

T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F
E N G L A N D.

C H A P. I.

*Accession of James.——Treaty with France.——Conspiracy against
the King.——Conference at Hampton-Court.——A Parliament.
——Treaty of peace with Spain.*

ON the decease of Elizabeth, James VI. of Scot- Ann. 1603.
land succeeded to the throne of England. By
the connection of the family of the Stewarts with
the Tudors, through Margaret the daughter of Henry VII.
he claimed superiority of title ; but to the nomination of
Elizabeth he owed his peaceable ascent to the throne.
This princess, by a long reign and many favourable
concurring circumstances, had gained an entire ascen-
dency over the hearts and opinions of her subjects, not-
withstanding that, during the course of her government,
she had exerted very arbitrary principles of sovereignty ;
to which she was enabled by the yet cherished opinion of
royal prerogative, and the continuation of the same re-
ligious factions which had supported a like exertion in
the reign of her father Henry VIII. and her sister Mary.

B

ELIZA-

Ann. 1603. ELIZABETH died on March 24, 1603, after a prosperous reign of forty-four years. Her good fortune is in nothing more conspicuous, than in the unmerited fame it has to this day preserved to her. The vices of this princess were such as could not exist with a good heart, nor her weaknesses with a good head: but to the unaccountable caprice of party-zeal she owes the reputation of qualities that would do honour to a masculine mind.

James proclaimed.

SIX hours after her decease, James her successor was proclaimed. Great was the impatience of the people to behold their new sovereign; no less impatient was their sovereign to take possession of his new dignity. His immediate journey from Edinburgh to London followed the joyful news of his accession*. The concourse of people which idleness, curiosity, and interest, had brought together, was so offensive to him during his progress, that he issued out a proclamation forbidding such a tumultuous resort. His ignorance of the laws of England, and the high idea he had conceived of his present power by the arbitrary proceedings of his predecessors, made him, upon his arrival at Newark, guilty of the absurd violence of hanging a thief without form or trial†. His severity was soon after exercised on Valentine Thomas,

Stow's Annals, 1631, p. 821.

* The following is a curious passage in a letter which James wrote from Edinburgh to the lord-mayor, aldermen, and common-council of London, on hearing that he had been proclaimed king. "Do all whatsoever things you shall find necessary or expedient for the good government of the said city in execution of justice, as you have been used to do in our dearest sister's time, till our pleasure be known unto you to the contrary." *MSS. in Br. Museum*, fol. 7021. no. 23.

† The manner in which he was addressed by his new subjects did not a little contribute to give him romantic notions of his present fortune.

J A M E S I.

3

of whom he had complained to Elizabeth that he had Ann. 1603. calumniated his conduct. This unfortunate man was in prison on this account, at the time of James's accession; who immediately brought him to a trial, and obtained his condemnation on the pretence of a conspiracy against Stow, p. 825. Elizabeth and some of her council.

THE first national transaction in which he engaged, Treaty with France. was a treaty with France, extorted from him by the importunity of Rosny ‡, whom Henry IV. had sent into England for that purpose. The articles contained a defensive league between France and England, and offensive, if the Spaniards, who were the then dreaded power in Europe, should attempt the Netherlands. This success of Rosny was extraordinary, because James had an aversion to the Dutch for their principles of freedom. His chief counsellor at this time was Cecil, created by him successively lord Effindon, viscount Cranbourn, and earl of Salisbury §. The present favour of this minister surprised every body; he was naturally odious to James on account of his father's enmity to Mary, and his own opposition to his partizan the earl of Essex: but this cun-

tune. The letter which the council wrote to him to notify their having proclaimed him king, begins with these words: "Right high, right excellent, and mighty prince, and our dread sovereign lord."

‡ Afterwards Duc de Sully. It appears from Sully's Memoirs that both the kings of France and Spain distributed large sums among James's ministers and courtiers, to bribe them to their respective interests.

§ James was so lavish of his favours, that in the course of this year he created fourteen peers; and from April 6 to May 20, he had made two hundred and thirty-seven knights. The earl of Southampton and the young earl of Essex were restored to their titles.

B 2

ning

4

HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

Ann. 1603. ning courtier had ingratiated himself by a secret commerce during the latter years of Elizabeth's life. Not so was the fate of Sir Walter Raleigh, a leader in all the intrigues in which Cecil had been engaged, excepting the last.

Conspiracy. AMONG the many discontented courtiers which a change of royal favour had occasioned, Raleigh and the lords Grey and Cobham were the most turbulent. Their indiscretion ran so high as to affect their lives and fortunes. A kind of conspiracy * with Aremberg the Flemish ambassador was charged against them and three other commoners, viz. Sir Griffith Markham, Anthony Copley, and George Brook, brother to the lord Cobham. The grounds of their accusation were some bold imprudent words spoken in the height of resentment. The issue of it was the condemnation of all the accused ; though Sir Walter Raleigh could not be brought in guilty without the violation of a very essential law in the constitution, there being no other evidence than a written one † to ap-

* The purport of the conspiracy was to set Arabella Stewart, the king's cousin-german, upon the throne.

† This was the lord Cobham's. This nobleman had been betrayed into an accusation of Raleigh ; but, on a fit of sickness, he wrote the following letter to him : " Seeing myself so near my end, for the discharge of my conscience, and freeing myself from your blood, which else will cry vengeance against me, I protest upon my salvation I never practised with Spain by your procurement. God so comfort me in this my affliction, as you are a true subject for any thing I know. I will say as Pilate, *Purus sum a sanguine hujus*. So God have mercy on my soul as I know no treason by you."—This letter was produced in court by Raleigh : but his enemies brought a written evidence, contradictory to the sense of this letter, signed by the lord Cobham. Raleigh desired his accuser might be brought face to face ; this was denied,

J A M E S I.

5

pear againſt him. To all but Brook the ſentence of Ann. 1603.
death was mitigated to imprifonment *.

THE plague at this time raged with ſuch unſparing violence, as to carry off thirty thouſand of the inhabitants Stow, p. 875.
of London † only. To the Roman Catholics was ſuper-added another mortification. The bigotry of Mary, the mother of James, to their faith, had filled them with a flattering affurance of favour from her ſon ; but the denial of a toleration, which they ſtrenuouſly ſolicited, convinced them that their hopes were vain.

OF all the qualities which marked the character of James, there was none more contemptible than a pedantic diſpoſition, which he had attained from a narrow, though laborious, education. Some ſchool learning he had, the fruits of that unwearied application which is often united to mean parts ; of that learning he was ridiculoſly vain. His vanity was much heightened by the flattery he had met with from the minions of his Engliſh court. He was eager for an opportunity of dif-

nied, his defence over-ruled, and the jury, after a quarter of an hour's conſultation, brought him in guilty. Cobham afterwards declared, that his name to that letter on which Raleigh was condemned, was fraudulently obtained. *State Trials*, vol. I. p. 183. *Sir Anthony Wel-den's Court of King James*, 1651. p. 36. *Guthrie*, vol. III. p. 629.

* The lord Cobham, the lord Grey, and Sir Griffith Markham, were brought to the block, before the warrant of reprieve was produced. They all three lived and died in great penury. Two prieſts, Watſon and Clerk, were convicted of being accomplices in this conſpiracy, and executed.

† This city is ſaid to have contained but one hundred and fifty thouſand inhabitants at this time.

play-

Ann. 1604. playing it to the whole nation. The opportunity was afforded him by a petition from the *Puritans for a reformation of fundry articles of the established church. James gave them hopes of an impartial debate, though he mortally hated all the reformers for the restraints they had laid upon him in his Scotch government; restraints which were altogether incompatible with that fond idea he had entertained of monarchical power. In this debate James was to preside as judge; and an assembly of churchmen and ministers met at Hampton-Court for this purpose. From judge he turned principal disputant, silencing all opposition by his authority and loquacity. The issue of the conference was an injunction to the ministers to conform. James closed his many arguments with these powerful ones: "That presbytery agreed as well with monarchy as God with the devil; that he would not have Tom and Dick and Will meet to censure him and his council;" a demonstration strong of the impartiality he had promised. The ministers were obliged to acquiesce, without other conviction than that they were mistaken in the hopes they had formed from his education. Great was the exultation and adulation of the churchmen and courtiers on this occasion. Chancellor Egerton cried out, "He had often heard that the royalty and priesthood were united, but never saw it verified till now." Archbishop Whitgift carried his flattery still farther; "He verily believed the king spoke by the spirit of God †."

Conference at
Hampton-
Court.

* This petition was signed by seven hundred and fifty clergymen.

Hume.

† James began the conference by exclaiming against the Scotch church. "Blessed be God's gracious goodness, said he, who hath brought me into the promised land; where religion is purely professed; where I sit amongst grave,

J A M E S I.

7

Two proclamations followed this decision ; one com- Ann. 1604.
manding all jesuits and priests that had orders from any
foreign power to depart the kingdom † ; the other enjoin-
ing the Puritans to conform to the established church.
In the spirit of the one, James plainly shewed that his
sole objection to the popish tenets was their not allowing
his supremacy : he intimated in it that he would have a
regard for the tender consciences of those that could not
comply with the church. That against the Puritans ba-
nished all hopes of a like indulgence ‡.

grave, reverend, and learned men ; not as before elsewhere, a king
without state, without honour, without order, where beardless boys would
brave us to our face.” There were no small reasons for James’s zeal for
the English hierarchy. Many of the prelates complimented him with
unlimited power ; while the dissenters hampered him with the doctrines
of law and conscience. After he had answered the objections urged by
the presbyterian ministers with the same logic as may be found in the
specimens already mentioned, he added, “ If this be all your party
hath to say, I will make them conform themselves, or else I will *barrie*
them out of the land, or else do worse, only hang them, that’s all.”

† At the end of this proclamation is a hint towards a political uni-
formity in matters of religion between all Christian monarchs. To this
scheme, which James had early planned, may be imputed many of
those absurdities which frequently occur in his conduct.

‡ The Puritans about this time suffered so severe a persecution, that
they were driven to offer a petition for relief to the king whilst he was
taking the diversion of hunting. James was something startled at this
unexpected intrusion, and very graciously directed them to depute ten
of their members to declare their grievances to the council. These
deputies no sooner made their appearance before the council, than
they were sent to jail ; and Sir Francis Hastings, Sir Edward Mon-
tague, and Sir Valentine Knightly, under whose protection they had
thus acted, were turned out of the lieutenancy of the county and the
commission of the peace. *Winwood’s Memorials*, 1725. vol. II. p. 36. 48.

JAMES

Ann. 1604. JAMES now tasted of all the enjoyments he most affected ; furrounded with flatterers, he snuffed up continually the incense of his own praise*. With the reputation of business he indulged his passion for idleness. He affected to decide, by his judgment, all affairs both civil and religious ; yet devoted his whole time to amusement. His days were spent in hunting or idle composition ; his evenings in all the variety of entertainments which the ingenuity of the queen his wife could procure him. Of the Scotch gentry, those that followed the court, or were attached to the hierarchy, imitated much the levity and freedom of French manners : on the contrary, those who were attached to puritanism affected severity and reserve. The present fortune and favour of James gave many of the first an opportunity of indulging their taste in a more expensive manner than the narrowness of their former circumstances would admit†. This humour coincided exactly with that of their prince.

AMONG the number of proclamations that were continually issued from royal authority, there was one which ordained an annual festival in remembrance of the king's deliverance from the famous Gowry conspiracy. This

* He was extolled as the Solomon of the age, and was the first king of England flattered with the absurd title of Sacred Majesty.

† The first disgust which James gave his English subjects, was the profusion of favours that he bestowed on his Scotch followers. The duke of Lenox, the earl of Mar, the lord Hume, lord Kinlofs, Sir George Hume, and secretary Elphinston, were added to the privy-council. Sir George Hume was created earl of Dunbar ; Hay was created viscount Doncaster, then earl of Carlisle ; and Ramsay was created earl of Holderness.

was

J A M E S I.

9

was a compliment which the Scotch presbytery had de- Ann. 1604.
 nied him, under the mortifying pretence of not confiding
 enough in his veracity to be certain of its reality.

THE time for the expected meeting of the parliament Proclama-
 tion.
 now approached. A proclamation which came out
 with the writs was remarkable for the fairness of
 its aspect, and the perniciousness of its tendency :
 prohibitions which interfered with the subjects right of
 electing, were veiled with an appearance of candor
 which shaded their consequences from the eyes of the ig-
 norant.

ON the nineteenth of March, the great council of the Parliament.
 nation met. James was determined to shine in the dou-
 ble capacity of king and orator, and addressed the as-
 sembly in a copious harangue. After having thrown
 out many hints concerning the sufficient right he had at-
 tained from his title ; he expressed his satisfaction for the
 cordial reception he had received from his subjects, on
 his first entry into his new kingdom. “ Shall I ever, Journals of
 the commons,
 vol. I. p. 142.
 said he, nay, can I ever be able, or rather so unable, in
 memory, as to forget your unexpected readiness and
 alacrity, your ever memorable resolution, and your most
 wonderfull conjunction and harmony of your hearts, in
 declaring and embracing me as your undoubted and
 lawfull king and governour? or shall it ever be blotted
 out of my mind, how at my first entry into this king-
 dom, the people of all sorts rid and ran, nay rather flew
 to meet me : their eyes flaming nothing but sparkles of
 affection ; their mouths and tongues uttering nothing
 but sounds of joy ; their hands, feet, and all the rest of
 C their

Ann. 1604. their members, in their gestures discovering a passionate longing and earnestness to meet and embrace their new sovereign." He then expatiated on the manifold blessings England had received in his person, which would make their measure of happiness full, if the two nations were united in one kingdom. "He was the husband, he said, and the whole island his lawful wife; and he hoped no one was so unreasonable as to think that a Christian king under the Gospel should be a polygamist, and husband two wives." He opened to them his opinion and intentional conduct towards the Papists and Dissenters. "He acknowledged the Roman Catholic to be the mother church, tho' defiled with some impurities. He did not wish the down throwing of the temple, but that it might be purged and cleansed from corruption; he had not, like Rehoboam, increased their burdens, but lightened them, as much as time, occasion, or law, could permit; and was even then considering how some overtures might be proposed to the present parliament, to lighten the burden of laws against them. He would be content, for his part, to meet them half way, so that all novelties might be renounced on both sides. As to the sects of Puritans and Novellists, being impatient of superiority, they were unsufferable in any well-governed commonwealth; his course towards them he remitted to his proclamation made on that subject."

THIS speech, which was tediously prolix, did not gain the applause, nor produce the satisfaction which James expected; or rather it dissatisfied every-body. The Roman-catholics were not content with his distinctions, though he had hinted that his only objection to their faith