke in that kingdom; that he should be admitted to some share in the government; and receive a considerable pension annually. James, it is probable, was too well acquainted with Elizabeth's arts, to rely entirely on these promises. But he understood his own interest in the present juncture, and pursued it with much steadiness. He rejected an alliance with Spain, as dangerous. He refused to admit into his presence an ambassador from the pope. He seized colonel Semple, an agent of the prince of Parma. He drove many of the seminary priests out of the kingdom. He marched suddenly to Dumfries, dispersed Maxwell's followers, and took him prisoner. In a convention of the nobles, he declared his resolution to adhere inviolably to the league with England; and, without listening to the suggestions of revenge, determined to act in concert with Elizabeth, against the common enemy of the protestant faith. He put the kingdom in a posture of defence, and levied troops to obstruct the landing of the Spaniards. He offered to send an army to Elizabeth's assistance, and told her ambassador that he expected no other favour from the king of

Spain, but that which Polyphemus had promised to Ulysses, that when he had devoured all his companions, he would make him his last morsel[q]. 1588.

The zeal of the people, on this occasion, was not inferior to that of the king; and the extraordinary danger, with which they were threatened, suggested to them an extraordinary expedient for their security. A bond was framed for the maintenance of true religion, as well as the defence of the king's person and government, in opposition to all enemies, foreign and domestic. This contained a confession of the protestant faith, a particular renunciation of the errours of popery, and the most solemn promises, in the name and through the strength of God, of adhering to each other in supporting the former, and contending against the latter, to the utmost of their power[r]. The king, the nobles, the clergy, and the people, subscribed with equal alacrity. Strange or uncommon as such a combination may now appear, many circumstances contributed at that time to recommend it, and to render the idea familiar to the Scots. When roused by an extraordinary event, or alarmed by any public danger, the people of Israel were accustomed to bind themselves, by a solemn covenant, to adhere to that religion which the Almighty had established among them; this the Scots considered as a sacred precedent, which it became them to imitate. In that age, no considerable enterprise was undertaken in Scotland, without a bond of mutual defence, which all concerned reckoned necessary for their security. The form of this religious confederacy is plainly borrowed from those political ones, of which so many instances have occurred; the articles, stipulations, and peculiar modes of expression, are exactly the same in both. Almost all the considerable popish princes were then joined in a league for

A national covenant in defence of religion.

[q] Camd. 544. Johnst. 139. Spotsw. 369.
[r] Dunlop's Collect. of Confess. vol. ii. 108.

1588. extirpating the reformed religion, and nothing could be more natural, or seemed more efficacious, than to enter into a counter-association, in order to oppose the progress of that formidable conspiracy. To these causes did the 'covenant,' which is become so famous in history, owe its origin. It was renewed at different times during the reign of James[a]. It was revived with great solemnity, though with considerable alterations, in the year one thousand six hundred and thirty-eight. It was adopted by the English in the year one thousand six hundred and forty-three, and enforced by the civil and ecclesiastical authority of both kingdoms. The political purposes to which it was then made subservient, and the violent and unconstitutional measures which it was then employed to promote, it is not our province to explain. But at the juncture in which it was first introduced, we may pronounce it to have been a prudent and laudable device for the defence of the religion and liberties of the nation; nor were the terms in which it was conceived, other than might have been expected from men alarmed with the impending danger of popery, and threatened with an invasion by the most bigoted and most powerful prince in Europe.

Philip's eagerness to conquer England did not inspire him either with the vigour or despatch necessary to ensure the success of so mighty an enterprise. His fleet, which ought to have sailed in April, did not enter the English channel till the middle of July. It hovered many days on the coast, in expectation of being joined by the prince of Parma, who was blocked up in the ports of Flanders by a Dutch squadron. Continual disasters pursued the Spaniards during that time; successive storms and battles, which are well known, conspired with their own ill-conduct to disappoint their enterprise. And by the blessing of providence, which watched with remarkable care over the protestant re-

The armada defeated.

[a] Cald. iv. 129.

ligion and the liberties of Britain, the English valour scattered and destroyed the armada, on which Philip had arrogantly bestowed the name of invincible. After being driven out of the English seas, their shattered ships were forced to steer their course towards Spain, round Scotland and Ireland. Many of them suffered shipwreck on these dangerous and unknown coasts. Though James kept his subjects under arms, to watch the motions of the Spaniards, and to prevent their landing in an hostile manner, he received with great humanity seven hundred who were forced ashore by a tempest, and, after supplying them with necessaries, permitted them to return into their own country. 1588.

On the retreat of the Spaniards, Elizabeth sent an ambassador to congratulate with James, and to compliment him on the firmness and generosity he had discovered during a conjuncture so dangerous. But none of Ashby's promises were any longer remembered; that minister was even accused of having exceeded his powers, by his too liberal offers; and, conscious of his own falsehood, or ashamed of being disowned by his court, he withdrew secretly out of Scotland[t].

Philip, convinced by fatal experience of his own rashness in attempting the conquest of England, by a naval armament, equipped at so great a distance, and subjected, in all its operations, to the delays, and dangers, and uncertainties, arising from seas and winds, resolved to make his attack in another form, and to adopt the plan which the princes of Lorrain had long meditated, of invading England through Scotland. A body of his troops, he imagined, might be easily wafted over from the Low Countries to that kingdom; and if they could once obtain footing, or procure assistance there, the frontier of England was open and defenceless, and the northern counties full of Roman catholics, who would receive them with open arms. Meanwhile, 1589. Philip's intrigues in Scotland.

[t] Johnst. 134. Camd. 548. Murdin, 635. 788.

1589. a descent might be threatened on the southern coast, which would divide the English army, distract their councils, and throw the whole kingdom into terrible convulsions. In order to prepare the way for the execution of this design, he remitted a considerable sum of money to Bruce, a seminary priest in Scotland, and employed him, together with Hay, Creighton, and Tyrie, Scottish jesuits, to gain over as many persons of distinction as possible to his interest. Zeal for popery, and the artful insinuations of these emissaries, induced several noblemen to favour a measure which tended so manifestly to the destruction of their country. Huntly, though the king had lately given him in marriage the daughter of his favourite the duke of Lennox, continued warmly attached to the Romish church. Crawford and Errol were animated with the zeal of new converts. They all engaged in a correspondence with the prince of Parma, and, in their letters to him, offered their service to the king of Spain, and undertook, with the aid of six thousand men, to render him master of Scotland, and to bring so many of their vassals into the field, that he should be able to enter England with a numerous army. Francis Stewart, grandson of James the fifth [u], whom the king had created earl of Bothwell, though influenced by no motive of religion, for he still adhered to the protestant faith, was prompted merely by caprice, and the restlessness of his nature, to join in this treasonable correspondence.

Popish nobles conspire against the king.

Feb. 17. All these letters were intercepted in England. Elizabeth, alarmed at the danger which threatened her own kingdom, sent them immediately to the king, and, reproaching him with his former lenity towards the popish party, called upon him to check this formidable conspiracy by a proper severity. But James, though firmly attached to the protestant religion, though profoundly

The king's maxims with regard to popery.

[u] He was the son of John Prior, of Coldingham, one of James's natural children.

versed in the theological controversies between the reformers and the church of Rome, though he had employed himself, at that early period of life, in writing a commentary on the Revelations, in which he laboured to prove the pope to be antichrist, had, nevertheless, adopted already those maxims concerning the treatment of the Roman catholics, to which he adhered through the rest of his life. The Roman catholics were at that time a powerful and active party in England; they were far from being an inconsiderable faction in his own kingdom. The pope and the king of Spain were ready to take part in all their machinations, and to second every effort of their bigotry. The opposition of such a body to his succession to the crown of England, added to the averseness of the English from the government of strangers, might create him many difficulties. In order to avoid these, he thought it necessary to sooth rather than to irritate the Roman catholics, and to reconcile them to his succession, by the hopes of gentler treatment, and some mitigation of the rigour of those laws, which were now in force against them. This attempt to gain one party by promises of indulgence and acts of clemency, while he adhered with all the obstinacy of a disputant to the doctrines and tenets of the other, has given an air of mystery, and even of contradiction, to this part of the king's character. The papists, with the credulity of a sect struggling to obtain power, believed his heart to be wholly theirs; and the protestants, with the jealousy inseparable from those who are already in possession of power, viewed every act of lenity as a mark of indifference, or a symptom of apostacy. In order to please both, James often aimed at an excessive refinement, mingled with dissimulation, in which he imagined the perfection of government and of kingcraft to consist. 1589.

His behaviour on this occasion was agreeable to these general maxims. Notwithstanding the solicitations of the queen of England, enforced by the zealous

His excessive lenity to the conspirators.

1589. remonstrances of his own clergy, a short imprisonment was the only punishment he inflicted upon Huntly and his associates. But he soon had reason to repent an act of clemency so inconsistent with the dignity of government. The first use which the conspirators made of their liberty was, to assemble their followers; and, under pretence of removing chancellor Maitland, an able minister, but warmly devoted to the English interest, from the king's council and presence, they attempted to seize James himself. This attempt being defeated, partly by Maitland's vigilance, and partly by their own ill-conduct, they were forced to retire to the north, where they openly erected the standard of rebellion. But as the king's government was not generally unpopular, or his ministers odious, their own vassals joined them slowly, and discovered no zeal in the cause. The king, in person, advancing against them with such forces as he could suddenly levy, they durst not rely so much on the fidelity of the troops, which, though superior in number, followed them with reluctance, as to hazard a battle; but suffering them to disperse, they surrendered to the king, and threw themselves on his mercy. Huntly, Errol, Crawford, and Bothwell, were all brought to a public trial. Repeated acts of treason were easily proved against them. The king, however, did not permit any sentence to be pronounced; and, after keeping them a few months in confinement, he took occasion, amidst the public festivity and rejoicings at the approach of his marriage, to set them at liberty [x].

The king's marriage with Anne of Denmark.

As James was the only descendant of the ancient monarchs of Scotland in the direct line; as all hopes of uniting the crowns of the two kingdoms would have expired with him; as the earl of Arran, the presumptive heir to the throne, was lunatic; the king's marriage was, on all these accounts, an event which the nation

[x] Spotsw. 373. Cald. iv. 103—130.

wished for with the utmost ardour. He himself was no less desirous of accomplishing it; and had made overtures for that purpose to the eldest daughter of Frederick the second, king of Denmark. But Elizabeth, jealous of every thing that would render the accession of the house of Stewart more acceptable to the English, endeavoured to perplex James, in the same manner she had done Mary, and employed as many artifices to defeat or to retard his marriage. His ministers, gained by bribes and promises, seconded her intention; and though several different ambassadors were sent from Scotland to Denmark, they produced powers so limited, or insisted on conditions so extravagant, that Frederick could not believe the king to be in earnest; and, suspecting that there was some design to deceive or amuse him, gave his daughter in marriage to the duke of Brunswick. Not discouraged by this disappointment, which he imputed entirely to the conduct of his own ministers, James made addresses to the princess Anne, Frederick's second daughter. Though Elizabeth endeavoured to divert him from this by recommending Catherine, the king of Navarre's sister, as a more advantageous match; though she prevailed on the privy council of Scotland to declare against the alliance with Denmark, he persisted in his choice; and despairing of overcoming the obstinacy of his own ministers in any other manner, he secretly encouraged the citizens of Edinburgh to take arms. They threatened to tear in pieces the chancellor, whom they accused as the person whose artifices had hitherto disappointed the wishes of the king and the expectations of his people. In consequence of this, the earl marischal was sent into Denmark, at the head of a splendid embassy. He received ample powers and instructions, drawn with the king's own hand. The marriage articles were quickly agreed upon, and the young queen set sail towards Scotland. James made great preparations for her reception, and waited her landing with all 1589.

1589. the impatience of a lover; when the unwelcome account arrived, that a violent tempest had arisen, which drove back her fleet to Norway, in a condition so shattered, that there was little hope of its putting again to sea before the spring. This unexpected disappointment he felt with the utmost sensibility. He instantly fitted out some ships, and, without communicating his intention to any of his council, sailed in person, attended by the chancellor, several noblemen, and a train of three
Oct. 22. hundred persons, in quest of his bride. He arrived safely in a small harbour near Upslo, where the queen
Nov. 24. then resided. There the marriage was solemnized; and as it would have been rash to trust those boisterous seas in the winter season, James accepted the invitation of the court of Denmark, and, repairing to Copenhagen, passed several months there, amidst continual feasting and amusements, in which both the queen and himself had great delight[y].

No event in the king's life appears to be a wider deviation from his general character, than this sudden sally. His son Charles the first was capable of that excessive admiration of the other sex, which arises from great sensibility of heart, heightened by elegance of taste; and the romantic air of his journey to Spain suited such a disposition. But James was not susceptible of any refined gallantry, and always expressed that contempt for the female character which a pedantic erudition, unacquainted with politeness, is apt to inspire. He was exasperated, however, and rendered impatient by the many obstacles which had been laid in his way. He was anxious to secure the political advantages which he expected from marriage; and fearing that a delay might afford Elizabeth and his own ministers an opportunity of thwarting him by new intrigues, he suddenly took the resolution of preventing them, by a voyage from which he expected to

[y] Melvil, 352. Spotsw. 377. Murdin, 637.

return in a few weeks. The nation seemed to applaud his conduct, and to be pleased with this appearance of amorous ardour in a young prince. Notwithstanding his absence so long beyond the time he expected, the nobles, the clergy, and the people, vied with one another in loyalty and obedience; and no period of the king's reign was more remarkable for tranquillity, or more free from any eruption of those factions which so often disturbed the kingdom. 1589.