

was, under these circumstances, much easier for the Jacobite correspondence to be carried on through the widow of James II. at the château of St. Germain's, than with the more distant retreat of her son at Avignon. The communications between these two courts, as they were fondly styled by the adherents of the exiled family, were unremitting; and the pen of the royal mother was, during the last two years of her life, actively employed in secret correspondence with her old friends among the English and Scotch nobility in behalf of her son.

The little Stuart sovereignty at St. Germain's had been thinned by the events of the last few months. Many a brave gentleman, who had departed full of hope to join the Jacobite movement in the north, returned no more: the mourning garments and tearful eyes of their surviving families afforded only too sad a comment on the absence of well-remembered faces. Independently, however, of those who had perished by the contingencies of war, or, sadder still, by the hand of the executioner, the number of the faithful friends who had held offices of state in her household, or that of her late consort king James II., was diminishing every year by death. Among these, no one was more sincerely lamented by Mary Beatrice than James earl of Perth, or, as he was entitled in her court, the duke of Perth, who died in the spring of 1716. If she had followed the energetic counsels of that nobleman in the first years of her regency, her son would, in all probability, have recovered the crown to which he had been born heir-apparent, or, at any rate, established himself as an independent sovereign of Scotland.

The disastrous result of the Jacobite insurrection in the preceding year, ought to have convinced the widow and son of James II. of the hopelessness of devising plans for the renewal of a contest, which had cost the partisans of the Stuart cause so dear. They were, however, far from regarding that cause as desperate, seeing that the terrors of the sanguinary executions which had just taken place in London and elsewhere, did not deter the people from wearing oaken boughs, in defiance of the prohibition of government, on the 29th of May,