

were subsequently to bring his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. His wife, Anne Hyde, on her death-bed declared herself a Roman-catholic, and he soon after withdrew himself from the communion of the church of England; nor could any representations of the impolicy of his conduct, or his royal brother's entreaties, induce him to appear again in the chapel-royal. It is a remarkable but well-authenticated fact, that about this time he became honourably attached to a lady who was a firm member of the church of England, Susanna Armine, the widow of sir Henry Bellasys, whom he was most anxious to marry, although she had not only resisted all his attempts to convert her to his new creed, but was even supposed to have shaken some of his recently imbibed opinions by the force of her arguments. Lady Bellasys was by no means beautiful; her great charm consisted in her fine understanding and captivating manners. James, who was aware that his attentions might be misconstrued by the world, gave her a written promise of marriage, lest her reputation should suffer from the frequency of his visits;¹ few alliances, however, could have been less suitable for the heir of the realm than this, for she was the mother of the heir of a Catholic house, and her late husband had been killed in a duel while in a state of inebriation.

When the king heard of his brother's romantic attachment to this lady, he was extremely provoked, and after expostulating roughly with him on the subject, told him "It was intolerable that he should think of playing the fool again at his age," in allusion to his impolitic marriage with Anne Hyde. James, like a true lover, thought no sacrifice too great to make to the woman whom he esteemed for her virtues, and loved for her mental endowments, rather than for her external graces, and would not give her up. Lady Bellasys proved herself worthy of the attachment she had inspired, for when she found that the interests of the duke of York were likely to suffer on account of his engagement with her, she voluntarily resigned him, conditioning only that she might be permitted to retain a copy of his solemn promise of marriage properly attested.²

¹ Count Hamilton. Burnet. Jameson.

² Jameson.

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