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THE

HISTORY

OF

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

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MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

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THE

HISTORY

OF

Mary Queen of Scots,

WHO WAS BEHEADED
IN THE NINETEENTH YEAR OF HER CAPTIVITY.

LONDON:

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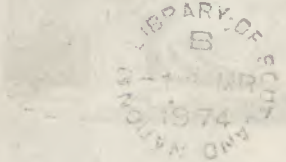

HISTORY

OF

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

A VICTIM to the malignity of female jealousy, and to the rage of puritanical bigotry, must ever excite the feelings of a sympathetic heart. Such was Mary Stuart, commonly called Mary queen of Scots, the daughter of James V. whose personal accomplishments were brilliant and captivating. By beauty of countenance, symmetry of form, and dignity of stature, she was eminently distinguished. The natural elegance of her address, improved by

the polish of a Gallic education, heightened the attractions of her person; and her engaging affability, vivacity, and ease, delighted all who had the honour of conversing with her. She possessed very respectable talents; and her mind was cultivated by literature and erudition.

At a very early age, this princess was married to the dauphin of France, afterwards Francis II. who dying in 1560, left her a widow at the age of nineteen. As Elizabeth had been declared illegitimate by Henry VIII. Francis, in right of his wife, began to assume the title of king of England; nor did the queen of Scots, his consort, seem to decline sharing this empty appellation. But what gave the greatest offence to Elizabeth, was a report that Francis and Mary had coined money

with the arms of France quartered with those of England, and had actually caused the same to be engraved on their service of plate.

Upon the death of Francis, Mary, the widow, still seemed disposed to keep up the title; but finding herself exposed to the persecution of the dowager queen, the mother of Francis, who now began to take the lead in France, she determined to return home to Scotland, and demanded a safe passage from her cousin Elizabeth through England. But it was now Elizabeth's turn to refuse; and she sent back a very haughty answer to Mary's request, upbraiding her with having designs on the crown of England. From hence a personal enmity began to prevail between these rival queens.

The reformation in England having

completely taken place, that work was now also going on in Scotland; but with circumstances of great animosity among the people. The mutual resentment which either party in that kingdom bore to each other, knew no bounds. It was in this divided state of the country, that Elizabeth, by giving encouragement to the reformers, gained their affections from their native queen, who being a catholic, naturally favoured those of her own communion. The reformers considered Elizabeth as their patroness and defender, and Mary as their persecutor and enemy. In this situation of things Mary had returned from France to reign in Scotland, entirely attached to the customs and manners of that airy people, and consequently averse to the gloomy austerity which her reformed subjects

affected, and which they fancied made an indispensible ingredient in religion. The jealousy thus excited, began every day to grow stronger; the clergy waited only for some indiscretion in the queen, to fly out into open opposition; and her affairs too soon gave them sufficient opportunity.

After two years spent in altercation and reproach between Mary and her subjects, it was resolved by her council, A.D. 1564, that she should look out for some alliance, by which she might be protected against the insolence and infatuation of her spiritual instructors. After some deliberation, lord Darnley, son to the earl of Lenox, was the person in whom their wishes centred. He had been born and educated in England; was grandson to Henry VII. by his daughter Margaret of Scotland,

and therefore divided with Mary the claim to the crown of England; he was now in his twentieth year, and was possessed of a fine manly exterior. When sir James Melvill was sent to communicate this treaty of marriage to the court of London, and to have recognized their next right of succession to the crown, Elizabeth affected to approve of the nuptials. The English princess, as jealous of Mary's charms as of her title, sifted the ambassador even as to the colour of her hair. At last, she asked him plainly, which of the two he thought the fairest? To this the cautious Melvill answered, that her majesty was the fairest person in England, and his mistress in Scotland. During their interviews, Elizabeth showed herself to him in the dresses of various countries, and con-

trived to let him hear her perform on the virginals, an instrument she understood to perfection; all the time endeavouring, with incredible dexterity, to allure the envoy into comparisons disadvantageous to his mistress.—Yet Elizabeth, when afterwards informed of the actual consummation of these nuptials, pretended to testify the utmost displeasure; seized the earl of Lenox's English estate, and threw the countess and her second son into the Tower. Duplicity of conduct was a strong feature in Elizabeth's character; and, on this occasion, it served as a pretext for publicly denying Mary's title to the future succession of England, which that princess urged. In this same year, 1564, under the persecuting hand of Elizabeth towards all her relations of the blood royal, Frances duchess of Suffolk,

daughter to Mary of France, youngest sister to Henry VIII. ended in prison a life, which, for a variety of wretchedness, had but few parallels since that of the Trojan Hecuba. She had seen her daughter, lady Jane Grey, beheaded. Her own and her daughter's husband had shared the same fate. Her daughter Catherine, after being repudiated by the earl of Pembroke, was now confined in the Tower; and her youngest daughter, named Mary, most unequally matched to an inferior officer of the household.

The queen of Scots, in the mean time, had been too much dazzled by the pleasing exterior of her new husband, to allow herself to look to the accomplishments of his mind. Darnley was but a weak and ignorant man; violent, yet variable in his gratifica-

tions; insolent, yet credulous, and easily governed by flatterers; devoid of gratitude, because he thought no favours equal to his merit; and being addicted to low pleasures, he was equally incapable of the delicate sensations of love and tenderness. Mary, at first had taken a pleasure in exalting him beyond measure; but having leisure to remark his follies and his vices, she converted her regard into disgust; and Darnley, enraged at her coldness, directed his vengeance against every person he suspected to be the cause of this change in her behaviour.

There was then in her court one David Rizzio, the son of a musician at Turin, himself a musician, who finding it difficult to subsist by his art in his own country, had followed the ambassador from that court into Scotland.

As he understood music to perfection, he was introduced into the queen's concert, who was so taken with him, that she desired the ambassador, upon his departure, to leave Rizzio behind. The queen seemed to place peculiar confidence in him; and her secretary for French affairs having fallen under her displeasure, she promoted Rizzio to that office. It was easily to prevail upon a man of Darnley's jealous temper, that Rizzio was the person who had estranged the queen's affections; and a surmise once conceived, became to him a certainty. He therefore consulted with some lords of his party, stung as he was with envy, rage, and resentment; and they not only fanned the conflagration, but offered their assistance to dispatch Rizzio. The earl of Murray, brother to the queen, the

earl of Morton, lord Douglas, natural brother to the countess of Lenox, the lords Ruthven and Lindsey, are said to have settled the circumstances of this poor creature's assassination; and determined that, as a punishment for the queen's indiscretions, the murder should be committed in her presence. Mary was at this time in the sixth month of her pregnancy, and was then supping in private, attended by the countess of Argyle, her natural sister, some other servants, and her secretary Rizzio. Lord Darnley led the way into the apartment by a private staircase, and stood for some time leaning on the back of Mary's chair. His angry looks and unexpected intrusion, greatly alarmed the queen, who nevertheless remained silent. A little after, Ruthven, Douglas, and the other conspira-

tors, rushed in, all armed, and showing in their looks some brutal intentions. The queen could no longer restrain her fears, but demanded the reason of this bold intrusion. Ruthven made her no answer; but ordered Rizzio to quit a place of which he was unworthy. Rizzio now saw that he was the object of their vengeance; and, trembling with apprehension, put himself under the protection of the queen, who, on her part, strove to interpose in his behalf. Douglas, in the mean time, had reached the unfortunate Rizzio; and snatching a dagger from the king's side, plunged it into Rizzio's bosom, who, screaming with fear and agony, was dragged into the ante-chamber, where he was inhumanly butchered with fifty-six wounds. The affrighted princess, being informed of his fate, in-

stantly discontinued her lamentations, and menaced revenge. The insult indeed upon her person and honour, and the danger to which her life was exposed on account of her pregnancy, were injuries so atrocious and so complicated, that they left but little room for pardon. Yet this act of violence seemed only to be punished by temporising; she pretended to forgive so great a crime, and exerted the force of her natural allurements so powerfully, that her husband submitted implicitly to her will. He gave up his accomplices to her resentment, and retired with her to Dunbar, while she, having collected an army which the conspirators had not power to resist, advanced to Edinburgh, and obliged them to fly into England, where they led a fugitive life, in poverty and distress. They made

application, however, to the earl of Bothwell; and that nobleman, desirous to strengthen his party by the accession of their interest, found means to pacify her resentment, and he at length procured them liberty to return home.

The earl of Bothwell was of a considerable family in Scotland; and though not distinguished by any talents, civil or military, yet he made some noise in the dissensions of the state, and was an opposer of the reformation. He was a man of profligate manners, had involved his fortune in great debts, and reduced his income by his profusions. This nobleman, however, is said to have ingratiated himself so far with the queen, that all her measures were eventually directed by his advice and authority. Reports were even spread of more unpardonable

intimacies; and these gave such uneasiness to Darnley, that he left the court, and retired to Glasgow, where he was suddenly taken ill. Those who wished well to Mary's character, were extremely pleased to hear that her tenderness for her husband was revived, and that she had taken a journey to Glasgow to visit him in his sickness. Darnley was so delighted with her affectionate behaviour, that he resolved to part with her no more; he put himself under her direction, and returned with her to Edinburgh. She lived in the palace of Holyrood-house; but as the situation of that mansion was low, and the concourse of persons about the court attended with noise, which might disturb him in his infirm state of health, she fitted up an apartment for him in a solitary house at some dis-

tance, called the Kirk of Field. Mary even there gave him every mark of kindness and attachment; she conversed cordially and kindly with him, and slept in a room under him. But on the 9th of February, 1567, she told him she would pass that night in the palace, because the marriage of one of her household was there to be celebrated in her presence. But dreadful was the consequence which ensued. About two o'clock in the morning the whole city was alarmed at an uncommon explosion: the house in which Darnley lay was blown up with gunpowder! His dead body was found at some distance in a neighbouring field, but without any marks of violence or contusion. No doubt could be entertained that Darnley was murdered; and the general suspicion fell upon the earl of

Bothwell. All orders of the state, and whole body of the people, began most commendably to demand justice, and a strict inquiry to be set on foot, in order to detect, and to punish, the perpetrators; amongst whom the queen herself was suspected to be implicated. On this subject the pens of the most able historians have been employed; and various have been their conjectures to the fact. The party zeal of our more early historians induced them to labour hard to stain the memory of the unfortunate Mary with the blood of her husband; while the latter and more dispassionate writers, have been inclined wholly to acquit her. Dr. Coote, in his very able and impartial history, seems judiciously to have steered between the two extremes, which has prompted us to follow him.

It was the partizans of the earl of Murray who first propagated reports to the prejudice of the queen's character, insinuating that she had been concerned in the murder of a husband whom she hated. But more satisfactory evidence than has yet been produced, seems necessary, to an impartial mind, to justify those who have imputed to her so horrible a crime. However great might be the aversion which she had conceived for Darnley, the humanity of her disposition was too strong to suffer her to concur in his destruction. Had she been desirous of his death, she might have procured the judicial condemnation of one who was so generally despised, that the nobles would not have interposed to rescue him from justice. She might have brought him to trial for the united crimes of murder

and treason; of murder, in having abetted the assassination of her secretary; of treason, in having directed his agents to commit that deed in the queen's apartment, to the manifest hazard of her life. She might, with equal facility, have procured a *legal* separation from him, without injuring her son's legitimacy, which could not have been affected by a divorce grounded on his adulterous commerce with other women; or, even if there had been a risk of destroying the son's right of inheritance, an act which exposed that right to dispute would have been far less criminal than the murder of the father.

From the character, also, of the chief accusers of Mary, a dispassionate inquirer would be led to form a strong presumption of her innocence. These

were the earls of Murray and Morton, who were men of such depraved hearts, and such unprincipled minds, that no crime which might gratify their irregular passions, would appear too enormous for them to perpetrate. The former was confident that, by his hypocritical pretences to piety, and by his artful mode of throwing off his own guilt on the head of others, he could retain the good opinion of the whole presbyterian party, whose plan of reformation he had warmly patronised. An eminent historian observes, that Murray could have no motive for the commission of the murder; but, without judging from the event, we may infer, from his conduct preceding the king's death, that he aimed at the possession of the government; and, as he retained a strong resentment against his sister

for her final resolution of punishing him, which nothing but the situation of her affairs, on the assássination of Rizzio, had induced her to relinquish, he was ready to contrive any scheme which might at once be subservient to his animosity and his ambition. We also find that he had been apprehensive of the execution of Darnley's menaces against his life; a fact recorded by Camden, which, according to the frequent practice of that age, would prompt him to anticipate the blow. Under these circumstances, can it be justly said that he had no motive for the crime? On the contrary, he seems to have had every motive which, however repugnant to humanity and justice, could urge a vindictive and aspiring nobleman, who foresaw, in the event of the conspiracy, the indulgence not only of

his revenge against Darnley, but likewise against the queen, whom, by calumnies consequent on the murder, and by such advice as might contribute to increase the effect of his malicious fabrications, he might render her so unpopular that her deposition might easily be procured by his influence over a people who had long been impatient of the government of a catholic princess. The earl of Morton, the friend and confederate of Murray, was influenced by similar views. He was exasperated against Darnley for having deserted him after the murder of Rizzio, in violation of his solemn engagements for the protection of the authors of that horrid deed. Besides, the desire of vengeance, the hopes of recovering his influence in the government, and the dignified office of chancellor, in-

clined him to promote, with great eagerness the iniquitous schemes of the queen's brother.

When Mary had received intelligence of her husband's sudden dissolution, she issued a proclamation, offering rewards for the discovery of the murderers. Bothwell being accused of the crime by the public voice, the earl of Lenox advised the queen to bring him to trial, as well as all other persons who were suspected of a concern in it. Mary, without hesitation, gave directions for that purpose; and Lenox was desired to repair to Edinburgh, that he might be present at the judicial proceedings. He proposed that Bothwell should be taken into custody; but the queen at first declined it, because the accusation against him rested only on the evidence of anonymous bills fixed

up in different parts of the city. When the day of trial arrived, the arts of Bothwell, the influence of Morton and the other partizans of Murray (for this nobleman himself, to avoid suspicion, had retired to France), deterred the earl of Lenox from appearing as an accuser; and no evidence being adduced against Bothwell, the jury thought proper to acquit him. This verdict received the sanction of a parliament which met two days afterwards; and the dissolution of this assembly was followed by a remarkable association of many of the nobles for promoting the marriage of Bothwell with the queen. They signed a bond, expressing their conviction of his innocence of the king's murder, and promising to hazard their lives and fortunes in defending him against all who should presume to

charge him with that crime. He had lately been extremely assiduous in his endeavours to obtain favour with Mary; but when he made proposals of marriage to her, she signified her dissent. Unwilling to submit to a refusal, he resolved to make use of compulsive measures; and, by a daring violation of her chastity, to render a marriage with him necessary for the reparation of her wounded honour. He assembled a party of eight hundred horse, under pretence of making an excursion against a banditti; and meeting the queen in her return from a visit to her infant son, he dispersed her small guard, and seizing her horse by the bridle, conveyed her to the castle of Dunbar. He there conjured her, in the most persuasive terms, to forgive that vehemence of passion, which had hurried him into

this outrageous behaviour; called to her mind the loyal services he had performed; represented in strong terms the inveterate malignity of his enemies; and declared that nothing but the queen's favour, exemplified in her acceptance of his hand, could secure him from the effects of their hatred. Her reluctance not being overcome by his artful insinuations, he produced the bond which the associated nobility had signed. Finding his addresses so strongly sanctioned, and not being aware of the perfidious views of the chief subscribers of the bond, she began to relax in her opposition to his proposals, and promised to gratify him in the matrimonial union. A mere promise not being so valid a security as he wished, he had recourse to extraordinary and unlawful means for the

completion of his wishes. Partly by artifice, and partly by force, he triumphed over her chastity. He soon after procured a divorce from his wife, and the nuptials between him and his sovereign were solemnized at Edinburgh.

Bothwell, in the mean time, though an undoubted agent in the murder, was suffered by the rebellious nobles to remain at Dunbar, unmolested, near a fortnight; a circumstance which may be considered as corroborative of the opinion of those who have attributed the contrivance of that deed to Murray and Morton. The latter, who, in the absence of the former, directed the motions of the insurgents, dreaded the regular condemnation of Bothwell, lest he should disclose such particulars as might injure the reputation of his secret accomplices. He therefore connived

at the retreat of this obnoxious nobleman, who, apprehensive of the stroke of assassination, put to sea with a few vessels, and commenced the practice of naval depredation. Being pursued by Kirkaldy of Grange, he escaped to Norway, where he was thrown into prison for an act of piracy. He died in confinement some years afterwards; and, on his death-bed, made a solemn declaration of queen Mary's innocence of the murder of Darnley, in which, he affirmed, the earls of Murray and Morton, secretary Maitland, and other persons of distinction, were concerned with him.

This fatal alliance, however, was the destruction of Mary. The principal nobility met at Stirling; and an association was formed for protecting the young prince her son, and punishing

the king's murderers. Lord Hume was the first in arms; and, leading a body of eight hundred horse, suddenly environed the queen in the castle of Borthwick, and conducted her to Edinburgh, amidst the insults of the populace. From thence she was sent prisoner to the castle of Lochlevin, situated on a lake of that name. Here Mary, by her charms and promises, engaged a young gentleman of the name of Douglas to assist in making her escape; and this he effected by conveying her in disguise in a small boat, rowed by himself. The news of her enlargement being soon spread abroad, the loyalty and love of her people seemed to revive once more. As Bothwell was no longer associated in her cause, many of the nobility signed a bond of association for her

defence; and in a few days she saw herself at the head of sixthousand men.

The earl of Murray, her brother, who had been declared regent, was not slow in assembling forces against her; and, although his army was inferior to that of the queen, he boldly took the field. A battle was fought at Langside, near Glasgow, which proved decisive in his favour. Mary, now totally ruined, fled from the field of battle with great precipitation: and came with a few attendants to the borders of England, vainly hoping for protection from Elizabeth. With these hopes she embarked on board a fishing boat in Galloway, and landed the same day at Workington in Cumberland, about thirty miles distant from Carlisle, whence she immediately dispatched a messenger to London, craving protec-

tion, and desiring liberty to visit the queen. Elizabeth, previously informed of her misfortunes, deliberated upon the proper methods of proceeding, and resolved at last to act in a friendly yet cautious manner. She sent orders to lady Scrope, and sir Francis Knolles, to pay her all possible respect. Notwithstanding these marks of kindness, the queen refused to admit Mary into her presence, until she had cleared her character from the foul aspersions with which it was stained.

Mary was now to undergo an examination before commissioners; her rival Elizabeth was to be the umpire; and the accusation was to be undertaken by her brother Murray, the Scottish regent. This extraordinary conference, which was to deliberate on the conduct of a foreign queen, was

managed at York; three commissioners being appointed by Elizabeth, nine by the queen of Scots, and five by the regent, in which he himself was included.

The prejudices entertained by Elizabeth against her unhappy kinswoman, were now evident in her conduct in the appointment of commissioners, and in the testimony which she admitted or rejected on those occasions. When the different commissions had been read, Mary's representatives entered a protest, importing, that, though she had consented to refer the disputes between herself and her rebellious subjects to the arbitration of the queen of England, she had no idea of acknowledging any superiority in that princess, but was herself an independent sovereign. The English commissioners, on the other

hand, declared, that, though they received this protest, they would not suffer it to prejudice that right of feudal superiority which the sovereigns of England had always claimed over Scotland. A paper was afterwards presented to the court by Mary's deputies, containing a statement of the acts of treason and rebellion committed against her by her brother's faction, and of the successive injuries which had been heaped upon her. The regent, in his turn, accused Mary of having countenanced the iniquitous schemes of the earl of Bothwell, so as to render it necessary for her nobles to insist on his dismission from her society; mentioned the steps which had been taken against the earl, as well as against the queen, whose partiality for him justified them in depriving her of her liberty;

and affirmed that she had voluntarily resigned her crown to her son, from the disgust which the fatigues and inquietudes of royalty had excited in her mind; that parliament had sanctioned her resignation; and that the national affairs had been conducted with order and tranquility, till some turbulent individuals had released her from confinement, and taken arms against the young king.

The omission of the charge of murder against the Scottish queen, which the regent had before industriously propogated, gave great surprise to many. But, exclusive of the supposition that he was scrupulous of advancing an accusation which he knew to be incapable of proof, he had lately had secret conferences with the duke of Norfolk, which may account for his

silence on this head. The duke, commiserating the fate of Mary, of whose restoration he was sincerely desirous, and whose person he wished to possess, remonstrated with the regent on the infamy to which he would subject himself by a public accusation of his sister and his sovereign; assured him that Elizabeth had resolved not to give a definitive sentence in the cause, whatever evidence might be adduced on either side; and hinted the danger not only of being deserted by that queen, but of being exposed to the vengeance of Mary, if she should ever regain her crown. The earl listened to these observations, and gave the duke a promise that he would not produce those documents which, he pretended, would convict Mary of adultery and murder. The documents here alluded to consis-

ted of letters and sonnets, supposed to have been written by Mary to Bothwell. If these were genuine, little doubt would remain of the guilt of that princess. A controversy has long subsisted on this subject; and authors of eminence have appeared on both sides of the question. Some have maintained that the letters and poems are the real compositions of Mary; while others, after a very accurate examination, have proved to the general satisfaction, that they were forged under the auspices of the earls of Murray and Morton, whom, not only the most respectable friends of the queen, but many of the criminals who suffered death for their agency in the murder of Darnley, accused of having planned that nefarious deed.

These pretended productions of

Mary were shewn by the regent to Elizabeth's commissioners, in a private interview; a circumstance which does not reflect a very high character of the candour of the earl and his colleagues, who thus clandestinely tampered with the English delegates in the consideration of that important evidence, which ought to have been first produced in open court. They had before expressed an unwillingness to exhibit in form this grand head of accusation, till they had received an explicit answer on the following points: Whether the commissioners were authorised to give a final decree in the cause; and whether Elizabeth would protect the accusers of Mary from that resentment which the latter princess would naturally feel against her adversaries. To these interrogatories an

evasive reply was given by the English deputies, who, at the desire of the re-regent, sent to Elizabeth for further instructions.

It was in this interval of delay, that Murray had privately opened to them his budget of evidence, that they might communicate their opinion of it to their sovereign, who would then see how far they were disposed to concur in the plan which she and the earl appear to have concerted for obstructing the vindication of Mary's character. From the account which they gave Elizabeth of the papers, she was inclined to think that they considered them as forgeries; a circumstance which did not coincide with her views. Hence she was induced to recal the commission she had granted, and to evoke the cause to Westminster, where

the proceedings would be more immediately under her eye. A new commission was then issued, in which, though the duke of Norfolk and his two colleagues were re-appointed, five other delegates were named, in whose subserviency Elizabeth placed greater confidence. These were, the lord-keeper Bacon, the earls of Arundel and Leicester, Clinton the high-admiral, and secretary Cecil.

Mary being now called upon by the English comissioners to state her answer to the various charges set forth by Murray, declined entering into any such defence or explanation, unless in the presence of Elizabeth, who alone could be considered as her equal, and consequently of proposing any kind of interrogatory. This privilege being refused, Mary persisted in demanding

Elizabeth's protection as an injured queen; and she desired either to be assisted in her endeavours to regain her crown, or that liberty should be given her for retiring into France, there to make trial of the friendship of other princes. But Elizabeth, aware of the danger which attended both these proposals, was secretly resolved to detain her in captivity; and the queen of Scots was sent to Tutbury castle, in the county of Stafford, and put under the custody of the earl of Shrewsbury; there she beguiled her royal prisoner with the hopes of one day coming into favour; and that, unless her obstinacy prevented, an accommodation might at last take place. But the designs and arts of Elizabeth had no such pacific views: whilst she kept up the most friendly correspondence with Mary, and

expressed the warmest protestations of sincerity, she was far from assisting her cause, or rendering her the smallest service. It was her interest to keep the factions in Scotland alive, and to weaken the power of that restless and turbulent nation: for this purpose she depressed the party of the queen, which had now power to prevail ; and in the mean time procured her adversary, the earl of Lenox, to be appointed regent in the room of Murray, who had suffered a merited fate.

Thus every event which promised to be favourable to Mary, was prematurely cut off by the insidious vigilance of Elizabeth.

The duke of Norfolk, who enjoyed the highest title of nobility in England, was at this time a widower; and, being of a suitable age to espouse the queen

of Scots, made him desirous of the match. But the obtaining Elizabeth's consent, previous to their nuptials, was a circumstance essential to his aims; yet, while this nobleman made almost all the nobility confidants to his passion, he never had resolution to open his intentions to the queen. On the contrary, in order to suppress the surmises that were currently reported, he spoke contemptuously of Mary to Elizabeth. This duplicity only served to inflame the queen's suspicions; who, on inquiry, finding this intercourse still going on, she had him committed to the Tower.

But the duke of Norfolk had too many partisans in the north, to be confined without an effort for his release. The earls of Westmoreland and Northumberland had prepared measures

for a rebellion; had communicated their design to Mary; had entered into a correspondence with the duke of Alva, governor of the Low Countries, and had obtained his promise of men and ammunition. But the vigilance of Elizabeth was not to be eluded; orders were immediately sent for their appearance at court; and now the insurgent lords, perceiving their plan discovered, were obliged to begin their revolt before matters were ripe for its execution. They accordingly published a manifesto, in which they alleged that no intention was intended against the queen, to whom they vowed unshaken loyalty; but that their sole aim was to re-establish the religion of their ancestors, to remove all evil counsellors from about the queen's person, and to restore the duke of Norfolk to his liberty,

and to the queen's favour. Their number amounted to four thousand foot, and sixteen hundred horse; and they expected to be joined by all the catholics in England. But they soon found themselves mistaken: the queen's conduct had gained the general good-will of the people, and she began to perceive her surest trust was in the justice of her actions. The duke of Norfolk himself, for whose sake they had revolted, used every method that his circumstances would permit, to assist the queen; the insurgents were obliged to retire to Hexham; and, hearing that reinforcements were upon their march to join the royal army, they had no other expedient but to disperse. The earl of Northumberland fled into Scotland, and was confined by the regent in the castle of Lochlevin;

Westmoreland, after attempting to excite the Scots to revolt, was obliged to escape into Flanders.

The queen was so well satisfied with the duke of Norfolk's behaviour, that she released him from the Tower, A. D. 1569, and allowed him to return home, after exacting a promise that he would, not proceed any further in his pretensions to the queen of Scots. But this fatal promise involved his life. He had not been released above a year, when new projects were set on foot by the enemies of the reformed religion, secretly fomented by Rodolphi, an instrument of the pope, in concert with the bishop of Ross. It was proposed that Norfolk should renew his addresses to Mary, to which it is probable he was prompted by passion; while the duke of Alva engaged to send over a

body of six thousand foot, and four thousand horse, to enable Norfolk to recover Mary's liberty. This scheme was so secretly conducted, that it had entirely escaped both the vigilance of Elizabeth, and of Cecil, who now bore the title of lord Burleigh. It was discovered merely by accident; for the duke having sent a sum of money to lord Herries, one of Mary's partisans in Scotland, omitted trusting the servant with the contents of his message; and he finding, by the weight of the bag, that it contained a larger sum than the duke mentioned to him, began to mistrust some plot, and brought the money, with the duke's letter, to the secretary of state. By the artifices of Burleigh, the duke's servants were brought to make a full discovery of their master's guilt; and the bishop of

Ross finding the plot discovered, to save his own life, confirmed their testimony. The duke was recommitted to the Tower, and ordered to appear for his trial. A jury of twenty-five peers found him guilty, and the queen, four months after, signed the warrant for his execution. The earl of Northumberland being delivered up by the regent, underwent a similar trial, and was also brought to the scaffold for rebellion. All these ineffectual struggles in the favour of the unfortunate queen of Scots, only served to rivet her chains, and harden the obdurate and suspicious heart of Elizabeth.

The death of Charles IX. of France, in 1574, eased the mind of Elizabeth from half of its anxiety. Henry III. who then succeeded to the throne, both hated and dreaded the house of

Guise, and consequently depressed the interest of the unfortunate Mary of Scotland. That kingdom enjoyed at this period a kind of tranquility under the government of Morton, whose entire dependence on the English queen, at the same time that it confirmed his power, prevented his gratifying his natural and wicked propensities to the extent of his wishes: but, in 1580 he was tried, convicted, and executed for treason against king James VI.

Wootton, a man of the most insinuating turn, entertaining in conversation, and skilled in dress and falconry, was sent by the English queen to reside at the court of James VI. of Scotland, to gain his favour, and inspect his conduct. It is even said, that he was to endeavour at seizing the person of the

Scottish monarch, with a view to convey him to England; if so, James showed great sense in forgiving the unjust machination, and in entering very soon afterwards (in spite of the remonstrances of France) into the most rational and political treaty ever made between the sister nations. It was an alliance offensive and defensive, and may be said to have secured to the king of Scots the affections of the English, and the succession of their sovereignity. The regard of James was assuredly much conciliated by an annual pension of £5000, equivalent to the Lenox estate, and granted at this period.

Anthony Babington, a young gentleman of Derbyshire, inspired with fanatical zeal to effect a change in the religion and government of his country, had joined with several men of family and

fortune in a plot to assassinate Elizabeth. They had been excited to this conspiracy by the exhortations of Dr. Gifford, and others of the Rhemish seminary.

The vigilant subtlety of Walsingham, secretary of the state, detected the whole contrivance; in consequence, Babington, with thirteen of his associates, suffered as traitors. This led to the final catastrophe of Mary queen of Scots. Though all England was acquainted with the event of Babington's conspiracy, every avenue to the unfortunate Mary was so strictly guarded, that she remained in utter ignorance of the matter. But her astonishment could only be equalled by her anguish, when sir Thomas Gorges, by Elizabeth's order, informed her of the fate of those who were called her confederates. She

was at that moment mounted on horseback, going a-hunting; and was not even permitted to return to her former place of abode, but conducted from one nobleman's house to another, till she was lodged in Forthingay castle, in Northamptonshire, where the last scene of her deep tragedy was to conclude.

The council of England was divided in opinion about the measures to be taken against this illustrious state prisoner. Some members proposed, that as her health was infirm, her life might be shortened by close confinement; therefore to avoid any imputation of violence or cruelty, Elizabeth's favourite, Leicester, proposed that she should be dispatched by poison; but the majority insisted on her being put to death by what was termed legal pro-

cess. Accordingly a commission was issued for forty peers, with five judges, or the major part of them, "to try and pass sentence upon Mary, daughter and heiress of James V. king of Scotland, commonly called queen of Scots, and dowager of France. "Thirty-six of these commissioners arriving at the castle of Fotheringay, Nov. 11, 1586, presented her with a mandate from Elizabeth, commanding her to submit to a trial for her late conspiracy. Mary perused the warrant with great composure; but wondered the queen of England should command her as a subject, who was an independent sovereign like herself. She would never, she said, stoop to any condescension which would lessen her dignity, or prejudice the claims of her posterity. The laws of England, she observed, were un-

known to her; she was destitute of counsel; nor could she conceive who were to be her peers, as she had but one equal in the kingdom. She added, that, instead of enjoying the protection of the laws of England, as she had hoped to obtain, she had been confined in prison ever since her arrival in the kingdom; so that she derived neither benefit nor security from them. When the commissioners pressed her to submit to the queen's pleasure, otherwise they would proceed against her as contumacious, she declared she would rather suffer a thousand deaths than own herself a subject to any prince on earth: that, however, she was ready to vindicate herself in a full and free parliament; as, for aught she knew, this meeting of commissioners was devised against her life, on purpose to take it

away with a pretext of justice. She exhorted them to consult their own consciences, and to remember that the theatre of the world was much more extensive than that of the kingdom of England. At length the vice-chamberlain Hatton vanquished her objections, by representing that she injured her reputation by avoiding a trial, in which her innocence might be proved to the satisfaction of all mankind. This observation made such an impression on her mind, that she agreed to plead, if they would admit her protest, disallowing all subjection.

The principal charge against her was urged by serjeant Gaudy, who accused her with knowing, approving, and consenting, to Babington's conspiracy. This charge had been supported by Babington's confession, by the copies

which were taken of their supposed correspondence, in which her approbation of the queen's murder was expressly declared, by the evidence of her two secretaries, Nairne and Curle, who swore she received Babington's letters, and that they had answered them by her orders. To these charges Mary made a most sensible defence; she said Babington's confession was extorted from his fears of the torture; which was really the case: she alleged the letters were forgeries; and she defied her secretaries to persist in their evidence, if brought into her presence, which was refused. She owned that she had used her endeavours to recover her liberty, which was only pursuing the dictates of nature; but as for conceiving a thought against the life of the queen, she treated the idea with hor-

ror. Whatever might have been this queen's offences, it is certain that her treatment was shamefully severe. She desired to be put in possession of such notes as she had taken preparative to her trial; but this was refused. She demanded a copy of her protest; but her request was not complied with: she wished an advocate to plead her cause against so many learned lawyers as had undertaken her accusation; but even this was rejected; and after an adjournment of some days, sentence of death was pronounced against her in the Star-chamber in Westminster, all the commissioners, except two, being present. At the same time a declaration was published by the commissioners, implying, that the sentence against her did in no wise derogate from the title and honour of James, king

of Scotland, son to the attainted queen.

During the interval between this sentence of the Scottish queen and its execution, Elizabeth acted a part remarkable for dissimulation and hypocrisy. When she found the tide of public prejudice ran strongly against Mary, and that the people were as eager as herself for the execution of that princess, she commanded secretary Davison to prepare the warrant for her signature. As soon as it was produced before her, she signed it with as much cheerfulness and self-complacency as if it had contained the grant of a pardon. She even insulted the misfortunes of the injured queen by unseasonable jocularity. Having desired the secretary to inform his colleague Walsingham (then indisposed) of what she had

done, she added, with an air of levity, that she was apprehensive of his dying of grief at the intelligence. But after she had thus given her sanction to the public execution of Mary, her fears of the censures of mankind suggested to her an expedient by which she hoped to remove the odium of her death on the keepers. She wished them to murder her in private, on pretence of the association by which they had bound themselves to revenge any attempt against the life of their own sovereign. This contrivance, she flattered herself, would tend to the propogation of an opinion that she had not consented to Mary's death, and that the officious zeal of private individuals had perpetrated the deed without her knowledge. Pleased with the suggestion, she ordered the two secretaries of

state to write a letter to Paulet and Drury, who had the charge of the condemned queen, reproaching them with their want of loyalty and public spirit, in not having relieved her, by some decisive means, from the danger to which she was hourly exposed by the life of Mary; urging the bond of association as a sufficient justification of such a measure to their own consciences as well as to the world; and reprobating their unkindness in wishing to throw the odium upon her, acquainted as they were with the humanity of her disposition, which rendered it so unpleasing to her to order the execution even of the lowest criminal, that they might easily suppose her to be peculiarly averse to the idea of issuing an order for the delivery of a princess of her own family into the hands of the

executioner. Paulet and his associate, though not remarkable for their tenderness to Mary, had too much honour to perpetrate the infamous deed in which their unprincipled sovereign was desirous of employing them. She might command, they said, their honourable services; but they scorned to act the part of assassins. Mortified at their refusal, which she ridiculed as the offspring of idle scrupulosity, Elizabeth resolved to instigate some less conscientious persons to the secret murder of the Scottish queen. But, being persuaded from that resolution by the remonstrances of Davison; she thought proper to have recourse to the regular execution of the sentence. That minister having communicated the warrant to the chancellor for the application of the great seal to it. Elizabeth sent a

messenger to countermand the operation; and finding it was already performed, she reprimanded Davison for his precipitation. Wishing to draw him into a snare, that she might have a pretence for imputing Mary's execution to him, she neither ordered him to issue the warrant, nor to with-hold it. Conceiving it to be his duty to expedite a writ which had passed through the necessary forms, and which he knew the queen to be extremely desirous of executing, he produced it before the privy council; and, as Cecil lord Burghley, Hatton, and other experienced courtiers, penetrated her schemes against Davison, of which indeed he himself had some suspicion, they resolved to gratify her wish, and easily persuaded the whole assembly to concur in sending off the warrant,

without further communication with their mistress. To allay the apprhensions of Davison, all the counsellors engaged to bear an equal share of the blame that might attend this measure.

In the mean time, accounts of this extraordinary sentence being spread into all parts of Europe, the king of France was among the foremost who attempted to soften the heart of Elizabeth. He sent over an extraordinary ambassador to intercede for the life of Mary. James of Scotland her son, was, as in duty obliged, still more pressing in her behalf. He dispached lord Keith, with a letter to Elizabeth, conjuring her to spare the life of his parent. Elizabeth treated his intercessions with the utmost indignity; and when the Scots ambassabor begged that the execution might be delayed for a week,

the queen answered, with great emotion, "No, not for an hour!"

On the 7th of February, 1587, the unfortunate Mary queen of Scots was brought to the block, at eight o'clock in the morning. In that awful conjuncture, she displayed a fortitude and a decency which would have honoured a matron of Rome; and, to the moment of her death, united the majesty of a queen with the meekness of a martyr. The earls of Shrewsbury and Kent carried to the hapless lady the warrant for her death. Worn with sickness, confinement, and distress, she seems to have looked on this summons rather as a relief, than as an addition to her woes. She divided her wardrobe among her servants, and even deigned to excuse herself to them for not adding to her present the magnifi-

cent habit in which she went to her death; "but I must, (said she,) appear in a dress becoming such a solemnity. It was not without many intreaties that she could get permission for six of her servants to attend at her death. She was even forced to remind the earls that she was "cousin to Elizabeth, descended from Henry VII. a married queen of France, and anointed sovereign of Scotland." The unutterable agonies of her servants she tenderly repressed, telling them that she had undertaken for the firmness of their behaviour. To her son she sent a tender and conciliatory message by the weeping Melville. It was her hard lot to have her devotion shamefully disturbed by the fanaticism of the busy dean of Peterborough. Having prayed for the church, for her son, and for the

prosperity and long life of Elizabeth, the intrepid Mary uncovered her neck, and smiled at her own dilatoriness; "She was not (she cheerfully said) accustomed to undress before so much company." An involuntary burst of tears proclaimed the feelings of those who stood around; she comforted and blessed them; and then serenely laid her head on the block, and two strokes severed it from her body. Her remains were not at first treated with due respect; but they were afterwards interred splendidly at Peterborough, from whence James, her son, in **1612**, removed them to Westminster-abbey. Of the long epitath inscribed on her tomb, one line is strikingly comprehensive:

Jure Scotos, thalamo Francos, spe possidet Anglos.

Scotland she claims, espouses France,
and hopes for England's crown.

She suffered in the forty-fifth year of her age, and the nineteenth of her captivity. Thus fell, by an illegal stretch of power in England, Mary Stuart, queen of Scotland in her own right, dowager of France, and heiress of the crowns of England and Ireland. In the profound knowledge of policy and government she was inferior to Elizabeth; but, in generosity, magnanimity, and other royal virtues, she excelled her celebrated rival.

As soon as her execution was notified to Elizabeth, another scene of hypocrisy was played off. She affected the utmost grief and astonishment, and threatened her ministers with her severest displeasure, for having put her

dearest cousin to death, not only without her knowledge or consent, but even in opposition to her declared will. She now wrote a letter to the king of Scotland, asserting her innocence of his mother's death, and professing an attachment to his interests. Davison was prosecuted in the Star-chamber for a misdemeanor, in having produced the warrant before the privy council without the orders of the queen, who affirmed that she had strictly enjoined him not to communicate it to any one till he had received further directions from her. Though Davison denied that she had given him such a charge, he was condemned by an arbitrary court to pay a fine of £10,000, and to suffer imprisonment during the queen's pleasure. This iniquitous sentence reduced the secretary to indi-

gence and misery. He lingered some years in confinement; during which the queen, by whose tyranny he had been ruined, occasionally relieved his necessities.

THE END.

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