

V. Chapter 4

The final phases of James V's reign saw the re-affirmation of the Auld Alliance through the king's two French marriage alliances, a pervasive and successful policy of enriching the crown further by persecuting anyone connected with the Douglases, and, finally, the deterioration of Anglo-Scottish relations.

From the beginning of his personal rule the king was set upon pursuing a French marriage alliance. By the end of 1534 proposals for marriage between James and Mary of Bourbon, daughter of the duke de Vendome were put forth not, however, without certain conditions. In addition to the 100,000 crowns offered by Francis I, James asked for an annual pension of 20,000 *livres*, the collar of St. Michael, the surrender of Dunbar (which was still in French hands under the duke of Albany), and the privileges enjoyed by Scots merchants at Dieppe to be extended to all the necessary ports in France.²⁴⁴ Francis confirmed the marriage settlement in March 1536, sent James the order of St. Michael in April and, despite a short-lived proposal that James marry Margaret Erskine (one of his mistresses and mother of the future regent Moray), received the Scottish king in France in September.²⁴⁵

James did not, however, marry Mary of Bourbon but Francis's oft-refused daughter Madeleine. After years of prevarication claiming that Madeleine was too young, too ill

²⁴⁴ *Letters of James V*, p. 304.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 314-15, 318, 320, *St. P. V (iv)*, 290.

or too frail to marry, Francis gave her away on January 1, 1537 to the Scots king. The last clause of the treaty of Rouen was finally fulfilled albeit twenty years later. The king returned home to Scotland in May with his bride and reports of her frailty were not unfounded; she survived for two months in Scotland, dying on July 7, 1537.

James was determined to have yet another French bride and by January 1538 was betrothed to Mary of Lorraine, daughter of Claude, duke de Guise and widow of Louis d'Orleans, duke de Longueville. They were married by proxy May 18, 1538 and at St. Andrews after her arrival in June. Throughout both of his marriage negotiations it became clear that James was, for the most part, more interested in dowries than in brides.^{***} Even though Mary of Lorraine was not of a royal family, the death of her first husband left her a considerably well-endowed widow. This, of course, was a desirable asset.

After his return from France in 1537 James maintained his policy of keeping a watchful eye over the realm. He continued to travel widely and during the summer of 1540 he journeyed to the Isles. Accompanied by Cardinal David Beaton, the earls of Huntly and Arran, and a fleet of well-armed ships, the king sailed from Leith in May, continued up the east coast to Faithness and the Orkneys,

^{***} James V did rather well financially by his marriages. Madeleine's dowry was 100,000 gold crowns of the sun in French currency and he also received 100,000 *livres* on his wedding day. Mary of Lorraine's dowry contributed 150,000 *livres* to the royal coffers, *Letters of James V*, p. 325, 340.

and thence down the west coast through the Outer Hebrides, Skye, the mainland of Glenelg, Moidart, and Ardnamurchan; finally ending the voyage at Dumbarton, after visiting or passing Mull, Coll, Tiree, the coast of Argyll, Arran and Bute." "Several island chiefs were 'compelled' to obedience and remained in royal custody as hostages for the good and lawful behaviour of their dependents.

Such concerns of law and order were always an important aspect of James V's government. Yet his near-obsessive concern with money overshadowed much of his domestic policy. There is no doubt that the king was successful in his financial endeavours although some of the methods he used must have caused some resentment. Many of the lands which were annexed to the crown in 1540 and 1541 came into royal hands by forfeiture. The king's unrelenting hatred for the Douglas family and their kin became a convenient excuse to deprive, and sometimes cut short the life of, anyone who was becoming too powerful in influence or lands or who had been unfortunate enough to have been associated with Angus during his hegemony.

In 1536 John, master of Forbes, was accused of high treason by George, earl of Huntly. He was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle, was tried before the Court of Justiciary

"MacKenzie, *Highlands and Isles of Scotland*, p. 124. A contemporary account of this journey describing various physical and geographical details of the locations visited by the king is found in "The Navigation of King James V round Scotland, The Orkney Isles and the Hebrides, or Western Isles; under the conduct of that excellent Pilot Alexander Lindsay." Methodized by Nicholas d'Arville, in *Miscellanea Scotica Vol. III*, (Glasgow, 1820).

on July 14, 1537, was found guilty on all counts and died upon the scaffold three days later.²³⁰ Traditional enmity between the Forbesees and the Gordons undoubtedly served as the motivation for Huntly's accusation and the fact that Forbes was married to a sister of Angus ensured that the king's ears would remain deaf to any entreaties or pleas of innocence. James was said to have repented of this execution and received Forbes's brother into court appointing him one of the gentlemen of his bedchamber in 1539.²³¹

Other relations of Angus were just as unfortunate. Janet Douglas, lady Glamis, a sister of Angus, was persecuted from 1528 until she was finally executed in July 1537. In 1528 she was accused of aiding and abetting the earl and, as a result, her property was escheated in 1531. She was bound to appear on a charge of poisoning her first husband, John, lord Glamis, one year later but the jury refused to appear at the proceedings for what was seen as a shameful charge. In 1537 she, her second husband, Archibald Campbell of Skipnish, and her son were accused of a design to poison the king and for communicating with Angus. The information was supplied by a William Lyon who is variously referred to as a previous suitor for her hand or as a relative of the family.²³²

²³⁰ *Scots Peerage Vol. IV*, p. 54.

²³¹ *Ibid*, p. 54, Pitcairn, p. 183.

²³² "The Life and Death of King James the Fifth of Scotland...", in *Miscellanea Scotica Vol. IV*, (Glasgow, 1820), p. 135, *Dictionary of National Biography Vol. V*, (London, 1908), p. 1240.

Lady Glamis was found guilty and was condemned to be burned on the Castlehill of Edinburgh, where the sentence was carried out on the same day. Her husband, Campbell, died while trying to escape from Edinburgh Castle and her son remained in prison until after James V's death. She has generally been regarded as an innocent victim who died because of her name and its implications. (See Introduction)

Sir James Douglas of Drumlanrig was also under the suspicion of the king, probably due to his name, and was warded for two years in Edinburgh Castle. In 1541 he was convicted of lese-majesty, put to the horn and his goods escheated. He remained in hiding and fled to England until after the king's death.

The final political execution which took place during the reign was that of James Hamilton of Finnart. He was a natural son of James, first earl of Arran, and from 1526 received very frequent grants of land and acquired, by favour or purchase, very extensive estates. Finnart held several offices such as principal sewer to the king, captain of Dumbarton Castle, principal master of works to the king, crowner of the lower lands in Lanark and principal steward to the king. He remained in very high favour with the king until 1540 when he was accused of treason by a relative, another James Hamilton, the brother of Patrick Hamilton, a protestant martyr who had been burned for heresy in 1528.

The accusation was supposedly in revenge for Finnart's complicity in Patrick's death, although no traces appear in

the criminal records of Finnart's trial. His downfall was rapid and he was convicted on a visibly trumped-up charge of plotting with the Douglases against the king's life. Jenny Wormald's observation that Finnart had become enriched by royal favour "far beyond the point of safety"²⁵² is a valid one. After a summary trial Finnart was sentenced and forfeited on August 16, 1540. He was executed on the same day.

Once again vindictiveness and revenge by an outside party was utilized against personal enemies who, by reason of their unfortunate kinship to the Douglas family or an unprecedented accumulation of wealth and status, served to bring about their deaths. That these three victims were innocent of any crime is probable. The king's wrath against the family which had dared to imprison him, threaten his life and rule in his name was a pervasive element in his personality which was inescapable for anyone who fell under it.

James's suspicions were addressed towards other individuals although their fates were not quite as tragic. In September 1538 Adam Otterburn, the king's advocate, and James Colville of East Wemyss, comptroller, were deprived of office. Otterburn was warded in Dumbarton Castle²⁵³ for four months and was liberated in February 1539 after Nicol Cairncross found caution for him of £1000 Scots.²⁵⁴ James

²⁵²Wormald, p. 12.

²⁵³*Diurnal*, p. 23.

²⁵⁴ADC, p. 479.

Colville, due to the fact that he had held office during Angus's rule, did not fare as well. He was accused of treason and abuse of his office whereupon he fled to England.

In July 1539 he returned to Scotland to submit to the king's will and paid £1000 to secure a remission. By August 1540 he was ordered to ward himself in Blackness Castle, which he refused, and fled, once more, to England where he died before the end of the year. The treason charges were revived, his goods were seized and a sentence of forfeiture was pronounced against him and his heirs in parliament, March 1541.²⁵⁶ The barony of East Wemyss and other lands were annexed to the crown in this session.

James Douglas, third earl of Morton, again probably due to his name and the fact that he had no male issue, was pursued by the king who utilized various methods, such as warding during the winter season, to make the earl surrender his estates. The king was ultimately successful in his endeavours although there is little doubt that he aroused a bitter animosity from Morton. Walter Scott of Buccleuch, even though he had attempted to deliver the king from Angus's custody in 1526, fell under his sovereign's suspicion and remained in and out of ward for the rest of the king's lifetime.²⁵⁷

As a result of these actions James V has been accused of a rapacious greed for money and lands which he acquired

²⁵⁶APS, II, p. 370.

²⁵⁷Scots Peerage Vol. II, p. 229.

by exploiting not only the papacy but his own magnates as well. By the time of his death he held a vast amount of land as well as a substantially large personal fortune.²³⁴

Although his methods may have been unpopular with those whom they were used against, James was only utilizing, to their utmost, powers already available to the crown. It cannot be denied that he was mean and vindictive especially towards anyone remotely connected with Angus and the Douglas kin, or that he utilized this hatred as convenient excuse to rid himself of 'over-mighty' subjects. Yet, his motivation was to increase the power of the crown, both financially and personally, and in this respect he was undoubtedly successful.

Nevertheless and somewhat contradictorily James has also been characterized as a monarch who relied too heavily upon his clerics for council and advice, the most influential of whom was David Beaton. Beaton, whose influence has been exaggerated by some authors had a more fruitful and positive relationship with the king than had his uncle James. (See Chapter 3, fn. 205)

From 1529, after his appointment as keeper of the privy seal²³⁵ until the king's death in 1542, David Beaton was one of James V's principal advisors and on numerous occasions he was a commissioner and ambassador at the court of France. He

²³⁴It was said to have been 300,000 *livres*. *R.S.S. Vol III*, 383.

²³⁵*R.S.S. Vol. II*, 4019.

was involved in both of the king's marriages as a commissioner and married the king to Mary of Lorraine at St. Andrews in 1538. In December 1538 Beaton was created Cardinal of St. Stephen in Monte Celio²⁶⁰ as well as Cardinal of Scotland but, despite James V's numerous entreaties,²⁶¹ Paul III refused to endow Beaton with the authority of legate *a latere*. In 1539, after the death of James Beaton, David succeeded him as archbishop of St. Andrews.

Despite his duties as the king's ambassador, Beaton exerted a concentrated effort against heretics in Scotland. Persecutions, however, were never extreme in number. Patrick Hamilton, titular abbot of Ferne, was burned at St. Andrews in 1528 and it was not until six years later that two more men were hanged and burnt.²⁶² The policy of persecution increased in 1539 when inquisitions, under Beaton's guidance, were held at Edinburgh. Four ecclesiastics and one layman were condemned to death, and several others were sentenced to banishment. Another court of inquisition was set up at St. Andrews in 1540 where Sir John Borthwick was sentenced in his absence for heretical opinions and burnt in effigy, although there is no evidence of any further executions.

David Beaton, the principal instigator of these persecutions, has been given undue importance as an advisor

²⁶⁰ Letters of James V, p. 360.

²⁶¹ Ibid, p. 349, 377, 384, 386, 395, 405.

²⁶² Diurnal, p. 18-19.

to James V and as a churchman. His most ardent supporter, John Herkless, described him as the "guardian and protector of Scotland's liberty."²⁶³ It was Beaton, according to Herkless, who kept the Reformation out of Scotland because he was the head of the national party which opposed Henry VIII and his intrigues against Scottish independence.²⁶⁴ In Herkless's opinion the king of Scotland had virtually no will of his own and was guided solely by the clergy, headed, of course, by Beaton. When rumours were circulating in 1540 that James intended to expel all the clergy from state offices Herkless contends that:

If James ever had such an intention, it was the intention of a man with the wish but without the power to act, - with the desire to exercise an authority which instead was exercised over him.²⁶⁵

This "influence" is claimed to have prevented the king from despoiling the monasteries, and from meeting Henry VIII at York, thus pushing him into a quarrel with England which inevitably led to the rout of Solway Moss and his own death.

The limitations of this argument are obvious. The consistency of James's actions in the various spheres of government, legislative or otherwise, suggest that he was by no means a weak-willed king who could be shaped and moulded to serve the interests of those who had an ascendancy over him. Rather, his decisions were, and remained, his own despite counsel to the contrary. James's vendetta against

²⁶³John Herkless and R.K. Hannay. *The Archbishops of St. Andrews*. 4 Vols. (Edinburgh, 1910) Vol. IV, p. 2.

²⁶⁴John Herkless. *Cardinal Beaton; Priest and Politician*. (Edinburgh, 1891), p. 2.

²⁶⁵*Ibid*, p. 176.

the Douglases was a purely personal one but it remained a consistent element of his kingship throughout his majority. The lands he acquired through the forfeiture of various individuals, as a result of their Douglas 'connection', served to augment royal revenue and the king continued to employ this justification for the persecution of anyone who aroused his suspicions. There is little doubt that this policy originated from the king himself.

James's success in amassing more and more wealth to the crown was due not only to the profits obtained from the 'Douglas forfeitures' but also to a successful policy of exploiting the church. In this area, not even David Beaton was exempt. In April 1541, upon the instance of the king's advocate, the cardinal was to have his lands and goods distrained as part of his share of the great tax which he had, so far, failed to submit.²⁴⁴ As a result, it seems unlikely that Beaton in any sense 'ruled' the council of James V, nor did he seem to have an ascendancy over the mind of the king.²⁴⁵ Like any other sixteenth-century king James V used clerics as some of his advisors, but the extent of their influence over his policy is highly questionable.

Similarly, the king was not led down an inevitable path to Solway Moss. Indeed, since the peace of 1534 Anglo-Scottish relations had remained amicable. Towards the

²⁴⁴ ADC, p. 503.

²⁴⁵ These are attributes ascribed to Beaton by Margaret McArthur in the *Dictionary of National Biography* Vol. II, (London, 1908), p. 18.

end of James's reign, however, the cordiality (outwardly at least) between the two kings began to break down. Henry VIII's Scottish policy, as always, continued to stress a reconciliation with Angus²⁶⁶ and from 1534 proposals for a meeting between the two sovereigns was advocated.²⁶⁷

Although accepting Henry's offer of the order of St. George, the Garter, in July 1535,²⁷⁰ James remained adamant against Angus and cool towards a meeting. Henry continued to press James into following his religious policy and launched a concerted effort to discredit David Beaton,²⁷¹ who he saw as England's greatest enemy.²⁷²

Problems upon the borders began to escalate after 1537 and both kings sought redress for various grievances. Henry VIII was faced with his own domestic problems throughout 1536-37, in the form of the Pilgrimage of Grace, and rumours that James was going to invade England on the rebels's behalf were circulating in May 1537.²⁷³ Henry continued to pursue a meeting with James and sent him gifts of geldings and bows and arrows in December 1540 while requesting that James send back certain 'rebels', those religious refugees that had fled to Scotland after the rebellions of the

²⁶⁶St. P. V (iv), 266.

²⁶⁷St. P. V (iv), 271, *Hamilton Papers: Letters and Papers Illustrating the Political Relations of Scotland in the Sixteenth Century*, Vol. I, 1532-1543. Edited by Joseph Bain, (Edinburgh, 1890). Hereafter cited as *H.P.* All citations refer to document number unless otherwise noted. 23.

²⁷⁰St. P. V (iv), 283, *Letters of James V*, p. 297.

²⁷¹*State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler*, 2 Vols. Edited by Arthur Clifford, (Edinburgh, 1809), Vol. I. p. 5-7, *H.P.* 22, 26.

²⁷²St. P. V (iv), 358.

²⁷³St. P. V (iv), 219.

north.²⁷⁴ James's refusal led to increasing suspicions in England so that Norfolk was despatched to the frontiers with artillery and munitions.²⁷⁵ These fears were enhanced when rumours were being spread that James, on the insistence of France, was going to invade England.²⁷⁶

Henry, however, was determined to meet with the Scots king and set out at the end of June, 1541 when he finally arrived at York on September 18. He remained there for nine days only to find that his nephew had neglected to show up. It is highly doubtful that James was as eager as his uncle for this meeting, as the contemporary source, Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie, suggests, or that Henry came to York to make James duke of York, governor of England and guardian of the king's young son Edward.²⁷⁷ Far from being prevented by "wickit bischopis" to "breik his promise to his onkill"²⁷⁸ James hardly needed the advice of his council to dissuade him from a meeting on English soil.

It is difficult to determine if there were any other motives, aside from personal safety, for James's refusal to meet Henry VIII. That there was no outward preparation on James's part is evident from a letter of September 2, 1541 written by Sir Thomas Wharton to the English privy council where his 'espiall' observed that "there was no liklyhede of [James V] conmyng into Ingland nor preparing therefore that

²⁷⁴ L&P, XVI, 361, 612, St. P. V (iv), 383.

²⁷⁵ L&P, XVI, 449, 496, 497, 612.

²⁷⁶ L&P, XVI, 650, 651, St. P. V (iv), 372-74.

²⁷⁷ Pitscottie, p. 385.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 383, 384.

cuth be perceyved."¹⁷⁷ James's concern with his personal security is more than understandable considering that only five months previously both of his sons¹⁷⁸ had died.¹⁷⁹ Without an heir to the throne it is unlikely that he would have risked crossing the border. Henry's motives were far from innocent when in December a further meeting was proposed and his privy council had to persuade him not to attempt to kidnap the Scottish king.¹⁸⁰

The Scots were well-aware of Henry's 'displeasure' but they did not seek war. James's failure to meet Henry at York, however, unleashed the English king's wrath; instructions were sent to Norfolk to expel any Scots remaining in Northumberland.¹⁸¹ James attempted to redress the breach by advocating peace throughout 1541-42, but his efforts were diminished when in August 1542 an English raiding party, under Sir Robert Bowes, crossed the border and was ambushed at Hadden Rig (about five miles north-east of Kelso) by a Scottish force under the earl of Huntly. James still, however, sought peace and sent ambassadors to York¹⁸² while Henry ordered further preparations for war. The duke of Norfolk made forays into Scotland and burned Roxburgh, Kelso and other border towns during the remaining autumn months.

¹⁷⁷H.P. 85.

¹⁷⁸James, born at St. Andrews in May 1540 and Arthur, born at Falkland in April 1541. Arthur died, on the same day as his brother, eight days after his birth.

¹⁷⁹St. P. V (iv), 380, H.P. 68.

¹⁸⁰St. P. V (iv), 390.

¹⁸¹L&P, XVI, 1202, 1205, 1207.

¹⁸²H.P., 174, 175, 181.

That the English king advocated war was clear in the terms of negotiation offered to the Scots in September 1542 which were by no means meant to further their amicability. The Scottish commissioners were to "capitulate and agree in writing"²¹³ that the peace was to be perpetual without the comprehension of France, James was to meet Henry in London before Christmas, all English prisoners were to be freed, frontier garrisons were to be dissolved, and all rebels, even churchmen, were to be returned to England.²¹⁴ James's ambassadors yielded on almost every point²¹⁵ even to the meeting between Henry and James but Henry was determined to fight the Scots.

Comprehending this state of affairs, James assembled an army and in late October marched towards the border. When they reached Fala Muir²¹⁶ the English force had already withdrawn²¹⁷ and, although James "was very desyrouse to be in England ... the Lordes wold not agree therunto, and upon this thei returned."²¹⁸ He became angry over his nobles' refusal to cross the border and blamed Huntly for their lack of enthusiasm.²¹⁹ Moray was made lieutenant in his stead while the king returned northward in an attempt to regroup.

²¹³H.P., 189.

²¹⁴L&P, XVII, 823.

²¹⁵The Scots would not agree to release the English prisoners until after Henry dissolved his army, which he refused to do.

²¹⁶A plain to the west of Soutra Hill at the western end of the Lammermoors; approximately twenty miles from the English border.

²¹⁷H.P., 226.

²¹⁸St. P. V (iv), 397.

²¹⁹L&P, XVII, 1100.

Henry lost little time in justifying his hostilities towards Scotland by publishing, on November 5, a pamphlet entitled "A declaration conteynyng the just causes and consyderations of this present warre with the Scottis, wherin also appereth the trewe and right title that the kinges most royall majesty hath to the Soverayntie of Scotland."¹³³ It laid out various grievances, albeit from an English viewpoint. Henry, it stated, was forced into war by James V who, having refused to deliver rebels or meet the English king at York, had broken his promise and had invaded England (although, in fact, as indicated above, the Scottish army had never done so). While Henry had just claim of suzerainty over Scotland recognized by previous kings of Scotland, this war had not proceeded from any demand of superiority.¹³⁴

On November 9, James appealed to Paul III asking him to use his influence with the Christian princes to send aid. The reasons for Henry's waging war were given: James V would not desert the Holy See nor join Henry in a war against France.¹³⁵ His pleas were, however, all to no avail.¹³⁶

By November 21, the Scots had reassembled under the guidance of Moray, Lord Maxwell and Oliver Sinclair¹³⁷ and

¹³³*Ibid*, XVII, 1033.

¹³⁴*Ibid*, 1033.

¹³⁵*Letters of James V*. p. 444.

¹³⁶As France was at war with both England and Spain at this time, the pope was undoubtedly far more concerned with remaining in the emperor's 'good graces' rather than supporting an ally of France.

¹³⁷Sinclair, son of Sir Oliver Sinclair of Roslin, was a favourite of James V's and was a member of the king's household. He accompanied James on the king's trip to the

advanced to the frontier. The king remained with a force at Lochmaben²⁷⁷ while the remainder, under Sinclair marched towards Carlisle only to be met by an English force at Solway Moss, under Sir Thomas Wharton, where the Scots were routed on November 24.²⁷⁸ 1,200 prisoners were taken²⁷⁹ and the fate of those retreating was just as disastrous; the inhabitants of Liddesdale slaughtered many of their fellow countrymen as they attempted to escape from the English.²⁸⁰ The king, disappointed by the outcome, proceeded by way of Peebles to Edinburgh where he sat in council. On December 4, he brought Lord Maxwell's son and the lairds of Johnston and Buccleugh out of ward to make them captains of certain garrisons in the East and Middle Marches.²⁸¹ The king fell ill, however, around December 6; a daughter, Mary, was born the next day, and on December 14, at the age of thirty, James V died at Falkland.

Thus ended the reign of one of the most capable and energetic kings of Scotland. Throughout the remaining years of his personal rule James V exhibited a consistency of policy in both governmental and political affairs. Animosity—
towards the Douglas family, and those unfortunate enough to

²⁷⁷(cont'd) Isles in 1540 and had been made captain of Tantallon earlier that year in February. (*R.S.S. Vol. II.*, 3512, 3410.) He received various gifts of land (*R.S.S. Vol. II.*, 3585, 3830, 4266.) and in April 1541 was given the lands and lordship of Orkney and Shetland. (*R.S.S. Vol. II.*, 3989.) He, with the afore-mentioned lords, served as one of the king's military advisors.

²⁷⁸*H.P.*, 247.

²⁷⁹*H.P.*, 240.

²⁸⁰*L&P*, XVII, 1142, *St. P. V (iv)*, 409.

²⁸¹*H.P.*, 245.

²⁸²*H.P.*, 246, 251, 252.

have been associated with them, enabled the king to pursue his unrelenting search for ways to enrich the crown. This hatred of Angus and his kin served as a convenient excuse to financially persecute, and, in some instances, execute anyone who aroused the king's suspicions.

— Royal revenue was also increased by the king's two French marriage alliances which, in turn, perpetuated Scotland's traditional ties with France. James V's foreign policy remained consistently pro-French throughout his reign. His relations with England, however, were less successful.

Although attempting to maintain peace with England, the later years of his reign saw a gradual degeneration of amicability between the two kingdoms. Henry VIII's continual harrassment and hostility towards Scotland ultimately pushed James V to war. The battle of Solway Moss was a military disaster for Scotland and one which left it unable to recuperate due to the death of the king and the beginning of yet another minority.

VI. Conclusion

Despite his somewhat tragic end, James V's relationships with his parliament and council render it difficult to accept the long-standing interpretation of his reign. The pervasive conclusion that he alienated his magnates is even more difficult to accept when the nature of Scottish kingship is examined. As previously discussed (See Chapter 2) barons, lords, earls and greater landed men were the monarch's representatives in the localities and therefore not only provided a link between court and country but were also responsible for maintaining royal authority within the realm. This symbiotic relationship depended upon cooperation between king and nobles; confrontation was in no-one's best interests. The rise of one family to unprecedented power was neither welcome nor acceptable. This was visible during James V's minority when Angus's usurpation of royal authority was challenged by two rebellions.

The king and his nobles had a mutual obligation to uphold the laws of the kingdom and, as such, were expected to enforce them regularly. A lazy king, such as James III, became unpopular and, as a result, parliament entreated him to ride about the country on justice ayres and put his kingdom in order. Rebellion, when it did surface, was the exception, not the rule.

James V's 'unpopularity' is difficult to assume if the above premiss is accepted. The records of parliament and

council reveal that he was an energetic and hard-working king. His numerous judicial and military expeditions throughout the country, and especially in the more remote areas of the Highlands and Islands, indicate that James was visibly and personally concerned with justice. The methods he used were severe but they produced effective results; Scotland, after 1534, remained peaceful until the last years of his personal rule.

Yet the standard interpretation concludes that this severity, coupled with a naturally suspicious disposition, led to his unpopularity and ultimate failure. James, however, utilized the methods available to the crown to their utmost extent. Border lords and highland chiefs were placed in ward as a means of ensuring cooperation and obedience from their dependents. It was neither an alien nor an oppressive measure. The forfeiture of the earldoms of Angus and Bothwell was supported by and passed in parliament. The king did not arbitrarily deprive his magnates of their status or power but often gave them some form of compensation. Thus, Archibald, earl of Argyll, did not receive the hereditary sheriffship of the Isles but he was appointed Justice-General of the entire kingdom, lieutenant of the north and of the border marches, and he accompanied the king to France in 1536 and to the Isles in 1540. Huntly was likewise maintained as the king's representative in the north.

Isolated individuals, rather than large groups, were singled out, often by a third party, and were subjected to the king's ruthless sense of justice. James Colville, Lady Glamis, the Master of Forbes, James Douglas of Drumlanrig and the earl of Morton had the misfortune of being connected, either by blood or through office, with Angus and the king's revenge against the Douglas family was implacable, James Hamilton of Finnart had no such connection although he too was a victim of revenge. Resentment, fear and indignation must have arisen but these sentiments remained particular to those who had been involved. There was no indication of "devisioun, debaitis and discordis... ymang our soverane lordis liegis barons and utheris" as there had been in the reign of James III. Nor was there any appeal in parliament that the nobility "suld gang in unite and concord."¹⁰²

James V's interest in amassing more and more wealth to the crown has been cited as a further motive for the discontent he supposedly brewed in the nobility. That the king was concerned with rebuilding royal finances cannot be denied; that it became a near obsession is possible. Thus, parliament's emphasis upon the strict enforcement of justice was not only necessary to ensure and maintain peace within the kingdom, but was also important for its fiscal rewards. The king's concerted effort to fulfill his role as lawgiver and the source of equitable justice was neither selfless nor

¹⁰²APS, II, p. 165.

ungenuine. The monetary profits of justice were just as important as its pacific rewards.

James continued to employ procedures that were available and legitimate. Revocation was a customary procedure in Scots law which the king pressed to the letter, the consequences of which enriched the crown substantially. It was not entirely self-serving as many lords benefitted from the new property the crown acquired and parliament acknowledged the crown's efforts to enrich itself by passing an act of annexation in 1540.

Much of early crown revenue came from James's profoundly successful exploitation of Scotland's religious situation. It is difficult to assess whether or not James V's concern with the state of the church in Scotland was one of personal inclination or policy. While he remained a Catholic and refused to follow his uncle's advice and break with the pope, his Catholicism appeared, in some ways, to be whole-hearted only as long as he could continue to extract favours from the Roman Church. His exploitation of a somewhat unique situation is a point that requires little debate.

When Sir Ralph Sadler, on an embassy to the Scottish court in 1540, outlined the advantages gained by dissolving the monasteries, James V's attitude was summed up succinctly in his reply:

What need I to take them to increase my livelihood, when I may have anything that I can require of them?... I am sure there is not an abbey in Scotland at this hour, but if we mister any thing, we may

have of them whatsoever we will desire that they have; and so what needs us to spoil them?''³⁰³

He would hardly give up a system where he could extract as much extraordinary revenue from the church as his uncle, all without jeopardizing his own status as a Catholic sovereign.

James, however, was not unaware of the abuses within the church and of certain churchmen. When Sadler protested the evilness of the clergy he noted the Scots king's reply:

Oh, God forbid that if a few be not good, for them all the rest should be destroyed. Though some be not, quoth he, there be a great many good; and the good may be suffered, and the evil must be reformed; as ye shall hear that I shall help to see it redressed in Scotland, by God's grace, if I brook life.³⁰⁴

Although it may have been merely lip-service to ordain, in an act of parliament, "every kirk man in his awin degree to reforme thare selfis thair obedienciaris and kirkmen under thame"³⁰⁵ it was, nonetheless, an act which was approved by a parliament made up of fifteen of the most influential clerics of the Catholic Church in Scotland. Threatened with censures from a king who was already successful in exploiting them and who had the power as well as the precedent to destroy them necessitated a degree of cooperation which might not have been so easily procured had it not been for their sovereign's unique position. Thus, James V was not only blackmailing the papacy but his own prelates as well. The opening statutes of the 1541

³⁰³ *State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, Vol. I., p. 30.*

³⁰⁴ *Ibid, p. 31.*

³⁰⁵ *APS, ii, p. 370.*

parliament (see Chapter 3) were a compensation to Rome for privileges received and yet to be given, as well as an attempt or, more realistically, a threat to strive for some kind of internal clerical reform.

Yet another cited reason for the alienation of the magnates was the king's over-reliance upon his clerics for counsel. This pervading characterization of James V as an essentially weak-willed king who was unable to make a decision without first consulting David Beaton and the prelates lacks conviction. Parliamentary records and, even more substantially, royal letters to the council (see Chapter 3) indicate that James had very definite and consistent ideas about what his foreign and domestic policy was to be concerned with. Like most other European kings of his age, he undoubtedly relied upon churchmen and nobles alike for councillors but it remains extremely unlikely that a king of his determination and strength would allow himself to be utterly guided by an exclusive group of his subjects.

The prelates, of course, were said to have forced Scotland into a war with Henry VIII much against the advice of the nobility. The latter's revenge against a king whom they hated was a refusal to fight. Fala Muir was a failure, however, because of a 'Flodden complex' among the majority of the nobles rather than a hatred of the king. That previous battle in which not only the king but the archbishop of St. Andrews, two other bishops, three abbots, one dean, fourteen earls, about fourteen lords, three

highland chiefs and a great number of lairds, had died deterred James V's nobles from any desire to cross the border and risk another possible slaughter. As the English forces had already withdrawn the Scots no doubt saw little sense in invading and pursuing a retreating army. The fact that they had gathered at all indicates a majority of support for the king's campaign. If, as almost every account assumes, the magnates were so utterly discontented with the king it begs the question as to why they did not rebel against his authority while they had the opportunity, the means, and the precedent.³⁰⁰ The assumption, therefore, is weak.

When the king regrouped another army three weeks later it was again a fear of Flodden which kept a substantial majority of the nobles neutral. Of the 1200 prisoners which were taken after the battle of Solway Moss only two earls and five barons were captured: the majority had remained at home. The battle itself was lost due to a lack of organization and confusion. Buchanan's assertion that the lords refused to fight and gave themselves up willingly is questionable. Contemporary evidence of the battle indicates that the Scots appeared uncertain what to do and, seeing their cause was lost, panicked and began to retreat.³⁰¹ The nobles' discontent over the appointment of Oliver Sinclair as commander is not apparent in any account of the

³⁰⁰ James III was defeated and assassinated by a coalition of nobles at the battle of Sauchieburn in 1488.

³⁰¹ H.P., 240.

battle,³⁰⁰ and if the king had been personally present at the scene the results might have been considerably different. Yet it was precisely that kind of action on the king's part which the majority of the magnates wished to avoid. Flodden was still too close at heart.

The loss of the battle and its circumstances undoubtedly disturbed and disappointed James V but it remains highly questionable whether or not it "broke his heart." Eleven days after Solway Moss the king was sitting in council at Edinburgh and proved to be just as capable as before of making decisions. He fell ill, however, on December 6 and never recovered. The illness was probably the result of a virus coupled with physical exhaustion. Despite the historical accounts, James exhibited evident physical symptoms of excessive vomiting and what was described as a great "laxe" as well as a greatly swollen body after his death.³⁰¹ Grief over the loss of battle is understandable but, as a cause of death, much less likely, especially when applied to a man who, from an early age, exhibited great strength and endurance of both mind and body.

Throughout his personal rule James V exhibited a consistent policy in the domestic and foreign affairs of Scotland. The disaster of Solway Moss was, perhaps, an unfitting end for a sovereign who, upon his death, left crown revenue at its highest and a kingdom relatively

³⁰⁰For example, neither the *State Papers of Henry VIII* nor the *Hamilton Papers* make any reference to this.

³⁰¹H.P., 267.

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