one of the Engliſh fugitives in France, and awarm friend of Mary’s, in the month of May 1586, wrote a letter to her, repeatedly and in the moſt preſſing man­ner recommending a revival of that correſpondence. In conſequence of which, in her anſwer to Morgan, dated the 27th day of July, ſhe informed him, that ſhe had made all apologies in her power to Babington, for not having written to him for ſo long a ſpace; that he had generouſly offered himſelf and all his fortune in her cauſe; and that, agreeably to Morgan’s advice, ſhe would do her belt to retain him in her intereſts; but ſhe throws out no hint of her knowledge of the intend­ed aſſaſſination. On the very fame day ſhe wrote like- wiſe to Paget, another of her moſt confidential friends; but not a word in it with reſpect to Babington’s ſcheme of cutting off the Engliſh queen. To Morgan and to Paget ſhe certainly would have communicated her mind, more, readily and more particularly than to Babington, and have conſulted them about the plot, had ſhe been acceſſory to it. Indeed it ſeems to have been part of the policy of Mary’s friends to keep her a ſtranger to all clandeſtine and hazardous undertakings in her fa­vour. To be convinced of this, we have only to re­collect, that Morgan, in a letter of the fourth of July, expreſsly, and in the ſtrongeſt terms, recommended to have no intelligence at all with Ballard @@\*, who was one of the original contrivers of the plot, and who was the very perſon who communicated it to Babington. The queen, in conſequence of this, ſhut the door againſt all correſpondence, if it ſhould be offered, with that perſon @@†. At the ſame time, Morgan aſſigned no par­ticular reaſons for that advice; ſo cautious was he about giving the queen any information upon the ſubject: What he ſaid was generally and ſtudiouſly obſcure: “Ballard (ſaid he, only) is intent on ſome mat­ters of conſequence, the iſſue of which is uncertain.” He even went farther, and charged Ballard himſelf to abſtain in any wife from opening his views to the queen of Scots.

The conſpiracy which goes under the name of *Babington* was completely detected by the court in the month of June: The names, proceedings, and reſidences, of thoſe engaged in it were then known: The blow might be ſoon ſtruck: The life of Elizabeth was in imminent hazard. The conſpirators, however, were not apprehended; they were permitted to enjoy com­plete liberty; treated as if there were not the leaſt ſuſpicion againſt them; and in this free and quiet ſtate, were they ſuffered to continue till the beginning of Auguſt, for a period it ſhould ſeem of near two months. What could be the reaſons for ſuch a conduct? From what cauſes did the council of England ſuſpend the

juſt vengeance of the laws, and leave their queen’s life ſtill in jeopardy? Was it on purpoſe to procure more conſpirators, and involve others in the crime?

Mary queen of Scots continued ſtill detached from Babington and his aſſociates. Their deſtruction was a ſmall matter comparcd with her’s. Could ſhe be de­coyed into the plot, things would put on a very new face: Babington’s conſpiracy, which in reality occaſioned little dread, as it was early found out, and well guarded againſt, would prove one of the moſt grateful incidents in queen Elizabeth’s reign. Elizabeth's miniſters, too, knew how much they had rendered themſelves juſtly obnoxious to the Scottiſh princeſs: Should ſhe come to mount the throne of England, their down­fall was inevitable; from which, it ſhould ſeem, is to be explained, why they were even more zealous than their miſtreſs to accompliſh her ruin.

Of theſe, Sir Francis Walſingham ſecretary of ſtate appears to have taken upon himſelf the chief manage­ment in concerting a plan of operations againſt the queen of Scots; and as a model, he ſeems to have had in his eye that which was purſued upon a former occaſion by the earl of Murray. His ſpies having early got into the confidence of the lower ſort of the conſpi­rators, he now employed the very agency of the latter for his purpoſes. Learning that a packet from France was intended to be conveyed by them to queen Mary, and by the hands of one Gilbert Gifford a prieft, whom he had ſecretly gained over from their aſſociation, he wrote a letter to Sir Amias Paulet, who had now the cuſtody of the Scottiſh queen, requeſting that one of his domeſtics might be permitted to take a bribe for conveying that packet to the captive princeſs. This was on purpoſe to communicate to her a letter forged in the name of Babington, in which that conſpirator was made to impart to the Scottiſh queen his ſcheme of aſſaſſination, and to claim rewards to the perpetra­tors of the deed. Paulet, however, to his honour, refuſed to comply with the requeſt of Walſingham; upon which Gifford corrupted a brewer in the neigh­bourhood, who put his letters to Mary in a hole in the caſtle-wall. By the ſame conveyance it was thought that Mary would anſwer the letters; but it appears that ſhe never ſaw them, and that of courſe no return was made @@(Y). It was then contrived that anſwers, in the name of the queen of Scots to Gifford, ſhould be found in the hole of the wall. Walſingham, to whom theſe letters were carried, proceeded formally to decipher them by the help of one Thomas Philips, a perſon ſkilled in theſe matters; and after exact copies were taken of them, it is ſaid that they were all artfully ſealed and ſent off to the perſons to whom they were

@@@ [m] \* Murdin, 527.

@@@ [m] † Ibid. 534.

@@@(Y) Dr Robertſon of Dalmeny, who, in his Hiſtory of Mary queen of Scots, has thrown much light upon thoſe dark tranſactions of Elizabeth’s nefarious miniſters, thinks it not improbable that an anſwer to Babing­ton’s letter was written by the Scottiſh queen’s ſecretaries. Although they could not communicate that letter to herſelf, on account of her known abhorrence of aſſaſſination, they perhaps wrote a diſpatch in her name, ap­proving of it; tempted by the proſpect of eſcaping from impriſonment, and of their miſtreſs being ſeated on the throne of England. This diſpatch being conveyed through the ſame chink of the wall, was carried by Gifford to Walſingham; opened; deciphered, and copied by him; and then ſent to Babington. Camden informs us, that Walſingham artfully forged a poſtſcript in the ſame cipher to this diſpatch; in which queen Mary was made to requeſt of Babington to inform her particularly of the names of his accomplices, and of others who were friends to the cauſe.