

A Letter from the late Dr Henry, author of the History of Great Britain, to William Tytler, Esq; with the Answer; and a Dissertation on the Marriage of Queen Mary with the Earl of Bothwell.

Communicated by Mr Tytler.

Dear SIR,

Millfield, 20th July 1790.

I RETURN you thanks for the valuable present you have done me the honour to make me, of the enlarged edition of your Enquiry. I have the second edition, and have read it oftener than once with pleasure. I have been long convinced, that the unfortunate Queen Mary was basely betrayed, and cruelly oppressed during her life, and calumniated after her death. Many things contributed to involve her in difficulties and dangers on her return to Scotland: Her invincible adherence to her religion;—her implicit submission to the dictates of her French friends;—her having roused the jealousy of Elizabeth, by assuming the English arms;—the ambition of her brother James;—and the faithless plotting characters of others near her person. In a word, an invisible political net seems to have been spread around her, from which it was hardly possible for her

to

to escape. She was unfortunate in her marriages. If Darnly had been a man of virtue and abilities, they would probably have baffled all their enemies: But his vices and follies ruined all. Her last marriage was the most unhappy; and there seems still to be some difficulty in vindicating her conduct in contracting that marriage. Was she seized by Bothwell, in her passage from Linlithgow, in consequence of a preconcert, and with her own consent; or was it by mere violence, and without her having any intimation that such an attempt was to be made? If I could answer that question, I should know what to think of several other things.

Your efforts, Sir, to relieve the memory of a much injured Princess from a load of calumny are generous and commendable; and, I can assure you, they have not been unsuccessful. There is a great and general change in the sentiments of the public on that subject. He would be a bold man who should publish a history of Queen Mary now in the same strain with our two late historians.

The last time I was in London, Mr Astle told me that there was in the Paper-office a great number of papers, containing the conversations which Queen Mary had with those about her every day, which were regularly sent to Queen Elizabeth. He made one of his clerks transcribe one of them for me. It is a very curious paper, which I shall show you the first time I come to town*.—I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

(Signed) ROBERT HENRY.

Y. y. y 2.

To

* The worthy writer lived not to fulfil his promise: He died within a few months after the date of the above letter. That Queen Mary, while detained in close confinement for many years, under the custody of the Earl of Shrewsbury, at his castle of Tulliberry, had spies placed about her to report her daily conversations, which were sent to Queen Elizabeth, is most certain. It now appears, from the correspondence by

letters.

To the Reverend Dr Robert Henry.

Dear SIR,

Your esteemed letter gives me very great pleasure. Your remarks are fair and candid, and written in the liberal spirit of criticism.

You have certainly placed your doubt upon the most difficult and obscure part of Queen Mary's story. As it was no part of my plan, I did not touch upon it. Your letter has made me look over my notes on that passage, and put them in order; and I send them inclosed for your perusal. It will give me very great pleasure if I am so fortunate as to satisfy you on that head. Meantime, let me assure you, that I am, dear Sir, your most obedient servant,

(Signed) W^M. TYTLER.*Woodhouselee, 3d August 1790.**Dissertation*

Letters carried on by the above Earl with Queen Elizabeth and her minister Cecil, lately published by Mr Lodge, that the orders given to Shrewsbury were not only, in general, to detail Queen Mary's conversations with those placed about her; but a refinement is added to this piece of treachery which is truly shocking, and of which the annals of Newgate, it is believed, can scarce show such an instance. Cecil incloses a letter from Queen Elizabeth to Shrewsbury, dated 5th September 1572, respecting Queen Mary, and thus writes himself: 'It is now fully discovered to her Mat^y what practices that Queen has had in hand both with the Duke of Norfolk and others, upon sending away of Rodolph into Spayne. Hir Mat^y wold have you tempt hir patience, to provoke hir to answer somewhat.'

The reflections of Mr Lodge on this infamous correspondence are those of a man of honour and humanity. We have here, says he, the prime minister of a powerful and wise monarch directing, by her order, one of the first noblemen of the realm to visit the cell of a prisoner, and to exercise *the office of a spy of the Inquisition*, by artfully drawing the proofs of the prisoner's guilt from her own mouth. The terms in which this treacherous mandate is couched aggravate the idea of its turpitude. The Earl, already master of all the known evidence against her, is ordered not only to sift her by artful questions, but to assail her passions, and to work upon the weakness of a feminine temper, which had been rendered infinitely irritable by a long series of misfortunes. In a word, 'to tempt her patience, to provoke her to utter somewhat.' What a frightful addition this to the horrors of Mary's prison, as they are described in the subsequent letter to this!—*Lodge's Original papers, &c. vol. 3. p. 71.*