

CHAP. III.

JAMES THE SIXTH.

1593—1594.

 CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.

<i>England.</i>	<i>France.</i>	<i>Germany.</i>	<i>Spain.</i>	<i>Portugal.</i>	<i>Pope.</i>
Elizabeth.	Henry IV.	Rodolph II.	Philip II.	Philip II.	Clement VIII.

IN the late revolution James had exhibited unusual firmness; and this last compromise with Bothwell was almost a victory. Nor was he deceived in his expectations of still farther triumph over this insolent noble, whom he now justly regarded as the leader of the English party and of the Kirk. The resolution and courage which the King had exhibited, convinced his turbulent barons that he was no longer a minor, or a puppet, to be tossed about from faction to faction, and made the helpless and passive instrument of their ambition. Many of them, therefore, began to attach themselves to the royal faction, from self-interest rather than loyalty; and however fatal to the peace of the country, the deadly feuds which existed amongst the nobles, by preventing combination, formed the strength of the monarch at this moment. It was evident that Bothwell had either

deceived Elizabeth or himself, when he spoke to Carey and Mathews of his overwhelming strength, and the facility with which he could guide the government of Scotland according to the wishes of his renowned Empress. Already his ally, the Duke of Lennox, young, capricious, and a favourite of James, began to waver; and before the appointed Convention met at Stirling on the 9th of September, a powerful reaction had taken place, which no efforts of English intrigue could arrest. It was in vain that Elizabeth, Burghley, and Sir Robert Cecil his son, who now acted as a chief councillor in all "Scottish causes," exerted themselves to keep up a faction, and even entered into a secret communication with Huntly and the Popish party, in the vain hope of bringing about a coalition between them and Bothwell. The effort to join with the Roman Catholics, whom they had so often stigmatized as enemies to the truth, only served to show the fraud and falsehood of Elizabeth's and Cecil's constantly-repeated assertion, that they were guided solely by zeal for the glory of God and the interests of the true religion; and Bowes the Ambassador assured them, that if the plot for this unnatural combination went forward, the ministers of the Kirk, from whom it could not be concealed, would "greatly wonder and start thereat."¹ Besides, how was he to

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 6th Sept., 1593. As this fact is new, and shows the insincerity of Elizabeth and Burghley, and the sincerity and honesty of the Kirk, proving, also, that Bothwell's party was the party of the Kirk, I give the passage from Bowes' letter.

"The party employed to sound Chanus [Huntly] and his com-

reconcile the course now recommended with his instructions to prosecute the Papistical rebels? How could he allow Huntly's uncle, a priest and a Jesuit, to steal quietly out of Scotland, and yet satisfy the Kirk and the Protestant leaders, that he (Bowes) was an enemy to the idolaters? All this needed to be reconciled and explained; and he begged for speedy directions.¹

We have seen how completely Bothwell had been supported and encouraged in his late audacious and treasonable enterprises by the English Queen. He was now to feel the fickleness of her favour: and with that deep hypocrisy which so often marked her political conduct, she addressed a letter to the King of Scots,

partners, how they stand affected to proceed in and perform their offers made for America [England,] letteth me know that he hath spoken with Chanus, and with such as tendered this offer for him and the rest; and that they will go forwards agreeable to the motions offered. For the which this party thus travelling herein hath promised to go forwards in his course with diligence, as all things may be effected with best expedition and secrecy, likeas it will be made known, I trust, to your Lordship, very shortly. I understand perfectly that Chanus [Huntly] will both impart to Petrea [King of Scots,] and also communicate to his partners, whatsoever shall be concredited to his trust and secrecy; and I believe, verily, that his partners, binding up with Argomartes [Bothwell,] shall acquaint him therewith. Further, this cannot be kept from the ears of the vi m £86£6 [Kirk] here, who will greatly start and wonder hereat. Therefore I beseech your Lordship that this may be well considered." Bowes very naturally goes on to observe, that this course of friendship with the Catholics is inconsistent with his instructions, which commanded him to prosecute the "Papistical rebels."

¹ MS. Letter, St. P. Off., Bowes to Burghley, 6th Sept., 1593.

and instructions to Bowes, in which she stigmatized the Scottish earl as guilty of an abominable fact, which moved her utmost abhorrence; and expressed her unfeigned astonishment, that any subject who had acted thus insolently, had not only escaped without chastisement, but had received, as it appeared, a remission of such atrocious conduct. She alluded also, with scorn and indignation, to his refusal to prosecute those "notable traitors of the North"—Huntly, Errol, and Angus, "who had conspired among themselves, and agreed to admit great forces of strangers to enter into his realm, to the ruin of his estate and the subversion of religion;" and she warned him that such sudden changes as had been brought to her ears, such capriciousness and imbecility of judgment, would end not only in the loss of his liberty, but might endanger his life.¹ It did not suit James' policy or circumstances to tear the veil from these pretences at this moment; and, indeed, we are not certain that, however he may have suspected Elizabeth's double-dealing, he had detected it with anything of the certainty with which we can now unravel her complicated intrigues. At all events, he chose to fight her with her own crafty weapons, and pretended to Bowes that he was fully satisfied with her late assurances of friendship. When the appointed Convention assembled at Stirling, Bothwell was commanded to absent himself from Court until the meeting of Parliament, which was fixed for the 14th of Novem-

¹ MS. St. P. Off., Orig. Draft of Her Majesty's Letter to Mr Bowes, 23d August, 1593.

