

## I.

ORIGINAL LETTER OF QUEEN ELIZABETH TO ANNE, QUEEN OF JAMES VI., DATED AT RICHMOND, 20<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 1595, WITH RELATIVE LETTER OF SIR ROBERT BOWES, THE ENGLISH AMBASSADOR AT THE SCOTTISH COURT, DATED 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 1595. By JOHN SMALL, M.A., F.S.A. Scot.

The following letter of Queen Elizabeth to Anne of Denmark, Queen of James VI., is interesting, not so much from any information contained in itself, as from the circumstances under which it was written and sent to Scotland.

A few years previously, the great Spanish Armada, which was intended by Philip II. to conquer England, and crush the Protestant religion there, had caused great excitement in Scotland. King James (although he had many tempting offers from Philip, among which was an alliance with his daughter, the Infanta Isabella) joined with Elizabeth, and rejected all Philip's overtures. That prince, however, sent emissaries to Scotland, who were so successful that, with the help of the Catholic noblemen there, they originated a party that openly espoused the cause of Spain. James at first contented himself with writing a treatise on the Apocalypse, proving the Pope to be Antichrist, in order to convert them, and save himself further trouble, but he afterwards prepared to assist Elizabeth with all his forces.

After the defeat of the Armada, the Roman Catholics spread reports that a new armament was to be fitted out by Spain, and, in 1594, James found himself with an empty exchequer, threatened with a rising of the Roman Catholic earls, Huntly, Errol, and Crawford, and he then looked to Elizabeth to assist him in his emergency. He found, however, that neither arguments, embassies, nor promises could prevail on Elizabeth to give him subsidies to put his army into a suitable condition. At this he was so incensed, that the English ambassador, Sir R. Bowes, came in for a

share of his resentment, and finding himself placed in a disagreeable position, he withdrew from Scotland altogether.

At the beginning of the year 1595, however, Elizabeth began to be alarmed at a threatened rebellion in Ireland, and, as there were rumours that Philip had again collected an immense force to renew his attempt, she bitterly repented of her neglect of King James, and looked to Scotland for assistance and recruits. James, at this time (January 2d) issued a proclamation enforcing the necessity of making common cause with England, and charged the inhabitants of the Borders to desist from all hostile attempts against England, and assiduously to cultivate friendship with their neighbours. Elizabeth then deemed it necessary to send Bowes again to Scotland, as her ambassador, with a letter to the Scottish King, in which she assured him of her unalterable friendship. Bowes was also entrusted with a letter to Queen Anne, whom he was to greet with every expression of courtesy.

The letter now printed is the one presented to the Queen on that occasion, and is as follows :—

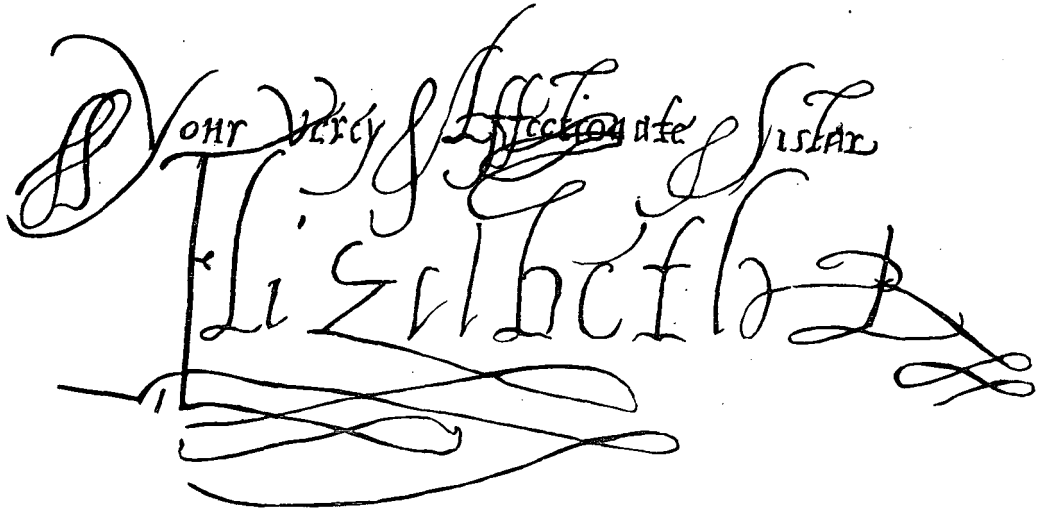
“Right Excellent right high and noble princesse our deerest Sister and Cousin, By a servant of ours of such trust as is this gentleman well knowne to you, (whome now we doe returne to exercise his charge of our ambassador towards the King our Brother) We would not omit to salute you with assurance of the contynuance of such kyndnes as we have alwaies professed towards you, although the good intilligence heretofore offered on your part haue of late passed under greater silence then we could have expected. And yet, such is our inclynation still to hold a firme correspondencie with you vpon all occasions whereby we may demonstrate our care either towards your selfe or the King our brother as we have giuen in charge to this our faithfull seruant sincerely affected to the preseruation of perfect amitie between both kingdoms both freely to impart with you and carefully to delyuer ouer to us such thinges as you shall at anie tyme thinke meete for our understanding who neuer will be founde behynde with anie offices of true kyndenes and affection. And so

“Right Excellent, right high and noble Princess our deerest Syster

and Cousin we cease further to trouble you saue with our prayers to the Almighty for your long health and prosperous estate.

“ Given at our Manor of Richmond the xxviii day of Januarie in the xxxviiiith yere of our reigne 1595.

Your very Affectionate Sister  
Elizabeth



“To the Right Excellent, right high and noble Princesse our dearest Sister and Cousin the Queene of Scottes.”

Bowes was well received by the Queen, who first expressed her readiness to correspond more frequently with Elizabeth. She then referred to the differences between the King and herself, about the custody of the infant prince, Henry, and his removal from the care of the Earl of Mar. Lastly, the ambassador entered on a more delicate topic, which was the rumours that had reached Elizabeth of the Queen's having been instigated to change her religion. She, however, assured Bowes that she remained a Protestant, and that all the attempts made for that purpose had failed.

The account of his visit was given by Bowes, in a letter to Elizabeth,

dated 24th February 1595, still preserved in the State Paper Office, London, of which the following is a copy<sup>1</sup> :—

“It maye please your moste excellent Maiestie, Vppon deliuerie of your Maiesties letter to the Q. of Scotts, and after that she had redd the same I entred first to confirme thassurance of your Maiesties kyndenesse professed towards her, with the continewance of your Maiesteis care for the welfare of the K. and herself. And, noting that thintelligence before offred on her part had not passed to your Maiestie from her in frequent manner expected, I tendred my redynes to conuoye to your Maiestie suche lettres or advertisment as she lyked at anye tyme to address. Wherevppon she yeelded to your Maiestie verie hartie thanks, bothe acknowledging that by strate obligation she was bound aboue all others to your Maiestie, and also promising to holde correspondencye in aduertisements by lettres or messuages as occasion serued, sayeing therewith that she woulde seeke and followe your Maiesteis especiall advyse, as giuen by one whom she most honoured, loved, and trusted.

“Secondlie I proceeded to recount to her theeffects of your Maiesteis message giuen me in chardge, letting her vnderstand that in the late differences betwixt the K. and her for the custodie of the bodye of the Prince her sonne, your Maiestie found it straunge that she had not imparted to your Maiestie her mynde that thereon your Maiestie by your great experience and affectionate loue to her might haue aduysed and warned her to avoyde the danger of subtile counsellours pressing her (for ther own advantages) to sewe to the K. to remove the Prince from the keeping of persones best trusted by the K. and authorysed by parliament, and to committ him to hands of others, at the appetytes of those decieuing counsellours possessed with no sinceritye of mynde or intention to please the K., to preserue the Prince, or to leave the custodie of the prince at the Q. pleasure, but to be reserued for ther practyses, and with dangers as hath beyne seene and put in experience in former tyme in sondrey nations, and most often and wickedlye in Scotland. To this she answered that the matter was soddaine and full of perill, and she found no fitt conuoye to your Maiestie. She acknowledged that the late Chancellour seking to recouer her fauour towards him firste brake this matter to her, layeing before her suche stronge reasons provinge it convenient not onlye for her

<sup>1</sup> Scottish State Papers, vol. lviii. No. 24.

to haue the keeping and bringing vpp of her owne chylde and Prince of the realme, but also veye benificeall to her and sonne as therby he im-  
barked her in thaction with his frinds and suche as he comended to her.  
And albeit that the Chancellour craftelye opened the cause to the K. and  
couertlye wrought with him to thinck that the remove of the Prince should  
endanger the Kings person and estate, yet he delte so betwixt the K. and  
herself, and with the persons interressed herein as the surpryse of the  
bodey of the K. was ploytted, practyse, and to haue bene effected at his  
coming to Edinburghe, which being discouered to her, she warned and  
stayed the K. and prevented this danger against the K. who otherwyse  
(she sayde) had beyne captiue, and to haue remayned in captiuiete.  
These secrets she desyred to be comended by my lettres to your Maiesties  
onlye hands, viewe, and secrecy, and as none other should knowe the  
same. In which respect (and to accomplish her request and desyre therein)  
I haue presumed to trouble your Maiestie with this immediat adres to your  
Maiestie, right humblye prayeing your Maiestie graciouslye to accepte my  
boldnes taken by the cause mentioned.

“Lastlye, I layde before her that your Maiestie had good cause to  
thinck that she is abused by some of these persons prevoking heir to  
seike the remoue of the Prince from the persons and place appointed by  
the K. For it hath beyne made certenly knowne to your Maiestie that  
some of those persons haue assured the Pope by her owne speaches that  
they doubted not to move her to chandge her religion contrarye to the  
Kings mynde. Further that some of them haue also secretlye reported  
that she hathe in her own harte changed her religion, and is secretlye recon-  
cyled to the Church of Rome, wherein althoyhe your Maiestie is loathe  
to giue that credit to this latter reporte, as ther is caus to be giuen to the  
former, yet to shew the fruiets of your Maiesteis trewe frendship to her,  
and in regarde that she is a stranger in this realme (albeit she be a Q. here)  
hauing no partie of her owne blood or of convenient quallitye to deale  
with her in suche difficulte matters, therefore your Maiestie could not  
but informe her lykewyse of the abuses remembred. To this she said  
that some purpose was intended to haue drawne her from the religion  
professed by her and this church, and which still she holdeth, with full  
resolution to perseuere therein. But the matter was not prosecuted, and  
she lyked not to reuale the names of the practysers or practyses any

further, promising directlye that if any person shall hereafter deale with or tempte her to any such change that she will acquainte your Maiestie with all ther attempts and of her owne doings therein. In which promise and mynde I leftte her, with offer of my service to convoye with safetie to your Maiestie her lettres or credit to be committed to me. Thus in all humillitye I prairie God longe to continew your Maiesteis raigne with all perfect parts of true felicitye. At Edinburgh the xxiiiith of Februarii 1595.

“ Your Maiesteis faithfull seruant with all  
loyaltie and obedience,  
ROBERT BOWES.”

[*Dorso.*] “ To the Queenes moste excellent Maiestie.”

The letter of Queen Elizabeth now brought to light forms part of the Drummond collection in the Library of the University of Edinburgh, and, along with several other papers, after being for half a century in the possession of the family of the late Mr R. Bower (the historian of the University, and who was at one time assistant-librarian there, but who died suddenly of heart disease) has recently been found and restored to the library.

Drummond seems to have had access to several of Queen Elizabeth's letters to King James VI., and a volume in his handwriting, in the possession of Mr D. Laing, contains copies of eight of them. Of these, two have been printed by Tytler, in his *History of Scotland*,<sup>1</sup> and a very remarkable one in which Elizabeth excuses herself for having caused the death of Queen Mary is given in a modernised form in the translation of Buchanan's *history of Scotland*.<sup>2</sup> The other five, so far as I am aware, are unprinted.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ix. Appendix, p. 416.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. of Scot.*, by Aikman, vol. iii. p. 144.