powerful. Morton was tried on the 1st of June 1581, was found guilty, and, with one Binning, who had accompanied Archibald Douglas to the scene of Darnley’s murder, was executed. His title went to the Douglases of Lochleven. James Stewart received the Hamilton earldom of Arran, and under him and Lennox the young king began his long strife with the kirk and his half­hearted dealings with the Catholics and his mother.

It is impossible here to follow the course of the strife, in which the godly were led by the earls of Gowrie and Angus. Gowrie seized James, and power, at Ruthven (August 1582), a step approved of by the preachers. In June 1583, James escaped to St Andrews and was surrounded by his party. In November he made the son of Lennox, who had died in France, a duke; Arran was again in power, and Melville with other preachers fled to England in 1584, after the execution of Gowrie for high treason. The king and council were proclaimed judges in all cases; preachers were to submit to their judicature when accused of political offences, a standing cause of strife.

No longer needing Catholic assistance, James threw over his mother, with whom he had been intriguing, and sent the beautiful Master of Gray to betray Mary’s secrets to Elizabeth. At the end of 1585, all James’s exiled foes, Douglases, Hamiltons and others, returned across the border in force, caught the king at Stirling, drove Arran into hiding, restored the Gowrie family, and became the new administration. In 1586, the Babington plot was arranged, and discovered by those who had allowed it to be arranged. James practically did nothing to rescue his mother: one of his representatives in England was that Archi­bald Douglas who helped to slay his father.

The execution of Mary on the 8th of February left James “ a free king ” as far as his mother’s claim to the throne was con- cemed, and he had his pension of £3000 or £4000 from Elizabeth. Thus war between the two countries was avoided. Thenceforth, till James came to the throne of England, the history of Scotland was but a series of inchoate revolutions, intrigues that led to nothing definite and skirmishes in the war of kirk and state. The king had to do with preachers who practically held the doctrines of Becket as to priestly pretensions. James was “ Christ’s silly vassal,” so Andrew Melville told him, and “ Christ” in practice meant the preachers who possessed the power of the keys, the power to bind and loose on earth and in heaven. The strange thing is that while Eliza­beth warned James against the pretensions of men who “ would have no king but a presbytery,” whenever he was at odds with the ministers and with the nobles who kept trying to seize his person with the approval of the ministers, Elizabeth secretly or

openly backed the kirk.

The kirk was strong enough to compel James to march, more than once, against the Catholic earls, Huntly, Errol, Angus and others. They, again, constantly intrigued with Spain, and there were moments when James, driven desperate by the preachers, listened to their projects. He was anti-papal by conviction, yet hoped for help from Rome, and was so far implicated in the adventures of his Catholic subjects that, in the interest of his own character, he had to advance against them and drive them into exile. In 1590 he married Anne of Denmark: in 1592 his character suffered through the murder, by Huntly, of “ the bonny earl o’ Murray,” suspected of favouring the madcap Francis Stewart, earl of Bothwell (nephew of Queen Mary’s Bothwell), a man who made it his business to kidnap the king, and who presently, by the help of Gowrie’s widow, seized him in Holyrood. In 1592 parliament “ ratified the liberty of the true kirk,” leaving little liberty for king and state, since, in the phrase of one preacher, “ the king might be excommunicated in case of contumacy and disobedience to the will of God,” as interpreted by the ministers. In the following year (23rd of July 1593) Bothwell, much favoured by the preachers, made his capture of James, but had net the power to hold him long, and a later revolutionary attempt in the same year, by Atholl and the young earl of Gowrie, was a failure.

Gowrie went abroad and passed some time at the university of Padua; to him the eyes of the preachers were hopefully turned

after 1596. As Bothwell had become a Catholic, they excom- municated him in 1595: in 1596 James resolved to recall the exiled Catholic peers; the commissioners of the General Assembly, alarmed and infuriated, met in Edinburgh, ordered a day of humiliation, decided to excommunicate the Catholic earls and established a kind of revolutionary committee of public safety. James insisted on his own authority; insisted that a secular court had a right to try a virulent preacher who declined the secular jurisdiction when accused of having denounced Queen Elizabeth as an atheist. The quarrel waxed: the gatherings summoned by the preachers were declared to be seditious; a meeting in a church ended in a threatening riot that raged round the Tolbooth, where James was sitting, and on the following day he with his Court withdrew to Linlithgow (18th of December 1596). The Court of Session was also to be removed, and the burgesses’, fearing loss of trade, laid down their arms. The leader of the clerical agitation, Mr Bruce, with a wild preacher named Balcanquhal, fled to England, and James returned in triumph to his capital on the ist of January 1597. He followed up his victory; a General Assembly at Perth was obedient to his will: the preachers were forbidden to criticize, from the pulpit, acts of parliament or of the privy council; they were forbidden to call conventions without the royal person or authority and to attack individuals in their sermons.

In the great towns, moreover, ministers might not be appointed to charges without the king’s consent, and in this course James advanced, with but slight opposition, till he put the preachers under his feet. In a long series of crafty movements James managed to reintroduce episcopacy (1598-1600) by the aid of packed General Assemblies, later declared void by the Covenanters (1638). He increased Presbyterian emotion by the suspicion that he was intriguing with Catholic powers, and by his book on the rights and duties of a king *(Basilicon Doron),* which fell into the hands of Andrew Melville. Some cryptic correspondence with the pope, whether actually by James or by Elphinstone, one of his ministers, came apparently to the knowledge of the English court; his secret relations with the earl of Essex were, if not known, suspected; the young earl of Gowrie, returned from a residence on the continent, was too effusively welcomed by Elizabeth in May 1600; and James made a tactless speech when asking parliament for money towards his “ honourable entering to the crown of England after the death of the queen.” He was in deep poverty, the Estates were chary of supplies, plotters in Scotland had been offering to Cecil to kidnap the king (1598), and his relations both with the English government and with his own subdued but struggling preachers were bitterly unfriendly.

It is not known whether the mysterious events that culminated in the slaying of the earl of Gowrie and his brother, by John Ramsay, in their own house in Perth, on the 5th of August 1600, had any connexion with James’s attitude to England and the kirk. The most probable ex­planation is that Gowrie laid, with the utmost secrecy, a plot to lure James to Perth, kidnap him there, transport him to Fastcastle, a fortress of the profligate and intriguing Logan of Restalrig, on the Berwickshire coast, and then raise the Presby­terian party. If we could accept the evidence of a letter attributed to Logan and produced in 1608, this theory would be valid. But the letter has been proved beyond question to be a forgery, though it may very well be a forged copy of a genuine original (see *The Gowrie Conspiracy Confessions of George Sprot,* by A. Lang, Roxburghe Club, London, 1902). Certainly no plot was laid by James to entrap the Ruthvens, and the only question is, was the brawl in which they fell accidental, or had a plot hatched in deep secrecy been frustrated by unexpected circum- stances? (In *James VI. and the Gowrie Conspiracy* the writer argues in favour of the latter solution.) In any case the scepticism of the Edinburgh ministers, especially of Bruce, encouraged the tendency of the people to think the worst, and led to the banishment, followed by other restrictions and sufferings, of Bruce himself. The house of Gowrie, so long hostile to Mary Stuart and James, was forfeited and ruined. Charles I. was