

## CHAPTER II.

1554 - 1561.

## CONTEMPORARY SOVEREIGNS.

<i>England.</i>	<i>France.</i>	<i>Spain.</i>	<i>Portugal.</i>	<i>Germany.</i>	<i>Popes.</i>
Mary. Elizabeth.	Henry II. Francis II. Charles IX.	Charles V. Philip II.	John III. Sebastian.	Ferdinand I. Maximilian II.	Paul III. Julius III. Paul IV. Pius IV.

MARY of Guise, who now assumed the supreme authority, was in many respects well qualified for her high station. She possessed a calm judgment; good, though not brilliant natural parts; manners which, without losing their dignity, were feminine and engaging; and so intimate a knowledge of the character of the people over whom she ruled, that if left to herself, there was every prospect of her managing affairs with wisdom and success. Her abilities, indeed, were sufficiently apparent in the quiet and triumphant manner in which she had brought about the revolution which placed her at the head of affairs. Although of a different religion, she had so entirely gained the affections of the Protestant party, that their support was one chief cause of her success. Nor by the prudent concessions which she made to their opponents, had she alienated from

herself the hearts of the adherents of the Romish faith, whose leaders she attached to her interest by gifts of the vacant benefices, and the exertion of her influence at the papal court.<sup>1</sup> It was chiefly by her management that the fierce and sanguinary feuds which for a long period had distracted the Scottish aristocracy, were composed; and her assumption of the regency was viewed with equal satisfaction by the clergy, the nobility, and the people.

But the possession of power is a trying and dangerous thing to the best. She had incurred many obligations to the court of France, which her gratitude or her promises impelled her to repay, by intruding foreigners into the offices hitherto filled by natives; and, unmindful of the extraordinary jealousy with which the Scottish people were disposed to regard all interference of this kind, she lent herself to measures dictated more by the ambition of the house of Guise, than by a desire to promote the happiness of her daughter's kingdom.

Her first act went far to disgust the nobility and the people. Huntly, the chancellor,<sup>2</sup> although per-

<sup>1</sup> Lesly, pp. 241, 242. MS. Records of Privy Council, fol. 8, p. 2, in a State Paper, entitled "Answers to the most Christian King of France's Memorial," given to Thomas Master of Erskine, Ambassador to the Court of France.

<sup>2</sup> This powerful and able nobleman, who was the head of the Romish party in Scotland, had been taken prisoner in the battle of Pinky, by Ralph Vane (Anderson's MS. Hist. vol. ii. p. 130 dorso), but made his escape in 1548, and on his return to Scotland was restored to his office of Chancellor. An interesting account of his escape will be found in Anderson's MS. Hist. vol. ii. pp. 130, 131.

mitted to retain the name, was superseded in all real power by Monsieur de Rubay, who obtained the place of vice-chancellor and possession of the great seal. Villemore was made comptroller, a place of high responsibility; and D'Oscl, although placed in no office, became her confidential adviser in all matters of state.<sup>1</sup> These imprudent preferments excited a dissatisfaction, which, was indeed smothered for the time, but afterwards broke out with fatal force against the Regent.

In the mean time the kingdom became disturbed in the north, where the fierce and powerful sept of the clan Ranald, under their leader John Mudyard, resumed their career of misrule and spoliation. The general policy hitherto pursued in these districts, was that introduced by James the Fourth. It was the practice of this monarch to keep the various clans in subordination by encouraging their mutual rivalry, and employing them as checks upon each other. In the event of any sept rising into a dangerous pre-eminence, or, as was not unusual, into open rebellion, one of the most powerful northern nobles, as Athole, Huntly, or Argile, was entrusted with a commission of lieutenancy, and, on repairing to the disturbed districts with an armed force, they engaged some of the rival clans to assist in putting down the insurrection. There can be no doubt that such commissions, of which the powers were indefinite,

<sup>1</sup> Keith's Eccl. Hist. pp. 69, 70. Lesly, pp. 250, 251. Anderson's MS. Hist. vol. ii. page 174, dorso.

had been often abused to the purposes of individual ambition. The great lords looked for forfeitures of the lands of the highland chiefs, to reward themselves and their followers; and, on many occasions, rather encouraged treason than promoted submission. It was a consequence of this miserable system that these chiefs continued in rebellion, not so much from any unwillingness to acknowledge the authority of the government, as from a dread of the influence and misrepresentations of their enemies.

In 1552, when the Regent Arran and the Queen Dowager held their court at Inverness, John Mudyard, the leader of the clan Ranald, had treated with proud contempt their summons to appear before them; and although Argile afterwards promised to compel his attendance, or to expose him to the extremity of fire and sword, he appears to have eluded both the promise and the penalty. In 1554, he and his adherents once more bid defiance to the government; and Huntly, armed with a commission of lieutenancy, and leading an army chiefly composed of lowland barons, proceeded against him as far as Abertarff in Invernesshire. His attempt, however, was singularly unsuccessful; for when it became necessary to pursue the daring outlaw into his mountain fastnesses, his lowland leaders declined acting in a country unsuited for cavalry, whilst his highland auxiliaries reproached him for the execution of Mackintosh, captain of the clan Chattan,<sup>1</sup> and showed

<sup>1</sup> Lesly, p. 251, 252. Maitland, vol. ii. p. 893.











































































































































