МАРГАРЕТ ОЛИФАНТ

ROYAL EDINBURGH: HER SAINTS, KINGS, PROPHETS AND POETS

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Содержание

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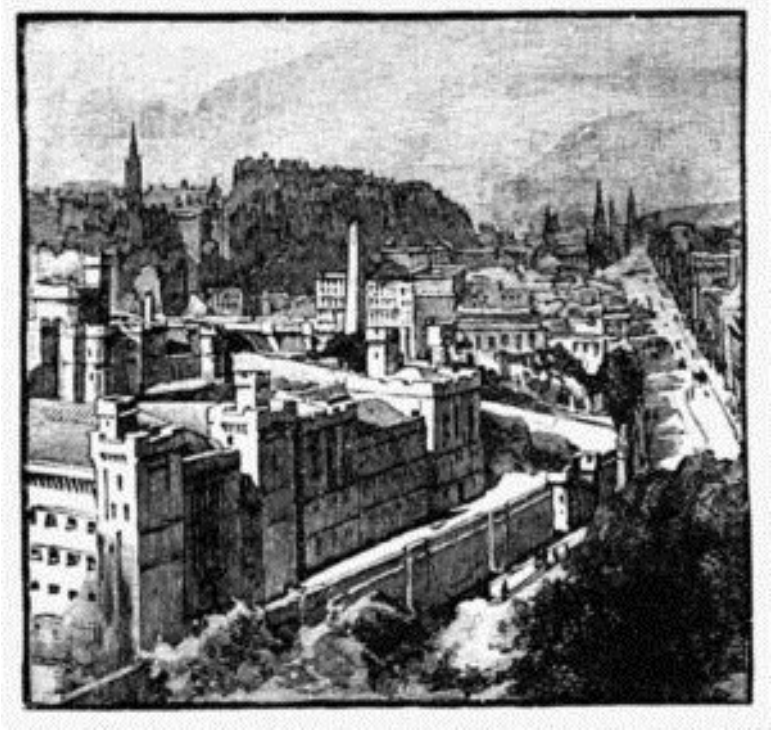
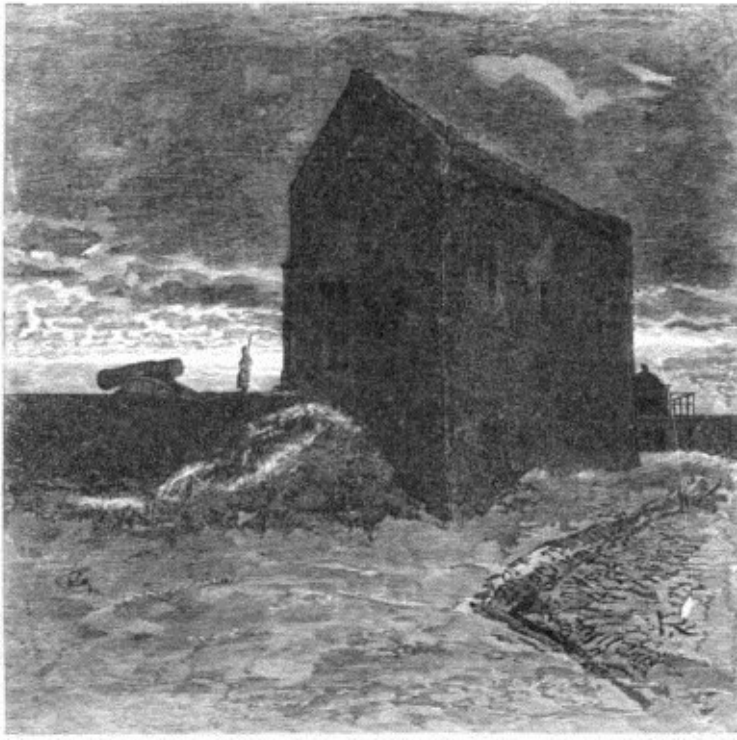




QUEEN MARGARET'S CHAPEL, EDINBURGH CASTLE.

PART I
MARGARET OF SCOTLAND, ATHELING—QUEEN AND SAINT

It is strange yet scarcely difficult to the imagination to realise the first embodiment of what is now Edinburgh in the far distance of the early ages. Neither Pict nor Scot has left any record of what was going on so far south in the days when the king's daughters, primitive princesses with their rude surroundings, were placed for safety in the *castrum puellarum*, the maiden castle, a title in after days proudly (but perhaps not very justly) adapted to the supposed invulnerability of the fortress perched upon its rock. Very nearly invulnerable, however, it must have been in the days before artillery; too much so at least for one shut-up princess, who complained of her lofty prison as a place without verdure. If we may believe, notwithstanding the protest of that much-deceived antiquary the Laird of Monkbarns, that these fair and forlorn ladies were the first royal inhabitants of the Castle of Edinburgh, we may imagine that they watched from their battlements more wistfully than fearfully, over all the wide plain, what dust might rise or spears might gleam, or whether any galley might be visible of reiver or rescuer from the north. A little collection of huts or rude forts here and there would be all that broke the sweeping line of Lothian to the east or west,

and all that width of landscape would lie under the eyes of the watchers, giving long notice of the approach of any enemies. "Out over the Forth I look to the north," the maidens might sing, looking across to Dunfermline, where already there was some royal state, or towards the faint lines of mountains in the distance, over the soft swelling heights of the Lomonds. No doubt Edinburgh, Edwinesburgh, or whatever the antiquaries imagine it to have been, must have been sadly dull if safe, suspended high upon the rock, nearer heaven than earth. It is curious to hear that it was "without verdure"; but perhaps the young ladies took no account of the trees that clothed the precipices below them, or the greenness that edged the Nor' Loch deep at their feet, but sighed for the gardens and luxuriance of Dunfermline, where all was green about their windows and the winding pathways of the dell of Pittendreich would be pleasant to wander in. This first romantic aspect of the Castle of Edinburgh is, however, merely traditional, and the first real and authentic appearance of the old fortress and city in history is in the record, at once a sacred legend and a valuable historical chronicle, of the life of Margaret the Atheling, the first of several Queen Margarets, the woman saint and blessed patroness of Scotland, who has bequeathed not only many benefits and foundations of after good to her adopted country, but her name—perhaps among Scotswomen still the most common of all Christian names.

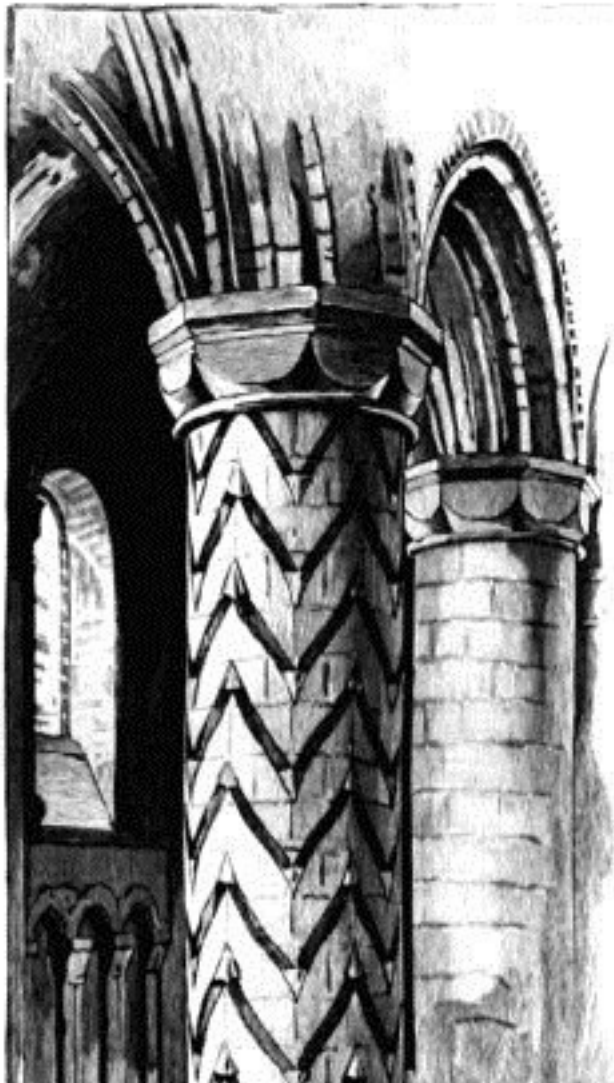
No more moving and delightful story was ever written or invented than the history of this saint and Queen. She was the

daughter of Edward, called the Outlaw, and of his wife a princess of Hungary, of the race which afterwards produced St. Elizabeth: and the sister of Edgar Atheling, the feeble but rightful heir of the Saxon line, and consequently of the English throne. The family, however, was more foreign than English, having been brought up at the Court of their grandfather, the King of Hungary, one of the most pious and one of the richest Courts in Christendom; and it was not unnatural that when convinced of the fact that the most legitimate of aspirants had no chance against the force of William, they should prefer to return to the country of their education and birth. It was no doubt a somewhat forlorn party that set out upon this journey, for to lose a throne is seldom a misfortune accepted with equanimity, and several of the beaten and despondent Saxons had joined the royal exiles. Their voyage, however, was an unprosperous one, and after much beating about by winds and storms they were at last driven up the Firth of Forth, where their ship found shelter in the little bay at the narrowing of the Firth, which has since borne the name of St. Margaret's Hope.

Lying here in shelter from all the winds behind the protecting promontory, with perhaps already some humble shrine or hermit's cell upon Inchgarvie or Inchcolm to give them promise of Christian kindness, with the lonely rock of Edinburgh in the distance on one side, and the soft slopes of the Fife coast rising towards the King's palace at Dunfermline on the other, the travellers must have awaited with some anxiety, yet probably

much hope, the notice of the barbaric people who came to the beach to stare at their weather-beaten ships, and hurried off to carry the news inland of such unwonted visitors. It is the very spot which is now disturbed and changed by the monstrous cobwebs of iron which bear the weight of the Forth Bridge and make an end for ever of the Queen's Ferry, which Margaret must have crossed so often, and by which a personage more familiar, Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck, once, as we all know, made his way to the North; but these are modern reflections such as have nothing to do with that primitive morning, fresh no doubt as to-day with sun and dew, when Malcolm's messengers came hurrying down to see what were these intruders, and what their purpose, and whether anything was to be apprehended from a visit apparently so unusual. The eager and curious emissaries had apparently no warrant to board the strangers, but gazed and wondered at the big ship and all its equipments, so unlike their own rude galleys; then hastened back again with an excited and exciting description of the greatness of the passengers on board and all their splendid array. Malcolm, cautious yet excited too, sent forth, as we are told in the *Scotichronicon*, "his wisest councillors" to make further inquiries. They too were astonished by the splendour of all they saw, and especially by the mien of a certain lady among these strangers, "whom, by her incomparable beauty, and the pleasantness of her jocund speech, I imagined to be the chief of the family," said the spokesman; "nor was it wonderful," adds the chronicler, "that they should believe her to

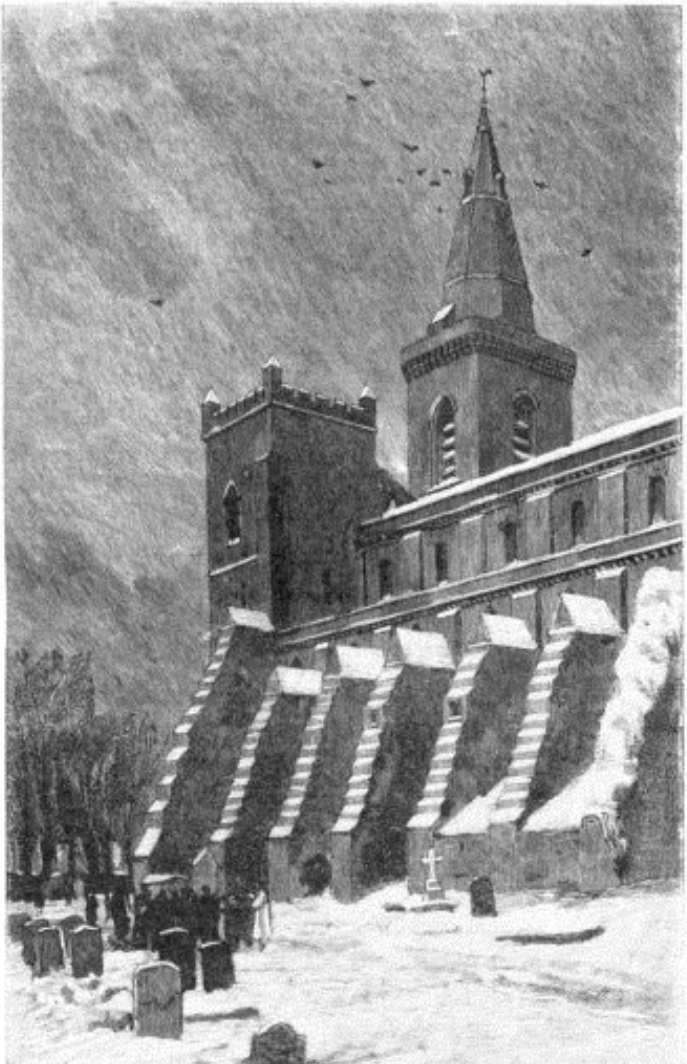
be the chief who was destined to be Queen of Scotland and also heir of England." Perhaps it was the after light of these events that conveyed that high appreciation of Margaret's qualities into the story, for she must have been quite young, and it is very unlikely that in presence of her mother, and the brother whom they all considered as the King of England, a young girl, however gifted, would have taken upon her the chief place.



PILLAR IN NAVE, DUNFERMLINE ABBEY

The report he received, however, had so much effect upon King Malcolm that he went himself to visit the strangers in their ship. He was not a mere barbaric prince, to be dazzled by the sight of these great persons, but no doubt had many a lingering recollection in his mind of Siward's great house in Northumberland, where he had taken refuge after his father's murder. It is curious and bewildering to go back in that dawn of national life to familiar Shaksperian regions, and to think that this primitive King who had so much in him of the savage, along with all his love and gentleness, was the son of that gracious Duncan who addressed his hostess like a kingly gentleman though her hospitality was to be so fatal. King Malcolm came down, no doubt with such state as he could muster, to see the wandering foreign princes. He was not unlearned, but knew Latin and the English tongue, though he could not read, as we are afterwards told. He had already reigned for fourteen years, after about as long a period of exile, so that he could not now be in his first youth, although he was still unmarried. He came down with his suite to the shore amid all the stir of the inquiring country folk, gathered about to see this strange thing—the ship with its unusual equipments, and the group of noble persons in their fine clothes who were to be seen upon the deck. The Athelings were carrying back with them to Hungary all the gifts with which the Emperor, Henry III, had loaded their father when he went

to England, and had jewels and vessels of gold and many fine things unknown to the Scots. And Margaret, even though not so prominent as the chroniclers say, was evidently by the consent of all a most gracious and courteous young lady, with unusual grace and vivacity of speech. The grave middle-aged King, with his recollections of a society more advanced than his own, which probably had made him long for something better than his rude courtiers could supply, would seem at once to have fallen under the spell of the wandering princess. She was such a mate as a poor Scots King, badgered by turbulent clans, could scarcely have hoped to find—rich and fair and young, and of the best blood in Christendom. Whether the wooing was as short as the record we have no means of knowing, but in the same year, 1070, Margaret was brought with great rejoicing to Dunfermline, and there married to her King, amid the general joy.



DUNFERMLINE ABBEY

The royal house at Dunfermline, according to the chronicle, was surrounded by a dense forest and guarded by immense cliffs. The latter particular, however, it is difficult to accept, for the dell in which the ruins of the mediæval palace (a building much more recent, it is needless to say, than that of Malcolm) still stand, though picturesque in its acclivities and precipices, is as far as possible from including any cliffs that could be called immense. The young Queen made a great change in the internal arrangements of what was no doubt a grim stronghold enough, soft as was the country around. Probably the absence of decoration and ornament struck her painfully, accustomed as she was to palaces of a very different kind—for almost the first thing we hear in the contemporary history written by her confessor Theodoric, afterwards a monk at Durham, is of the workshops and rooms for embroidery and all the arts which were established in Dunfermline, presumably in the palace itself under Margaret's own eye, for the beautifying of the great church which she founded there, and also no doubt for her own house. Certain women of good birth were judged worthy to share the Queen's work, and lived with her, it would seem, in a kind of seclusion, seeing only such chosen visitors as Margaret brought with her to cheer their labours, and forswearing all idle talk and frivolity. The Queen had such austerity mingled with her graciousness and such grace with her severity, says her monkish biographer, loving

an antithesis, that all feared and respected her presence. "Her life was full of moderation and gentleness, her speech contained the very salt of wisdom; even her silence was full of good thoughts."

This biographer—according to the conscientious and painstaking investigations of the Bollandist Fathers, who examine in their careful way all the guarantees and traditions of the manuscript with a jealousy worthy of the most enlightened historians—is not Turgot, who is usually credited with it, but Theodoric, a monk of Durham, who must have shared with Turgot, at some period of his life, the office of spiritual director and confidant to the Queen. It is curious that both these writers should have passed from the northern Court to the community at Durham, of which Turgot was prior and Theodoric a simple brother; yet not so strange either, for Durham was largely patronised and enriched by Margaret and her husband, their kingdom at this period reaching as far south. Of Turgot's Life, which was presumably written in the vernacular, there seems nothing existing; but that of Theodoric is very full, and contains many details which set before us the life of the simple Court, with its many labours and charities: the King full of reverence and tender surprise and admiration of all his wife's perfections; the young saint herself, sweet and bright in modest gravity amid a tumultuous world little respectful of women, full of the excessive charity of the age and of her race, and of those impulses of decoration and embellishment which were slow to develop among the ruder difficulties of the north. Theodoric himself

must have been more or less of an artist, for in speaking of the "golden vases" and ornaments for the altars of her new church which Margaret devised, "I myself carried out the work," he says. These must have been busy days in Malcolm's primitive palace while the workmen were busy with the great cathedral close by, the mason with his mallet, the homely sculptor with his chisel, carving those interlaced and embossed arches which still stand, worn and gray, but little injured, in the wonderful permanency of stone, in the nave of the old Abbey of Dunfermline: while the Queen's rooms opened into the hall where her ladies sat over their embroidery, among all the primitive dyes that art had caught from herbs and traditional mixtures, on one hand—and on the other into noisier workshops, where workmen with skilful delicate hammers were beating out the shining gold and silver into sacred vessels and symbols of piety. Margaret along with her stores of more vulgar wealth, and the ingots which were consecrated to the manufacture of crucifix and chalice, had brought many holy relics: and no doubt the cases and shrines in which these were enclosed afforded models for the new, over which Father Theodoric, with his monkish cape and cowl laid aside, and his shaven crown shining in the glow of the furnace, was so busy. What a pleasant stir of occupation and progress, the best and most trustworthy evidences of growing civilisation, must have arisen within the shelter of the woods which framed that centre of development and new life: the new abbey rising day by day, a white and splendid reality in the clearing among the trees;

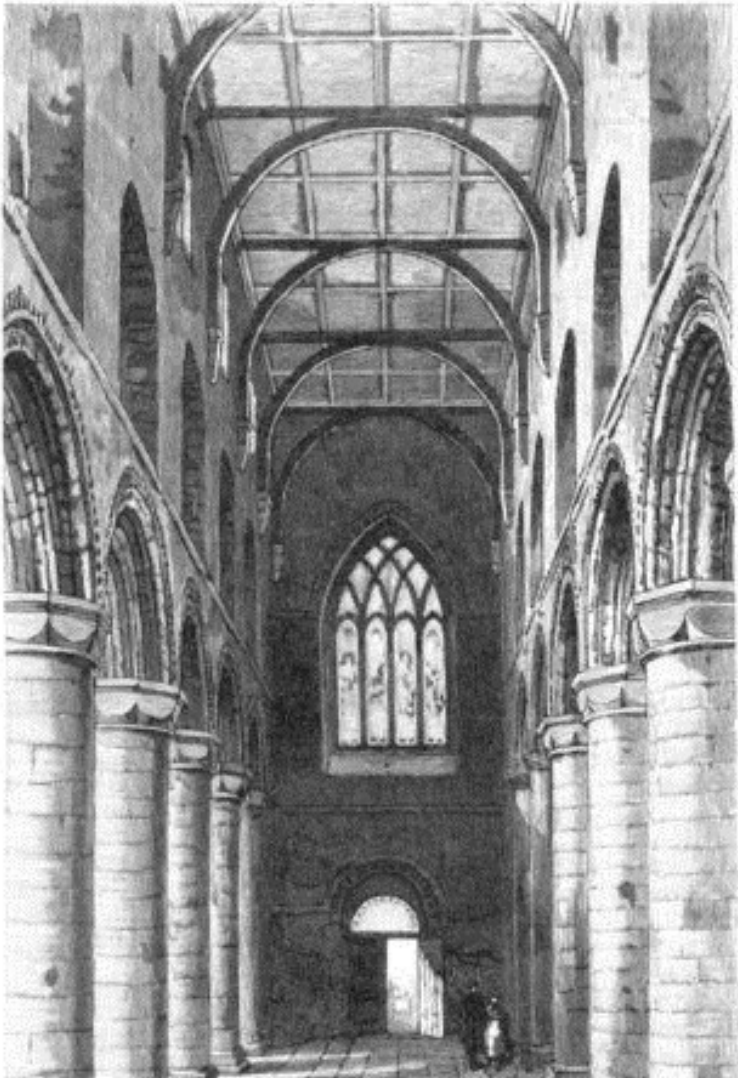
the bells, symbols of peace and pleasantness, sounding out over the half-savage country; the chants and songs of divine worship swelling upward to the skies. Margaret's royal manufactory of beautiful things, her tapestries and metal work, her adaptation of all the possibilities of ornament latent in every primitive community, with the conviction, always ennobling to art, that by these means of sacred adornment she and her assistants and coadjutors were serving and pleasing God, no doubt consoled her ardent and active spirit for the loss of many comforts and graces with which she must have been familiar. At the same time her new sphere of influence was boundless, and the means in her hand of leavening and moulding her new country almost unlimited—a thing above all others delightful to a woman, to whom the noiseless and gradual operation of influence is the chief weapon in the world.

WEST TOWER, DUNFERMLINE ABBEY

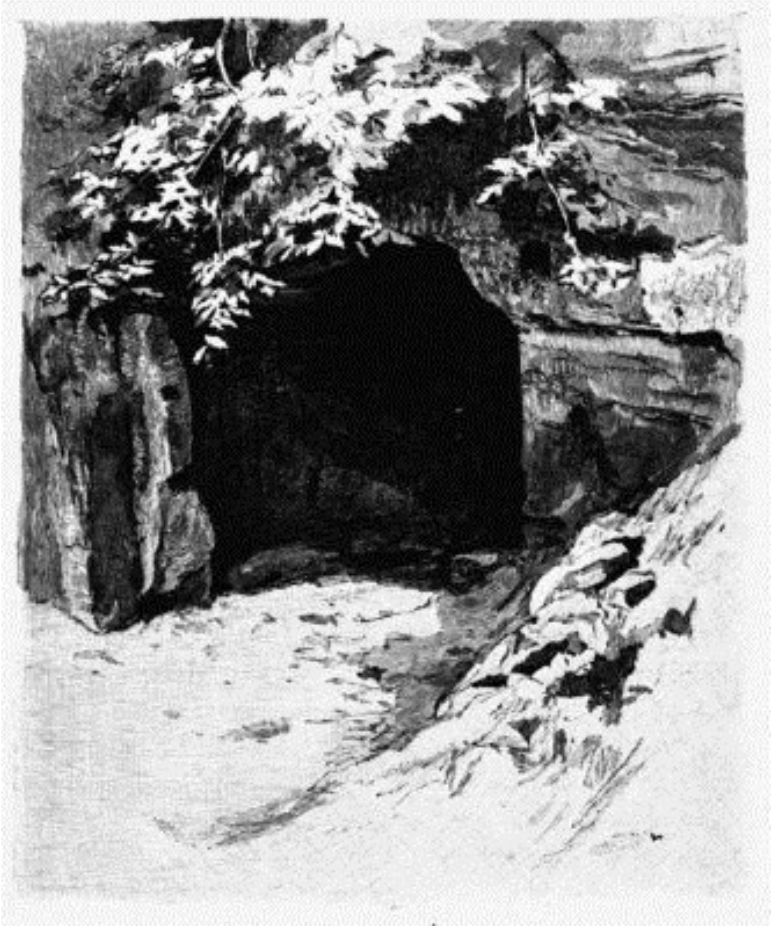
There is nothing, however, in this history more charming than the description of the relations between the royal pair. King Malcolm had probably known few graces in life except those, a step or two in advance of his own, which were to be found in Northumberland in the house of Earl Siward; and after the long practical struggle of his reign between the Scots and Celts, who had already so far settled down together as to constitute something which could be called a kingdom, he had no doubt fallen even from that higher plane of civilisation. Such rude state as the presence of a queen even in those primitive days might have procured had been wanting, and all his faculties were probably absorbed in keeping peace between the unruly chieftains, and fostering perhaps here and there the first rising of a little community of burghers, strong enough by union to defend themselves. Uneasy, there can be little doubt, was often the head which bore the circlet of troubled supremacy among all those half-subdued tribes; and his dwelling in the heart of the "dense forest," amid all the noisy retainers in the hall and jealous nobles in the council chamber, would leave little room for beauty or sweetness of any kind. When the stranger princess suddenly came in like an enchantment, with her lovely looks and "jocund eloquence"—full of smiles and pleasant speech, yet with a dignity which overawed every rude beholder—into these rude and noisy halls, with so many graceful ways and beautiful

garments and sparkling jewels, transforming the very chambers with embroidered hangings and all the rare embellishments of a lady's bower, with which no doubt the ship had been provided, and which mediæval princesses, like modern fine ladies, carried about with them—the middle-aged man of war was evidently altogether subdued and enraptured. To see her absorbed in prayer—an exercise which Malcolm had perhaps felt to be the occupation of monks and hermits only—to see her bending over her beautiful book with all its pictures, reading the sacred story there, filled him with awe and a kind of adoration. He could not himself read, which made the wonder all the more; but though incapable of mastering what was within, he loved to handle and turn over the book from which his beautiful wife derived her wisdom, touching it with his rude hands with caressing touches, and kissing the pages she loved. When he found one manuscript which she particularly esteemed, he "sent for his goldsmith" and had the vellum encased in gold and ornamented with jewels; then carried it back to her with such fond pleasure as may be easily imagined. Margaret on her part did what she could to secure to her King some of the punctilios of reverential respect due in her knowledge to a monarch. She suggested the formation of a royal guard to protect the King's person and surround him with honour and observance. She filled the palace with her wealth, adorning it in every way, providing fine clothes for the retainers and so enriching the house that the table was served with dishes of gold and silver. And it would seem that the reputation of a new and

splendid Court thus suddenly evolved among the northern mists got abroad, and brought merchants with their wares up the Firth, and quickened, if it did not altogether originate, the first feeble current of trade which was the precursor and origin of all our after wealth in Scotland.

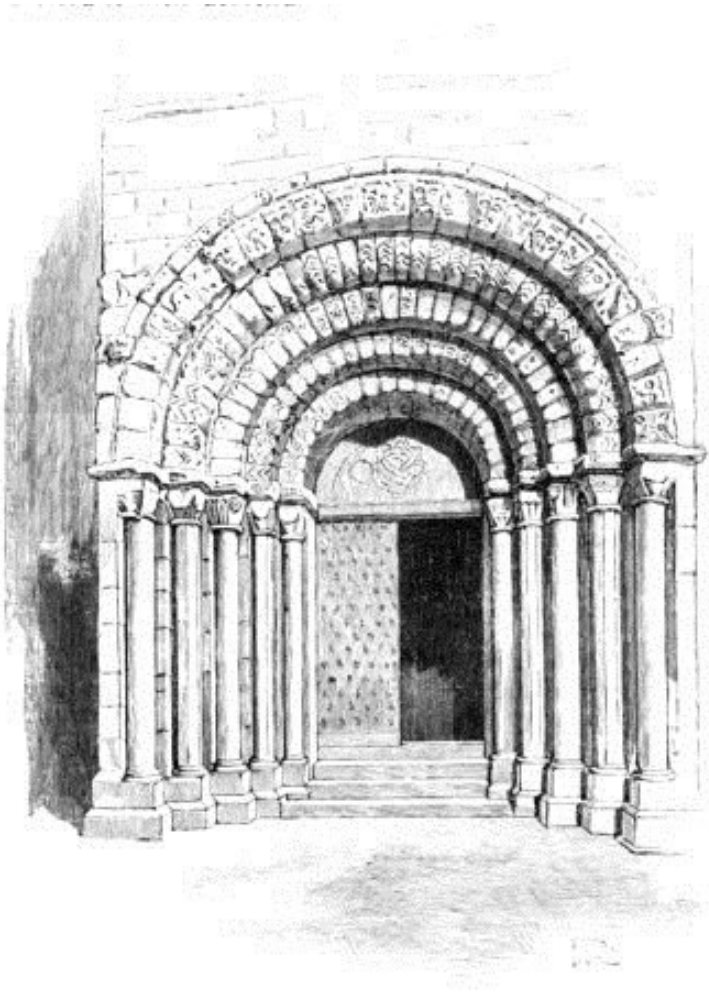


THE NAVE, DUNFERMLINE ABBEY—LOOKING WEST



This was not all, however, that Margaret did for the commonwealth. If we may trust her biographer, it was she who established that great principle of reform so important in all states, and generally one of the later fruits of civilisation, that the soldiers should be prevented from exacting or putting under requisition the peaceful people about, and that all they had should be honestly paid for, which was the last thing likely to be thought of by a mediæval prince. Altogether Margaret's influence was exerted for the best purposes to induce her husband "to relinquish his barbarous manners and live honestly and civilly," as the chronicler says. It was perhaps not so good an exercise of her power when she opened arguments, apparently through Malcolm as interpreter, with the native clergy of Scotland, the hermits and ecclesiastics of Columba's strain, and the mysterious Culdees of whom we know so little. The one certain fact fully established concerning them being, that they kept Easter at a different date from that appointed by Rome. The King, though no scholar, would seem to have been a linguist in his way, since he spoke both languages, that is the Saxon, and the Celtic or Pictish, again a most difficult question to determine—with a smattering of Latin; and was thus able to act as Margaret's mouthpiece in her arguments. She found fault with the Celts not only for the date of their Easter, but for their habit of not communicating at that festival. It is very curious to note in their answer the very same

reason which has prevailed in later days among all the changes of faith and ceremonial, and is still put forth in Highland parishes as an excuse for the small number of communicants. The Celtic priests and bishops defended their flocks by producing the words of St. Paul, in which that Apostle says that those who eat and drink unworthily eat and drink condemnation to themselves. So, according to Theodoric, the Celtic party in the Church answered Margaret, and so would their descendants, the "Men" of the Highlands, answer at this day. The integrity of the tradition is very remarkable. On the other hand, they offended the devout Queen by their neglect of Sunday, a reproach which cannot be addressed to their descendants.



WEST DOORWAY, DUNFERMLINE ABBEY

These theological discussions between the fair and learned Queen and the Highland ecclesiastics and anchorites, carried on by means of her chief convert the warrior King, whom love for her had taught to respect and share in her devotion, must have afforded many picturesque and striking scenes, though unfortunately there was no modern observer there to be interested and amused, but only Theodoric standing by, himself very hot upon the atrocity of a miscalculated Easter, and perhaps helping his royal mistress here and there with an argument. Naturally his story is especially full upon the religious side of Margaret's life—her much prayer, her humility and reverence during the services of the Church, an intent and silent listener to all teachings, only a little disposed to rebel now and then when her confessor passed too lightly over her faults. As for her charities, they were boundless. It was not for nothing that the blood of St. Ursula, and that which was to give life to still another saint, Elizabeth of Hungary, was in her veins. It is needless to say that nobody in those days had discovered the evil of indiscriminate almsgiving, which was, on the contrary, considered one of the first of Christian virtues. Margaret was the providence of all the poor around her. Her biographer tells us naïvely, with no sense that the result was not one to be proud of, that the fame of her bounty and kindness brought the poor in crowds to every place where she was. When she went out they crowded round her like children round their mother. When she

had distributed everything she had of her own she took garments and other things from her courtiers and attendants to give away, a spoliation to which they consented willingly, knowing that the value of everything thus appropriated would be returned to them —an excellent reason for acquiescence. This "rapine of piety" was so strong in her that she sometimes even appropriated to her poor certain of the gold pieces which it was the King's custom to offer at Easter to the Church—a pious robbery which Malcolm pretended not to perceive until he caught her in the act, when he accused her with a laugh of tender amusement for her rapacity. In all the touches by which the sympathetic priest delineates the union of this pair there is something at once humorous and pathetic in the figure of the King, the rough old warrior, always following with his eyes the angelic saintly figure by his side, all believing, half adoring, and yet not without that gleam of amusement at the woman's absolute unhesitating enthusiasm— an amusement mingled with admiration and respect, but still a smile—a delighted surprise at all her amazing ways, and wonder what she will do next, though everything in his eyes was perfect that she did—such as may still be seen in the eyes of many a world-worn husband looking on at the movements of that directer, more simple, yet more subtle being, and the quick absolutism and certainty of the bright spirit at his side. The grey-bearded old soldier, leader of many a raid and victor in many a struggle, with this new revelation of beauty and purity bursting upon his later life, becomes to us a recognisable and friendly

human soul in these glimpses we have of him, unintentional and by the way. Theodoric himself must have liked Malcolm, half-barbarian as he was, and even admired the look of ardent supplication which would come into the King's face, "a great intentness and emotion," such as seemed to him extraordinary in a secular person, and which his wife's beautiful example and the contagion of her piety alone could have developed.

Among Margaret's many duties there was one which throws a very strange light upon the time. Just before her arrival in Scotland, King Malcolm had been carrying fire and sword through Northumberland in one of the many raids over the Border which were the commonplace of the time—if indeed we may speak of the Border at such an unsettled and shifting period when the limits of the kingdoms were so little certain. The issue of this raid was that Scotland, probably meaning for the most part Lothian, the southern portion of the country, was filled with English captives, apportioned as slaves, or servants at least, through the entire population, so that scarcely a house was without one, either male or female. The Queen interested herself particularly in these captives, as was natural; sometimes paying the ransom exacted for them, and in all cases defending and protecting them. Her emissaries went about among them inquiring into their condition and how they were treated, visiting them from house to house: and all that Margaret could do to mitigate the evils of their captivity was done. Nothing can be more strange than to realise a time when Northumbrian prisoners

of war could be house slaves in Lothian. No doubt what was true on one side was true on the other, and Scotch captives had their turn of similar bondage.

In those days the ancient county which her children love to call the Kingdom of Fife was far more than Edinburgh, then a mere fortress standing up on an invulnerable rock in the middle of a fertile plain, the centre of the national life. Not only was the King's residence at Dunfermline, but the great Cathedral of St. Andrews was the ecclesiastical capital, gradually working out that development of Roman supremacy and regularity which soon swept away all that was individual in the apostleship of St. Columba and the faith of his followers. That the King and Queen were frequently at Edinburgh is evident from the fact that Margaret had her oratory and chapel on the very apex of the rock, and had there established a centre of worship and spiritual life. St. Andrews, however, was the centre of influence, the shrine to which pilgrims flowed, and the pious Queen, in her care for every office of religion and eagerness to facilitate every exercise of piety, gave special thought to the task of making the way easy and safe towards that holy metropolis. The Canterbury of the north was divided from the other half of Malcolm's kingdom by that sea which in these later days, at much cost of beauty, money, and life, has been bridged over and shortened—"the sea which divides Lothian from Scotland" according to the chronicler, "the Scottish Sea" as it is called by others, the mighty Firth, which to the rude galleys of the little trading villages along its shores must

have been a sea dangerous and troubled, full of risks and perils. The Queen, we are told, erected houses of shelter on either side of this angry strait, and established what we should call a line of passenger boats to take the pilgrims over at the expense of the State. One wonders how much or how little of State policy might mingle in this pious act, for no doubt the establishment of an easy and constant means of communication between the wealthy Lothians and the then centre of national life must have been of unspeakable use in consolidating a kingdom still so imperfectly knit together and divided by the formidable line of the great estuary. It is one drawback of a religious chronicler that no such motive, large and noble as it might be, is thought of, since even national advantage counted so much less than the cultivation of piety. And it is very likely that Margaret thought of nothing else, and reckoned a prayer at the shrine of the patron saint as far more important than the intercommunications thus established and the knowledge of each other thus acquired by the different parts of a kingdom which still retained the differences of separate nationalities. A mingled aim, a practical motive, might not have accomplished half so much; but no doubt among Malcolm's men, his greybeards pondering in council, or perhaps himself thinking of many things as he protected all his wife's schemes, there was a dawning perception, along with the undoubted advantages of piety, of a national use in the quickened intercourse and securely established communications. If so he would probably blame himself for a mixed motive by the side of Margaret's

pure and absolute heavenly-mindedness, yet take pleasure in the secondary unacknowledged good all the same.

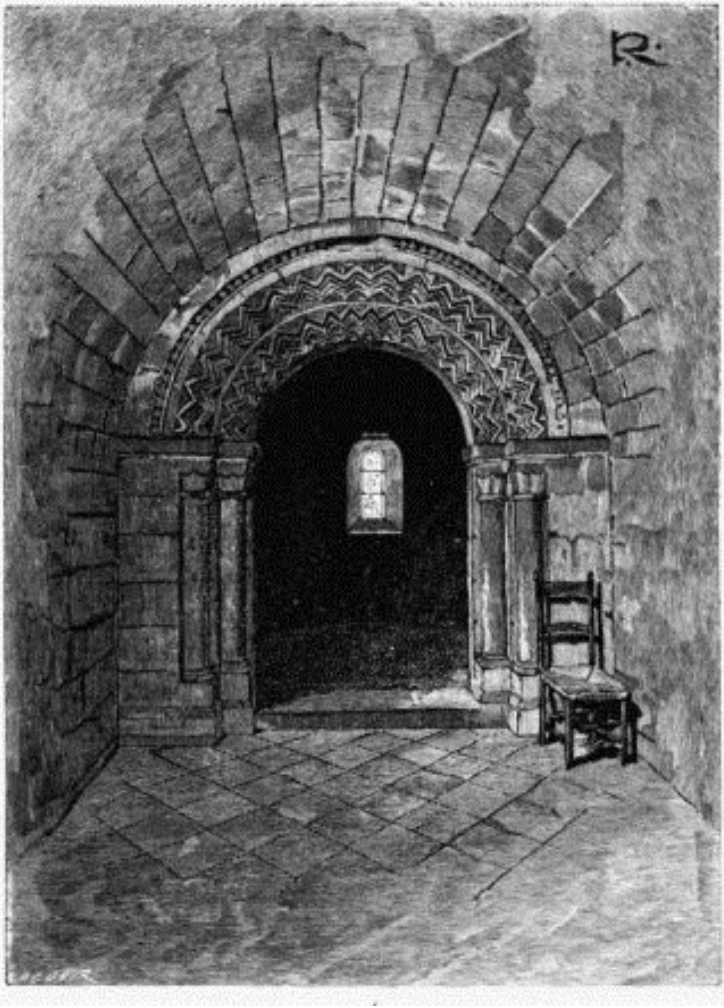
Thus their life went on for nearly a quarter of a century in a course of national development to which everything contributed, even the love of splendour which Margaret brought with her, and her artistic tastes, and the rage for decoration and beautiful surroundings which had then begun to be so strong an element in national progress. She had many children in the midst of all these labours and public interests, seven sons and two daughters, whom she brought up most carefully in all the perfection of her own faith. Three of these sons succeeded one after the other to the Scottish throne, and proved the efficacy of her teaching by piety as strong and as liberal as her own. It was in the year 1093 that Margaret's beautiful and touching life came to an end, in great sorrow yet triumph and pious victory over trouble. Before this time, but at a date not indicated in the narrative, she had parted with her friend and biographer Theodoric, probably not very long before her own death, as we are told that she was oppressed by forebodings, or rather premonitions of death and sorrow, of which she spoke to him with tears. When the moment of separation came both penitent and confessor so long united in the closest bonds of sympathy wept sore. "Farewell," said the Queen; "I shall not live long, but you will live long after me. Remember my soul in your prayers, and take care of my children; cease not to teach and admonish them, especially when they are raised to great estate." He made the promise with tears,

not daring to contradict her by happier auguries, and in this way took his last farewell of the Queen, and never saw her more. He continues his story, however, taking it from the lips of a priest who remained with her during the rest of her life, probably also a Saxon, since he became a monk of St. Cuthbert's on Margaret's death.

The narrative goes on with an account of the declining health of the Queen. For more than six months she had been unable to mount a horse, or sometimes to rise from her bed, and in the midst of this illness the King set forth upon one of his raids into England, on what provocation or with what motive it is difficult to tell, except that the provocation was perpetual and the motive persistent the leading rule of life. His two elder sons accompanied him on this expedition, which for some reason Margaret had opposed, "much dissuading" him from going; but this time, unfortunately, had not been hearkened to. Probably she set out along with him, on her way to Edinburgh to pass the time of his absence there, which was a place where news could be had more readily than beyond the sea in Fife. The solitary castle, high perched upon its hill, whence messengers could be seen approaching, or, better still, the King's banners coming back, was a fitter home for an anxious wife than the palace over the Firth among its woods. How long she remained there we are not told, and there are now unhappily no articulate remains at all of the old stronghold which must have risen upon that height, with its low massive walls and rude buildings. The oldest relic in Edinburgh

is that little sanctuary, plain and bare as a shed, deprived of all external appearance of sanctity, and employed for vulgar uses for many centuries, which has been at length discovered by its construction, the small dark chancel arch and rude ornament, to have been a chapel, and which there seems no doubt is at least built upon the site consecrated for Margaret's oratory, if not the very building itself. It is small enough and primitive enough, with its little line of toothed ornament, and its minute windows sending in a subdued light even in the very flush of day, to be of any antiquity. I believe that even the fortunate antiquary who had the happiness of discovering it does not claim for this little chapel the distinction of being the very building itself which Margaret erected. Yet it must have been one very similar, identical in form and ornament, so that the interested spectator may well permit himself to picture the sick and anxious Queen, worn out with illness and weighed down by sore forebodings, kneeling there in the faint light before the shadowed altar, trying to derive such comfort as was possible from the ministrations of the priests, and following with her prayers her husband and her boys, so young still and not hardened to war, who might be falling by the hands perhaps of her own kindred, in the country which was hers, yet which she scarcely knew. In the intervals of these anxious prayers, when her failing strength permitted, how wistfully the Queen and her ladies must have gazed from the walls far around on every side to watch for the first appearance of any messenger or herald of return. From the woods of Dunfermline and its soft

rural landscape, and the new abbey with its sweet singing and all its magnificence, it must have been a change indeed to dwell imprisoned so near the sky, within the low, stern rugged walls of the primitive fort, with a few rude houses clinging about it, and the little chapel on the rock, small and dark, as the only representative of the stately arches and ornate services which she loved. But the little chapel is deeply involved in all the later history of Margaret's life.



INTERIOR OF QUEEN MARGARET'S CHAPEL, EDINBURGH CASTLE

One day her attendants remarked that she was even more sad than her wont, and questioning her received a reply which must have made them tremble. "Perhaps to-day," she said, "a great evil has fallen upon the Scots, such as has not happened to them for years." Her hearers, however it alarmed them, made as light as they could of this prophetic foreboding, which might be but a deepened impression of the prevailing despondency in her heart. No doubt it was a melancholy night in the fortress, where the women who had husbands or sons or brothers in the distant army would cluster together in the antechamber and watch for the attendants who came and went behind the curtain into the sick chamber where the Queen, visibly sinking day by day, lay sleepless and sad, listening for every sound. Terrors surrounded the castle for the personal safety of its occupants as well as for their brethren in the wars; and no doubt there would be whispers of the King's brother, Donald Bane, and of the watchful jealous Celtic chiefs all ready to rise with him, should an opportunity occur, and dash the stranger brood from the throne. All these sad prognostications were quickly realised. Next morning brought messengers in fear and distress from the army to say that the King had fallen at Alnwick in Northumberland, and to prove that Margaret's prophecy had been fulfilled at the very time it was spoken. It was November, dark and cheerless both within and

without, and the Queen would seem to have been prostrated for a day or two by the sad news: but on the fourth day she rose from her bed and tottered to the little chapel on the rock to hear mass for the last time, and receive the Holy Sacrament in preparation for death. She then returned to her rooms with the pallor of death already on her face, and bidding all around—"me," says the priest, "and the others who stood by"—to recommend her to Christ, asked that the black rood should be brought to her. This was the most holy of all the relics which she had brought with her to Scotland. It was a case of pure gold in the form of a cross, ornamented with marvellous work, bearing the image of the Saviour curiously carved in ivory, and enclosing a portion of the true cross (proved to be so by many miracles). The Queen took it in her hands, pressed it to her dying breast, and touched with it her eyes and face. While thus devoutly employed, with her thoughts diverted from all earthly things, Margaret was brought back to her sorrow by the sudden entrance of her son Ethelred, who had returned from the defeated army to carry to his mother the dreadful news of the death not only of his father but of his elder brother. The sight of his mother in extremity, almost gone, no doubt confused the poor boy, still little more than a stripling, and with that weight of disaster on his head—and he answered to her faltering inquiry at first that all was well. Margaret adjured him by the holy cross in her arms to tell her the truth: then when she heard of the double blow, burst out in an impassioned cry. "I thank Thee, Lord," she said, "that givest me this agony to bear in

my death hour." Her life had been much blessed; she had known few sorrows; it was as a crown to that pure and lovelit existence that she had this moment of bitterest anguish before God gave to His beloved sleep.

While this sad scene was enacting within, the country was full of tumult and conspiracy without. Donald Bane, the brother of Malcolm, had no doubt chafed at the Saxon regime under which the King had fallen, for years, and struggled against the influences brought in from abroad in the retinue of the foreigner, as has been done in every commonwealth in history at one time or another. He represented the old world, the Celtic rule, the traditions of the past. Some of the chroniclers indeed assert that Malcolm was illegitimate and Donald Bane the rightful heir to the crown. He was, at all events, a pretender kept in subjection while Malcolm's strong hand held the sceptre, but ready to seize the first opportunity of revolution. No doubt the news of the King's death, and of that of his heir, would run like wildfire through the country; but it would seem that the attempt of Donald must have been already organised, since his siege of Edinburgh, where most of his brother's children were with their mother, placed there for safety in the King's absence, had already begun. Upon the death of the Queen, Donald was not likely to have treated the royal children who stood in his way with much mercy; and the state of affairs was desperate when young Ethelred, the third of her sons, not yet arrived at man's estate, closed his mother's eyes, and found himself at the

head of the weeping family shut up within the castle, surrounded by precipices on every side except that upon which his angry uncle lay with all the forces of the discontented in Scotland at his back, all the lovers of the old regime and enemies of the stranger, and with a fierce contingent from Norway to support his Celtic horde. In the simplicity of the narrative we hear not a word of the troubled councils which must have been held while the boy prince in his sorrow and the sudden dreadful responsibility laid on his young shoulders turned to such wise advisers as might have followed Margaret into the stronghold, and took thought how to save the children and carry off the precious remains of the Queen. The expedient to which they had recourse was one which their assailants evidently thought impossible. That the rock upon which Edinburgh Castle stands should have been considered inaccessible by practical mountaineers like the followers of Donald Bane seems curious: but in those days the art of climbing for pleasure had not been discovered, and it had no place in the methods of warfare. It seemed enough to the assailants to hold the gates and the summit of the eastern slopes, where probably there must already have been some clusters of huts or rough half-fortified dwellings descending from the Castle Hill, foreshadowing a Lawnmarket at least if not yet a Canongate. No one would seem to have thought of the possibility of any descent on the other side from that perpendicular rock.

But despair sharpens the wits, and no doubt after many miserable consultations a desperate expedient was found. Even

now nothing but a goat, or a schoolboy, or perhaps a young private fearful of punishment, could find a way down the wonderful curtain of rock which forms the west side of Edinburgh Castle; and to guide the children and their attendants, a sorrowful little group of mourners, distracted with grief and fear, and Margaret's body in its litter, down those rocks where there was scarcely footing for an alert and experienced climber, must have been one of the most difficult as it was one of the boldest of undertakings. While the rebel host raged on the other side, and any traitor might have brought the enemy round to intercept that slow and painful descent, it was accomplished safely under cover of "a great myst," Heaven, as all thought, helping the forlorn fugitives by that natural shield. Mists are no rare things, as everybody knows, on these heights. Perhaps it was the well-known easterly haar, the veil of salt sea fog which Edinburgh so often wraps round her still, which, blowing up from the mouth of the Firth, enveloped the travellers and hid them in its folds of whiteness, impenetrable by the closest watcher, till they had safely reached the level ground, and stealing down to the Queen's Ferry escaped to loyal Fife and their home in Dunfermline. Needless to say that this mist was a miraculous agency to all the family and servants of the Queen. To us it adds a touch of local colour, the well-known symbol of a familiar scene. Edinburgh was then nothing but a castle upon a rock, and now is one of the fairest and most celebrated of historical cities; but still its perpendicular crags rise inaccessible against the setting sun,

and still the white mist comes sweeping up from the sea.

It is to the credit of the priests that this is the only miracle that is connected with the name of Margaret, if we except the pretty legend which tells how a hundred years later, when her descendants removed the remains of the saint from the place where they had been deposited to lay them before the high altar in Dunfermline, the coffin in which they were placed could not be carried past the humble spot in which lay, brought back from Northumberland, the bones of her King. The cortege stopped perforce, the ceremonial had to be interrupted, for all the force of all the bearers could not carry even in death the faithful wife from her husband; and the only thing it was found that could be done was to transport Malcolm along with the partner of his life to the place of honour, to which on his own account that rude soldier had but little claim. Many saints have had whims as to the place of their interment, and showed them in a similar way, but this is all sweetness and tender fidelity and worthy to be true. The royal pair were carried off afterwards, stolen away like so much gold or silver, by Philip of Spain to enrich his gloomy mausoleum-palace, and can be traced for a long time in one place or another receiving that strange worship which attaches to the most painful relics of humanity. But where they now lie, if in the bosom of the kindly earth or among other dreadful remains in some sanctuary filled with relics, no one knows.

Margaret had done in her lifetime great things for Scotland. She had introduced comforts and luxuries of every kind, and the

decorative arts, and a great deal of actual wealth, into a very poor and distracted country. The earliest charter which is found in the Scottish archives is one of Malcolm and Margaret, showing how the time of settlement and established order began in their reign. She had helped to give the distracted and divided kingdom, made up of warring sects, that consolidation and steadiness which enabled it to take its place among recognised nations. She turned the wavering balance between Celt and Saxon to what has proved to be the winning side, the side of progress and advancement. The Donalds and Duncans were swept away after a brief and bloody interval and were no more possible in Scotland after her, and the reign of the Anglo-Saxon was assured. She was apparently the instrument too, though there is little information on this subject, of drawing the Church of Scotland into that close union with Rome which had been already accomplished in England; a step which, if it lost some doubtful freedom and independence in ecclesiastical matters, secured still more completely a recognised place in Catholic Christendom to the northern kingdom. "The pure Culdee" of whom we know so little did not survive, any more than did the Celtic kings, her influence and the transformation she effected. Her life and legend formed the stepping-stone for Scotland into authentic history as into a consolidated and independent existence. The veil of fable and uncertainty cleared away before the mild shining of her name and story. Like Edinburgh coming suddenly into sight, as in some old and primitive picture, high upon its rock, with the

slope of the Castle Hill on one side and the precipices round, and the white mist sweeping up from the sea, Scotland itself becomes recognisable and grows into form and order by the light of her peaceful and gracious presence.

And it is something worth noting that this image of purity and excellence was no monkish vision of the purity of the cloister, but that more complete and at the same time more humble ideal of the true wife, mother, and mistress, whose work was in and for the world and the people, not withdrawn to any exceptional refuge or shelter—which has always been most dear to the Anglo-Saxon race. The influence of such an example in a country where manners and morals were equally rudimentary, where the cloister proved often the only refuge for women, and even that not always a safe one—was incalculable, and the protection of a virtuous Court something altogether novel and admirable. The gentlewomen who worked at their tapestry under Margaret's eye, and learned the gentler manners of other Courts and countries of old civilisation by her side, and did their wooing modestly with the sanction of her approval, must have changed the atmosphere of the north in the most wonderful way and quickened every current of national development though the influence was remote and the revolution unperceived. The chroniclers go back with a fond persistence to the story of Margaret and her sons, and the number of her family and the circumstances of her marriage and of her death. Before her there is little but fable; after her the stream of history flows clear. The story of Macbeth, which is,

yet is not, the Shakspearian drama, and accordingly takes quite a curious distinct flow of its own, like a new and imperfect version of something already familiarly known, is the only episode of secular history that has any reality before we come, in the next generation, to herself and her King. The earlier annals of Adamnan, the life of Columba and the records of his sacred isle, belong to those ever-living ever-continuing legends of the saints in which the story of the nations counts for little. But Margaret was fortunately secular, and though a saint, a great and influential personage in the front of everything, and also a woman in the fullest tide of life to whom all human events were happening; who lived by love and died of grief, and reigned and rejoiced and triumphed as well as suffered and prayed.

There followed, however, a terrible moment for that new Scottish-Saxon royal family, when both their parents were thus taken from them. Donald Bane set up a brief authority, restoring the old kingdom and banishing, after the familiar use and wont of such revolutions, his brother's children from Scotland. Of these children, however, but three sons are mentioned: Edgar, Alexander, and David, who must all have been under age at the time. Ethelred, who had the dangerous office of conveying his brothers and sisters along with his mother's body to Dunfermline, died or was killed immediately after this feat, and was laid with the King and Queen before the rood altar in Dunfermline; and of Edmund, an elder son, we have but a confused account, Wynton and Fordun both describing him as "a man of gret wertu," who

died in religion, having taken the cowl of a monk of Cluny; whereas William of Malmesbury accuses him of treachery and complicity in the murder of his base-born brother Duncan. However this might be, he was at least swept from the succession, in which there is no mention of him. Malcolm's lawful heirs were thus reduced to the three boys whom their uncle, Edgar Atheling, had received in England. But Donald Bane was not long permitted to enjoy his conquest in peace. Duncan, the illegitimate son (but this counted for little in those days) of Malcolm, who was a hostage in England, after his uncle had held the sovereign power for six months, made a rush upon Scotland with the help of an English army, and overcame and displaced Donald; but in his turn was overcome after a reign of a year and a half, Donald Bane again resuming the power, which he held for three years more. By this time young Edgar, Margaret's son, had come to man's estate, and with the help of the faithful Saxons who still adhered to his uncle, Edgar Atheling, and encouraged by dreams and revelations that the crown was to be his, came back to Scotland and succeeded finally in overcoming Donald and securing his inheritance. The period of anarchy and trouble lasted for five years, and no doubt the civilisation and good order which Malcolm and Margaret had toiled to establish were for the moment much disturbed. But after Edgar's succession the interrupted progress was resumed. "He was a man of faire havyng," says old Wynton, and in his time the Saxon race came again to great honour and promotion, at once by

his own firm establishment upon the Scottish throne, and by the marriage of his sister Maud to the new King of England, Henry I., which restored the Saxon succession and united right to might in England. Thus after a moment of darkness and downfall the seed of the righteous took root again and prospered, and the children of St. Margaret occupied both thrones. Edgar, like so many of his race, died childless; but he was peacefully succeeded by his brother Alexander, who, though as much devoted to church-building and good works as the rest of his family, was apparently a more warlike personage, since he was called Alexander the Fierce, an alarming title, and was apparently most prompt and thoroughgoing in crushing rebellion and other little incidents of the age. He was succeeded in his turn by the youngest of Margaret's sons, David, that "sair sanct for the crown," who covered Scotland with ecclesiastical foundations.

> "He illumynyd in his dayes
> His landys wyth kirkis and abbayis;
> Bishoprychs he fand bot foure or three,
> Bot or he deyd nyne left he."

Among the many other foundations made by King David was the house of the Holy Rood which has been so familiar a name in Scottish history—built low in the valley at the foot of the surrounding hills and that castle in which the Queen died pressing the black rood—most precious possession—to her dying breast. Whether a recollection of that scene, which might

well have impressed itself even on the memory of a child, and of the strange wild funeral procession, with all its associations of grief and terror, which had stumbled down the dangerous rocks in the mist thirty-five years before, was in David's mind, it would be vain to inquire. The black rood of itself, besides these touching and sacred associations, was a relic of almost unequalled sanctity, and well warranted the erection of a holy house for its guardianship and preservation. How far the street, which would be little more than a collection of huts, had crept down the Castle Hill towards the new monastery in the valley there is no evidence to show, but no doubt both the castle and the religious house were soon surrounded by those humble scattered dwellings, and David's charter itself makes it plain that already the borough of Edinburgh was of some importance. Part of the revenues of the monastery were to be derived from the dues and taxes of the town, and it was also endowed with "one half of the tallow, lard, and hides of the beasts slain in Edinburgh," an unsavoury but no doubt valuable gift. The canons of the Abbey of Holyrood, or Holyrood House as it is called from the beginning with a curious particularity, had also permission to build another town between themselves and Edinburgh, which would naturally cluster round the Canon's Gate—the road that led to St. Cuthbert's, at the farther end of the North Loch, where every man could say his mass; or more directly still to the dark little chapel upon the castle rock, made sacred by all its memorials of the blessed Margaret. The nucleus of the future

capital is thus plainly apparent between the two great forces of that age, the Church, the great instrument of congregation and civilisation, and the Stronghold, in which at any moment of danger refuge could be taken. It is curious to realise the wild solitude of this historical ridge, with its rude houses coming into being one by one, the low thatched roofs and wattled walls which in the course of time were to give place to buildings so stately. The Canongate would be but a country road leading up towards the strong and gloomy gate which gave entrance to the *enceinte* of the castle—itself like some eagle's nest perched high among the clouds.

The line of Margaret went on till her sons held their Courts and dated their charters from Holyrood House, and Parliaments were held and laws made in the Castle of Edinburgh, and the scattered huts upon the Castle Hill had grown into a metropolis. They were a pious and in many respects an enlightened race, and they came to great honour and renown on both sides of the house. Maud, Margaret's daughter, became Queen of England, and her granddaughter Empress, while Scotland developed and flourished in the hands of the saintly Queen's sons and their descendants. There are unfortunate individuals in the most prosperous races, and Scotland never sustained greater humiliation than in her attempts to rescue William called the Lion, a sorry lion for his kingdom, when he allowed himself to be caught in a trap and made the prisoner of the English king. But the children of Malcolm and Margaret retained their character through many

generations, and were a Godfearing house, full of faith and devotion, careful of their people's interests, and dear to their hearts. They prospered as the virtuous and excellent so often do even in this world, and covered Scotland with endowments —endowments which indeed proved a snare to the church on after occasions, but which at that period were probably the best means in which money could be invested for the benefit of the people, since alms and succour and help and teaching in every way came from the monks in the primitive circumstances of all nations. They were not only the guardians of learning; they were examples in husbandry, in building, in every necessary craft; nursing the sick, receiving the stranger, and, as the very title-deed of their existence, feeding the poor. In those uncomplicated times there was no such fear of pauperising the natives of the soil as holds our hands now, and everything had to be taught to the primitive labourer, who might have to leave the plough in the middle of the furrow and be off and away on his lord's commands at any moment, leaving his wife and children to struggle on with the help of the good fathers who taught the boys, or the gentle sisters who trained the girls to more delicate work, feeding the widow and her brood. David and his brothers, and the devout kings who immediately followed, probably did what was best for their agitated kingdom in establishing so many centres of assured and quiet living, succour and peace, even if what was salvation for their age became the danger of another time. Those foundations continued through the whole of the period during

which the lineal descendants of Margaret held the throne. Her lineage, it is true, has never died out: but the strain changed with the death of the last Alexander, and another change came over Scotland not so profound as that which attended the coming of the Saxon princess, yet great and remarkable—the end of an age of construction, of establishment, of knitting together; the beginning of a time disturbed with other questions, with complications of advancing civilisation, nobles and burghers, trade and war.

ARMS OF QUEEN MARGARET OF SCOTLAND
(From the Ceiling of St. Machar's Cathedral, Old Aberdeen)

PART II
THE STEWARDS OF SCOTLAND

CHAPTER I
JAMES I. POET AND LEGISLATOR

The growth of Edinburgh is difficult to trace through the mists and the tumults of the ages. The perpetual fighting which envelops the Scotland of those days as in the "great stour" or dust, which was Sir Walter Scott's conception of a battle, with gleams of swords and flashes of fire breaking through, offers few breaks through which we can see anything like the tranquil growth of that civic life which requires something of a steady and settled order and authority to give it being. The revolutions which took place in the country brought perpetual vicissitude to the Castle of Edinburgh, and no doubt destroyed and drove from their nests upon the eastern slopes of the rock the settlers who again and again essayed to keep their footing there. When the family of St. Margaret came to a conclusion, and the great historical struggle which succeeded ended in the establishment of Robert Bruce upon the throne, that great victor and statesman destroyed the Castle of Edinburgh with other strongholds, that it might not afford a point of vantage to the English invader or

other enemies of the country's peace—a step which would seem to have been premature, though probably, in the great triumph and ascendency in Scotland which his noble character and work had gained, he might have hoped that at least the unanimity of the nation and its internal peace were secured, and that only an enemy would attempt to dominate the reconciled and united country. The Castle was, however, built up again and again, re-established and destroyed, a centre of endless fighting during the tumultuous reigns that followed, though it is only on the accession of a new race, a family so deeply connected with the modern history of Great Britain that no reader can be indifferent to its early appearances, that Edinburgh begins to become visible as the centre of government, the royal residence from whence laws were issued, and where the business of the nation was carried on. Following what seems to be one of the most wonderful rules of heredity—a peculiarity considerably opposed to the views which have been recently current on that subject—Robert Bruce was too great a man to have a son worthy of him: and after the trifling and treacherous David the inheritance of his kingdom came through his daughter to a family already holding a high place—the Stewards of Scotland, great hereditary officials, though scarcely so distinguished in character as in position. The tradition that their ancestor Banquo was the companion of Macbeth when the prophecy was made to him which had so great an effect upon that chieftain's career, and that to Banquo's descendants was adjudged the crown which Macbeth had no

child to inherit, is far better known, thanks to Shakspeare, than any fact of their early history. It is probably another instance of that inventive ingenuity of the original chroniclers, which so cleverly imagined a whole line of fabulous kings, to give dignity and importance to the "ancient kingdom" thus carried back to inarticulate prehistoric ages. In this way the Stewarts, actually a branch of a well-known Norman family, were linked to a poetic and visionary past by their supposed identification with the children of Banquo, with all the circumstantial details of an elaborate pedigree. According to the legend, the dignity of Grand Steward of Scotland was conferred by Malcolm Canmore upon a descendant of the ancient thane, and the lineage of the family is traced through all the dim intervening ages with scrupulous minuteness. The title of Steward of Scotland was enough, it would seem, to make other lordships unnecessary, and gradually developed into that family surname with which we are now so familiar, which has wrought both Scotland and England so much woe, yet added so intense an interest to many chapters of national history. The early Stewards are present by name in all the great national events: but have left little characteristic trace upon the records, as of remarkable individuals. They took the cross in repeated crusades, carrying their official coat with its chequers, the brand of the Chief Servitor of the Scottish Court, through the wars of the Holy Land, till they came finally into the highest favour and splendour in the days of Bruce, whose cause, which was also the cause of the independence of Scotland,

they maintained. Walter, who then held the office of Steward, was knighted on the field of Bannockburn. He was afterwards, as the story goes, sent to receive on the Border, after peace had been made, various prisoners who had been detained in England during the war, and among them Marjory Bruce, the daughter of the patriot-king. It would be easy to imagine the romance that followed: the young knight reverently escorting the young princess across the devastated country, which had not yet had time to recover its cruel wounds, but yet was all astir with satisfaction and hope: and how his account of what had happened in Scotland, and, above all, of that memorable field where he had won from the Bruce's own famous sword the touch of knighthood, would stir the maiden's heart. A brave young soldier with great hereditary possessions, and holding so illustrious an office, there was no reason why he should despair, however high-placed his affections might be. It takes a little from the romance to be obliged to acknowledge that he was already a widower; but marriages were early and oft-repeated in those days, and when Marjory Bruce died her husband was still only about twenty-three. It was thus that the crown came to the family of the Stewards of Scotland, the Stewarts of modern times: coming with a "lass" as her descendant said long afterwards, and likely to "go with a lass" when it was left to the infant Mary: though this last, with all her misfortunes, was the instrument not of destruction but transformation, and transferred that crown to a more splendid and enlarged dominion.

It was in the reign of Marjory's son, the grandson and namesake of the Bruce, and of his successors, that Edinburgh began to be of importance in the country, slowly becoming visible by means of charters and privileges, and soon by records of Parliaments, laws made, and public acts proceeding from the growing city. Robert Bruce, though he had destroyed the castle, granted certain liberties and aids to the burghers, both in repression and in favour pursuing the same idea, with an evident desire to substitute the peaceful progress of the town for the dangerous domination of the fortress. Between that period and the reign of the second Stewart, King Robert III, the castle had already been re-erected and re-destroyed more than once. Its occupation by the English seemed the chief thing dreaded by the Scots, and it was again and again by English hands that the fortifications were restored—such a stronghold and point of defence being evidently of the first importance to invaders, while much less valuable as a means of defence. In the year 1385 the walls must have encircled a large area upon the summit of the rock, the *enceinte* probably widening, as the arts of architecture and fortification progressed, from the strong and grim eyrie on the edge of the precipice to the wide and noble enclosure, with room for a palace as well as a fortress, into which the great castles of England were growing. The last erection of these often-cast-down walls was made by Edward III on his raid into Scotland, and probably the royal founder of Windsor Castle had given to the enclosure an amplitude unknown before. The Scots king

most likely had neither the money nor the habits which made a great royal residence desirable, especially in a spot so easily isolated and so open to attack; but he gave a charter to his burghers of Edinburgh authorising them to build houses within the castle walls, and to pass in and out freely without toll or due—a curious privilege, which must have made the castle a sort of *imperium in imperio*, a town within a town. The little closets of rooms which in a much later and more luxurious age must have sufficed for the royal personages whom fate drove into Edinburgh Castle as a residence, are enough to show how limited were the requirements in point of space of the royal Scots. The room in which James VI of Scotland was born would scarcely be occupied, save under protest, by a housemaid in our days. But indeed the Castle of Edinburgh was neither adapted nor intended for a royal residence. The abbey in the valley, from which the King could retire on receipt of evil tidings, where the winds were hushed and the air less keen, and gardens and pleasant hillsides accessible, and all the splendour of religious ceremonies within reach, afforded more fit and secure surroundings even for a primitive court. The Parliament met, however, within the fortress, and the courts of justice would seem to have been held within reach of its shelter. And thither the burghers carried their wealth, and built among the remains of the low huts of an earlier age their straight steep houses, with high pitched roofs tiled with slabs of stone, rising gray and strong within the *enceinte*, almost as strong and apt to resist whatever missiles were possible as the

walls themselves, standing out with straight defiant gables against the northern blue.

King Robert III was a feeble, sickly, and poor-spirited king, and he had a prodigal son of that gay, brilliant, attractive, and impracticable kind which is so well known in fiction and romance, and, alas! also so familiar in common life. David, Duke of Rothesay, was the first in the Scotch records who was ever raised to that rank—nothing above the degree of Earl having been known in the north before the son and brother of the King, the latter by the fatal title of Albany, brought a new degree into the roll of nobility. Young David, all unknowing of the tragic fate before him, was then a daring and reckless youth, held within bounds, as would appear, by the influence of a good and wise mother, and if an anxiety and trouble, at least as yet no disgrace to the throne. He was the contemporary of another madcap prince, far better known to us, of whose pranks we are all more than indulgent, and whose name has the attraction of youth and wit and freedom and boundless humour to the reader still. David of Scotland has had no one to celebrate his youthful adventures like him whose large and splendid touch has made Prince Hal[1] so fine a representative of all that is careless and gay in prodigal youth, with its noble qualities but half in abeyance, and abounding spirit and humour and reckless fancy making its

[1] We here take Shakspeare's Prince Hal for granted, as we feel disposed at all times to take the poet's word in defiance of history; though no doubt the historical argument is calculated to throw a chill of doubt upon that gay and brilliant image.

course of wild adventure comprehensible even to the gravest. Perhaps the licence of the Stewart blood carried the hapless northern prince into more dangerous adventures than the wild fun of Gadshill and Eastcheap. And Prince David's future had already been compromised by certain sordid treacheries about his marriage when he first appears in history, without the force of character which changed Prince Hal into a conquering leader and strong sovereign, but with all the chivalrous instincts of a young knight. He had been appointed at a very early age Lieutenant of the Kingdom to replace his father, it being "well seen and kenned that our lorde the Kyng for sickness of his person may not travail to govern the realm," with full provision of counsellors for his help and guidance; which argues a certain confidence in his powers. But the cares of internal government were at this point interrupted by the more urgent necessity of repelling an invasion, a danger not unusual, yet naturally of an exciting kind.

On this occasion the invader was Henry IV of England, the father of the other prodigal, whose object is somewhat perplexing, and differs much from the usual raid to which the Scots were so well accustomed. So far as appears from all the authorities, his invasion was a sort of promenade of defiance or bravado, though it seems unlike the character of that astute prince to have undertaken so gratuitous a demonstration. He penetrated as far as Leith, and lay there for some time threatening, or appearing to threaten, Edinburgh Castle; but all that he seems to have done was to make proclamation by

his knights and heralds in every town they passed through, of the old, always renewed, claim of allegiance to the English crown which every generation of Scots had so strenuously and passionately resisted. The fact that he was allowed to penetrate so far unmolested is as remarkable as that the invasion was an entirely peaceful one and harmed nobody. When Henry pitched his camp at Leith, Albany was within reach with what is called a great army, but did not advance a step to meet the invader —in face of whom, however, young David of Rothesay, and with him many potent personages, retired into Edinburgh Castle with every appearance of expecting a siege there. But when no sign of any such intention appeared or warlike movement of any kind, nothing but the gleam of Henry's spears, stationary day by day in the same place, and a strange tranquillity, which must have encouraged every kind of wondering rumour and alarm, the young Prince launched forth a challenge to the English king and host to meet him in person with two or three hundred knights on each side, and so to settle the question between them and save the spilling of Christian blood. Henry, it is said, replied with something of the sarcasm of a grave and middle-aged man to the hasty youth, regretting that Prince David should consider noble blood as less than Christian since he desired the effusion of one and not the other. The position of the young man shut up within the walls of the fortress in enforced inactivity while the hated Leopards of England fluttered in the fresh breezes from the Firth, and Henry's multitudinous tents shone in the northern

sun—an army too great to be encountered by his garrison and noble attendants alone—while dark treason and evil intent in the person of Albany kept the army of Scotland inactive though within reach, was one to justify any such outbreak of impatience. David must have felt that should the invader press, there was little help to be expected from his uncle, and that he and his faction would look on not without pleasure to see the castle fall and the heir of Scotland taken or slain. But King Henry's object or meaning is more difficult to divine. Save for his proclamations, and the quite futile summons to King Robert to do homage, he seems to have attempted nothing against the country through which he was thus permitted to march unmolested. The little party of knights with their attendant squires and heralds riding to every market-cross upon the way, proclaiming to the astonished burghers or angry village folk the invader's manifesto, scarcely staying long enough to hear the fierce murmurs that arose—a passing pageant, a momentary excitement and no more—was a sort of defiant embassage which might have pleased the fancy of a young adventurer, but scarcely of a king so wary and experienced; and his own stay in the midst of the startled country is still more inexplicable. When the monks of Holyrood sent a mission to him to beg his protection, lying undefended as they did in the plain, his answer to them was curiously apologetic. "Far be it from me," he said, "to be so inhuman as to harm any holy house, especially Holyrood in which my father found a safe refuge.... I am myself half Scotch by the blood of the

Comyns," added the invader. The account which Boece gives of the expedition altogether is amusing, and strictly in accord with all that is said by other historians, though they may not take the same amiable view. I quote from the quaint translation of Bellenden.

> "A schort time efter King Harry came in Scotland with an army. Howbeit he did small injury to the people thairof, for he desirit nowt but his banner to be erected on their walls. Alwayis he was ane plesand enneme, and did gret humaniteis to the people in all places of Scotland where he was lodgit. Finally he showed to the lords of Scotland that he come in their rialm more by counsel of his nobles than ony hatred that he bore to Scottes. Soon efter he returnit without any further injure in England."

It is very seldom that a Scotch historian is able to designate an English invader as "a pleasant enemy," and whether there was some scheme which came to nothing under this remarkable and harmless raid, or whether it was only the carrying out of Henry's own policy "to busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels"

> "Lest rest and lying still might make them look
> Too near unto my state,"

it is difficult to say. The nobles pent up in Edinburgh Castle with the hot-headed young Prince at their head did not know what to make of the pleasant enemy. The alarm he had caused, compelling their own withdrawal into the stronghold, wrath

at the mere sight of him there in the heart of Scotland, the humiliating inaction in which they were kept by a foe which neither attacked nor withdrew, must have so chafed the Prince and his companions that the challenge thrown forth like a bugle from the heights to break this oppressive silence and bring about the lingering crisis one way or another must have been a relief to their excitement if nothing else. One of the bewildered reasons alleged for the invasion is that young David had written letters to France in which he called Bolingbroke a traitor—letters which had fallen into Henry's hands; but this is as unlikely to have brought about the invasion as any other frivolous cause, though no doubt it might make the young Prince still more eager to take upon himself the settling of the quarrel. We have no reason to suppose that any foreboding of his fate had crossed the mind of the youth at this period of his career, yet to watch the army of England lying below, and to know his uncle Albany close at hand, and to feel himself incapable—with nothing but a limited garrison at his command and no doubt the wise Douglas and the other great noblemen holding him back—of meeting the invader except by some such fantastic chivalrous expedient, must have been hard enough.

And how strange is the scene, little in accordance with the habits and traditions of either country: the English camp all quiet below, as if on a holiday expedition, the Scots looking on in uneasy expectation, not knowing what the next moment might bring. The excitement must have grown greater from day to

day within and without, while all the inhabitants, both citizens and garrison, kept anxious watch to detect the first sign of the enemy's advance. Henry, we are told, was called away to oppose a rising in Wales; not indeed that rising which we all know so well in which Prince Hal, more fortunate than his brother prodigal, had the means of showing what was in him; but even the suggestion approaches once more strangely and suggestively the names of the two heirs whose fate was so different—the one almost within sight of a miserable ending, the other with glory and empire before him. Prince Henry did not apparently come with his father to Scotland, or there might perhaps have been a different ending to the tale, and it would not have needed Harry Hotspur to rouse his namesake from his folly. There was, alas! no such noble rival to excite David of Scotland to emulation, and no such happy turning-point before him. No one, not even a minstrel or romancer, has remembered it in his favour that he once defied the English host for the love of his country and the old never-abandoned cause of Scottish independence. Already it would seem a prodigal who was a Stewart had less chance than other men. Whether some feeble fibre in the race had already developed in this early representative of the name, or whether it was the persistent ill-fortune which has always pursued them, making life a continual struggle and death a violent ending, the fatal thread which has run through their history for so many generations comes here into the most tragic prominence, the beginning of a long series of tragedies. It adds a softening touch

to the record of David's unhappy fate that the death of his mother is recorded as one of the great misfortunes of his life. In the same year in which these public incidents occurred the Queen died, carrying with her the chief influence which had restrained her unfortunate son. She was Annabella Drummond, a woman of character and note, much lamented by the people. And to add to this misfortune she was followed to the grave within a year by the great Earl of Angus, David's father-in-law, and the Bishop of St. Andrews, to whom, as the Primate of Scotland, the young Prince's early instruction had probably been committed, as his loss is noted along with the others as a special disaster.

Thus the rash and foolish youth was left to face the world and all its temptations with no longer any one whom he feared to grieve or whom he felt himself bound to obey. His father, a fretful invalid, had little claim upon his reverence, and his uncle Albany, the strong man of the family, was his most dangerous enemy, ever on the watch to clear out of his path those who stood between him and the throne: or such at least was the impression which he left upon the mind of his time. Thus deprived of all the guides who had power over him, and of the only parent whom he could respect, the young Duke of Rothesay, only twenty-three at most, plunged into all those indulgences which are so fatally easy to a prince. It is supposed that the marriage into which a false policy had driven him was not the marriage he desired. But this was a small particular in those days, as it has proved even in other times less rude. He ran into every kind of riot and

dissipation, which the councillors appointed to aid him could not check. After no doubt many remonstrances and appeals this band of serious men relinquished the attempt, declaring themselves unable to persuade the Prince even to any regard for decency: and the ill-advised and feeble King committed to Albany, who had been standing by waiting for some such piece of good fortune, the reformation of his son. The catastrophe was not slow to follow. Rothesay was seized near St. Andrews on the pretence of stopping a mad enterprise in which he was engaged, and conveyed to Falkland, where he died in strict confinement, "of dysentery or others say of hunger" is the brief and terrible record —blaming no one—of the chroniclers, on Easter Eve 1401. It would be vain to attempt to add anything to the picture of the young unfortunate and his end which Sir Walter Scott has given. We can but rescue out of obscurity the brief moment in which that young life was at the turning-point and might have changed into something noble. Had his challenge been accepted, and had he died sword in hand outside the castle gates for Scotland and her independence, how touching and inspiring would have been the story! But fortune never favoured the Stewarts; they have had no luck, to use a more homely expression, such as falls to the lot of other races, and what might have been a legend of chivalry, the record of a young hero, drops to the horror of a miserable murder done upon a victim who foils even the pity he excites—a young debauchee almost as miserable and wretched as the means by which he died.

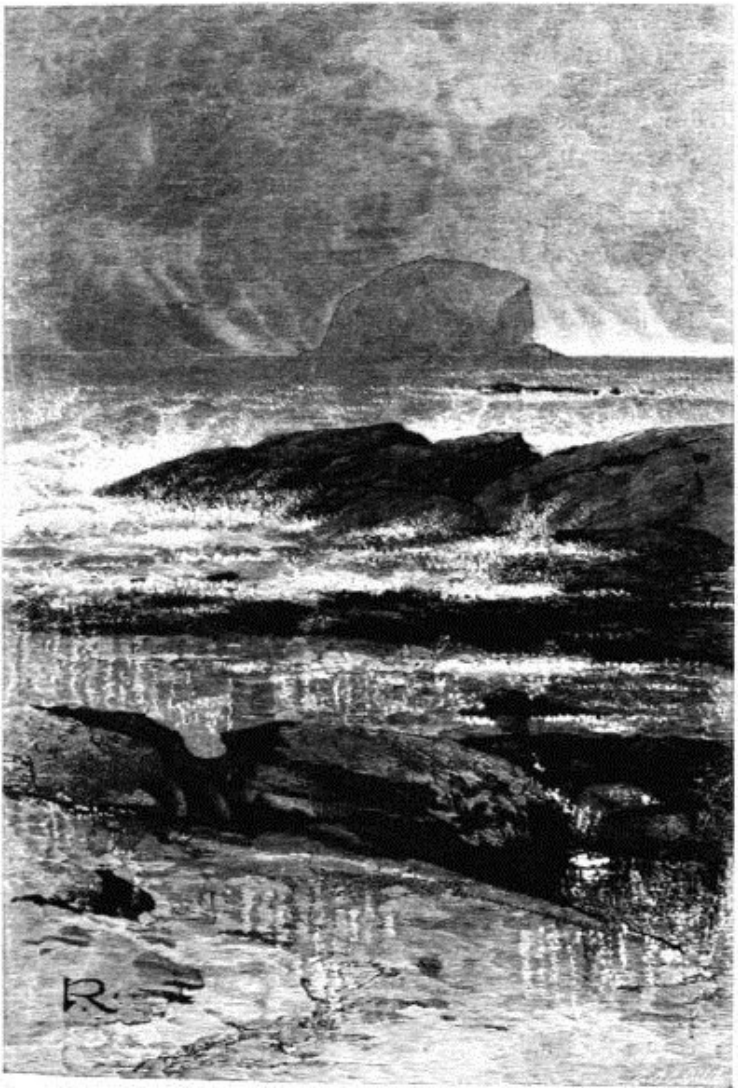
There was this relic of generosity and honour about the unfortunate Prince, even in his fallen state, that he refused to consent to the assassination of the uncle, who found no difficulty, it would appear, in assassinating him; thus showing that wayward strain of nobleness among many defects and miseries which through all their tragic career was to be found even in the least defensible of his race.

King Robert, who had for some time been retired from the troubles of the throne, a poor man, infirm in health and in purpose, virtually deposed in favour of the son who was Lieutenant or the brother who was Regent of the kingdom, and from whom all his domestic comfort had been taken as well as his power, was driven to desperation by this blow. He had lost his wife and his best counsellors; he had never been strong enough to restrain his son, nor resist his brother. David, his first-born and heir, the gay and handsome youth who was dazzling and delightful to his father's eyes even in his worst follies, had been, as no doubt he felt, delivered over to his worst enemy by that father's own tremulous hand; and the heart-broken old man in his bereavement and terror could only think of getting the one boy who remained to him safe and out of harm's way, perhaps with the feeling that Albany might once again persuade him to deliver over this last hope into his hands if he did not take a decisive step at once. The boy-prince was at St. Andrews, pursuing his studies, under the care of the bishop, when his brother was murdered; and from thence he was sent, when the preparations were complete,

across the Firth to the Bass, there to await a ship which should take him to France. It was a forlorn beginning for the Prince of Scotland to be thus hastily taken from his books and the calm of a semi-monastic life and hurried off to that wild rock in the middle of the waves, probably with his brother's awful story thrilling in his ears and his terrible uncle within reach, pushing forward a mock inquiry in Parliament into the causes of Rothesay's death. How easy it would have been for that uncle with the supreme power in his hands to seize the boy who now stood alone between him and the throne; and with what burning at the heart, of impotent rage and fierce indignation, the little Prince, old enough to know and feel his father's helplessness, his own abandonment, and his brother's terrible end, must have been conveyed away to the sea stronghold among the bitter eastern blasts. James, the first of the name, was not one of the feeble ones of the family. With all the romance and poetry of his race he conjoined a great spirit and a noble intelligence, and even at twelve, in the precocious development of that age of blood, when even a royal stripling had to learn to defend himself and hold his own, he must have had some knowledge why it was that he had to be sent thus clandestinely out of his native country: he, the hope of Scotland, in terror for his life.

The little garrison on the rock and the governor to whom the Prince's safety was confided must have watched with many an anxious vigil among the trading vessels stumbling heavily down the Firth from Leith, for that sail which was to carry

their charge, into safety as they thought. Whether there was any navy belonging to the Crown at this period, or whether the King himself possessed some galley that could venture on the voyage to France, we are not told. But no doubt the ship when it arrived bore some sign by which the Prince's guardians, and unfortunately others besides, could recognise it. It could not be in any way a cheerful embarkation. It was in the dark days of Lent, in March, when the north is most severe: and the grey skies and blighting wind would be appropriate to the feelings of the exiles as they put forth from their rock amid the wild beating of the surf, anxiously watched by the defenders of the place, who no doubt had at the same time to keep up a vigilant inspection landward, lest any band of spearmen from Albany should arrive upon the adjacent shore in time to stop the flight. The grey rock, the greyer leaden sea, the whirling flight of wild sea birds white against the dark horizon, the little boat, kept with difficulty from dashing against the cliffs and rocky boulders, the attendant ship, driven up and down by the waves, and distant Fife, with its low hills in tones of neutral tint upon the horizon—would all increase the sadness of the parting: but no doubt there was a long breath of relief breathed by everybody about when the vessel continued its course, and slowly disappeared down the Firth. Whatever might happen elsewhere, at least the heir was safe.



But this hope soon proved futile. Whether it was some traitorous indication from Albany, or information from another source, or pure hazard, which directed the English ships to this one vessel with its royal freight, it had but rounded the headland of Flamborough when it fell into the hands of the enemy. Palm Sunday 1405 was the date of this event, but it was not till the end of Lent 1423, almost exactly eighteen years after, that James came back. The calamity seemed overwhelming to the nation and to all who were not pledged to Albany throughout Scotland. It was the death-warrant of poor old King Robert in his retirement. He lingered out a weary year in sickness and sorrow, and when the anniversary of his son's loss came round again, died at Rothesay, in Bute, amid the lovely lakes and islets of western Scotland—a scene of natural peace and tranquillity, which, let us hope, shed some little balm upon the heart of the helpless superseded sovereign. Perhaps he loved the place because it had given his title to his murdered boy, the hapless David, so gallant and so gay. There is something more than ordinarily pathetic and touching in the misfortunes of the feeble in an age of iron. As civilisation advances they have means of protecting themselves, but not in a time which is all for the strongest. One son buried, like any peasant's son, ignobly in the Abbey of Lindores: the other in an English prison, at the mercy of the "auld enemy," whom Scotland had again and again resisted to the death: and his

kingdom entirely gone from him, in the hands of his arrogant and imperious brother; there was nothing left for poor King Robert but to die.

Thus James became at thirteen, and in an English castle, the King of Scotland. His prison, however, proved a noble school instead of an ignoble confinement to his fine and elevated spirit. The name of Stewart has never been so splendidly illustrated as by this patriotic and chivalrous Prince. No doubt it is infinitely to the credit of the English kings, both Henrys, IV and V, that he received from them all the advantages of education that could have been given to a prince of their own blood—advantages by which he profited nobly, acquiring every art and cultivation that belonged to his rank, besides that divine art which no education can communicate, and which is bestowed by what would seem a caprice, were it not divine, upon prince or ploughman as it pleases God. For above all his knightly and kingly qualities, his studies in chivalry and statesmanship, which prepared him to fill the throne of Scotland as no man save his great ancestor Bruce had yet filled it, James Stewart was a poet of no mean rank, not unworthy to be named even in the presence of Chaucer, and well worthy of the place which he has kept in literature. We need not enter here into that part of his history which concerns another locality full of great and princely associations—the noble Castle of Windsor, where the royal youth first saw and sang the lady of his love, "the fairest and the sweeteste yonge flour," of whom he has left one of the most tender and beautiful descriptions that is

to be found in all the course of poetry. It is more to our present purpose to tell how, amid all the charms of that courtly residence, so far superior to anything which primitive Scotland could offer in the way of dignity or luxury, the boy-king remained faithful to his country, and maintained the independence for which she had so long struggled. It is said that the one advantage taken of his captivity and youth was to press the old oft-repeated arguments concerning the supposed supremacy of England, and the homage due from the kings of Scotland, upon the boy who bore that title sadly amid the luxury and splendour of what was still a prison, however gracious and kind his jailers might be. No circumstances could have been better suited to impress upon James's mind the conviction that submission was inevitable: and it would have been almost more than mortal virtue on the part of his captors had they not attempted to bring about so advantageous a conviction. King Henry V, under whom it is said the attempt was made, had been most generously liberal to and careful of the boy. He was a man so brilliant in reputation and success that a generous youth might well have been led by enthusiasm into any homage that was suggested, too happy to feel himself thus linked to so great a king; and James was very young, distant from his own country and all native advisers, his very life as well as his liberty in the power of those who asked this submission from him, and the force of circumstances so great that even his own people might have forgiven, and Holy Church could scarcely have hesitated to dispense him from

keeping, an obligation entered into under such pressure. But the royal youth stood fast, and was not to be moved by any argument. Boece, whose authority is unfortunately not much to be depended upon, has a still more distinct and graphic story of judgment and firmness on the part of the young captive. He had been, according to this account, taken to France in the train of King Henry, who after the defeat the English had sustained near Orleans, chiefly through the valour of the Scots who had joined the French army, sent for James, and desired him "to pass to the Scots, and to command them to return to Scotland. King Harry promised, gif the said James brought this matter to good effect, not only to remit his ransom but to send him to Scotland with great riches and honour." James answered courteously, with expressions of goodwill and gratitude for the humanity shown towards him, but "I marvel not little," he said, "that thou considerest not how I have no power above the Scots so long as I am ane private man and holden in captivity." The chronicler adds: "Then said King Henry, 'Maist happy people shall they be that happens to get yon noble man to their prince.'" It is a pity that we have no more trustworthy proof of this charming story.

As a matter of fact James attained his freedom only after the death of Albany, when the resistance or the still more effectual indifference to his liberation of the man who alone could profit by his death in prison, or by any unpopular step he might be seduced into making to gain his freedom, was dead, and had

ceased from troubling. It would perhaps, however, be false to say that his imprisonment had done him nothing but good. So far as education went this was no doubt the case; but it is possible that in his subsequent life his reforms were too rapid, too thorough-going, too modern, for Scotland. The English sovereigns were richer, stronger, and more potent; the English commonalty more perfectly developed, and more capable of affording a strong support to a monarch who stood against the nobles and their capricious tyranny. James might not have been the enlightened ruler he was but for his training in a region of more advanced and cultivated civilisation; but had he been less enlightened, more on the level of his subjects, he might have had a less terrible end and a longer career.

He returned to Scotland—with the bride of whom he had made so beautiful a picture, preserving her lovely looks and curious garments, and even the blaze of the Balas ruby on her white throat, to be a delight to all the after generations—in 1423, during Lent; and on Passion Sunday, which Boece calls *Care* Sunday, entered Edinburgh, where there was "a great confluence of people out of all parts of Scotland richt desirous to see him: for many of them," says the chronicle, "had never seen him before, or else at least the prent of his visage was out of their memory." There must indeed have been but few who could recognise the little prince who had been stolen away for safety at twelve in the accomplished man of thirty in all the fulness of his development, a bridegroom, and accustomed to the state and prestige of a

richer Court than anything that Scotland could boast, who thus came among them full of the highest hopes and purposes, and surrounded by unusual splendour and wealth. It is true there was the burden behind him of a heavy ransom to pay, but her English kindred, we may well believe, did not suffer the Lady Jane to appear in her new kingdom without every accessory that became a queen; and a noble retinue of adventurous knights, eager to try their prowess against the countrymen of that great Douglas whose name was still so well known, would swell the train of native nobles who attended the sovereign. Old Edinburgh comes to light in the glow of this arrival, not indeed with any distinctness of vision, but with something of the aspect of a capital filled to overflowing with a many-coloured and picturesque crowd. The country folk in their homespun, and all the smaller rank of gentlemen, with their wives in the French hoods which fashion already dictated, thronged the ways and filled every window to see the King come in. It was more like the new setting up of a kingdom, and first invention of that dignity, than a mere return: and eager crowds came from every quarter to see the King, so long a mere name, now suddenly blazing into reality, with all the primitive meaning of the word so much greater and more living than anything that is understood in it now. The King's Grace! after the long sway of the Regent, always darkly feared and suspected, and the feeble deputyship full of abuses of his son Murdoch, it was like a new world to have the true Prince come back, the blood of Bruce, the genuine and native King,

not to speak of the fair Princess by his side and the quickened life they brought with them. From the gates of the castle where they first alighted, down the long ridge—through the half-grown town within its narrow walls, where a few high houses, first evidences of the growth of the wealthy burgher class, alternated with the low buildings which they were gradually supplanting—through the massive masonry of the Port with its battlements and towers to the country greenness and freshness of the Canon's Gate which led to the great convent of the valley, there could be no finer scene for a pageant. Holyrood was one of those great monastic establishments in which kings could find a lodgment more luxurious than in their own castles, and though there would scarcely seem as yet to have been any palace attached to that holy house, it was already a frequent residence of royalty, and with all its amenities of parks and gardens would be more fit for the reception of a young queen coming straight from princely Windsor than the narrow chambers in the castle. Among the many presents which she is said to have brought with her from England there is a special mention of fine tapestries for the adornment of her new habitation.

Thus the royal pair took possession of their kingdom, and of the interest and affection of the lively and eager crowd for which Edinburgh has always been famous—a populace more like that of a French town than an English, though with impulses sometimes leading to tragedy. James would scarcely seem to have been settled in that part of the ancient establishment of the

abbey which was appropriated to the lodging of the King, or to have exhausted the thanksgivings of Easter and the rejoicings of the restoration, when he set himself to inquire into the state of the country and of the royal finances, to which he had been so long a stranger. There was no Civil List in those days nor votes of supply, and the state of the Crown lands and possessions, "the King's rents," was doubly important in view of the ransom yet to be paid, of which only a fourth part had been remitted as the portion of the Queen. The result of this investigation was anything but satisfactory. It was found that during the reign of Albany many of these possessions had been alienated, made into fiefs, and bestowed upon the leaders of the faction which supported the Regent. "There was nothing left to sustain the Crown," says Boece, "except the customs of burrows. He was naething content of this," adds the chronicler with pithy conciseness, "howbeit he shewed good will (gud vult) for the time." James had already griefs enough against the family of his cousin without this startling discovery; and his "gud vult" would seem rather to have been the serious self-control of a man who was biding his time than any pretence of friendliness with his unfaithful relations and stewards. Amid the early pageants and festivities it is indeed recorded that he knighted Walter Stewart among the other candidates for that honour, the flower of the noble youth, a band of twenty-six gentlemen of the best houses in Scotland; but this was probably a step which was inevitable, as it would have been impossible to leave his own nearest relative

out of the list until he had finally made up his mind how the family of Albany was to be treated. It is stated that the complaints and grievances of the people brought him to a decision on this point, and helped him to carry out his revenge upon the house which had, in popular belief at least, the guilt of his brother's blood upon it as well as that of his own long confinement. Walter Stewart, whose only other appearance in history is that of a rebellious and undutiful son whom his father was incapable of keeping in subjection, was arrested in Edinburgh Castle about a year after James's restoration, and after an interval of several months his arrest was followed by that of Duke Murdoch and his son Alexander, both of whom were also seized in Edinburgh Castle, where they had probably retired for safety. A few of their retainers arrested with them were speedily liberated, and it became apparent that upon this doomed family alone was King James's wrath directed. They were tried at Stirling, by a court of their peers, under the presidency of the King himself. The offences charged against them were misgovernment and oppression of the people, the greatest of public sins: but it was no less the end of a long tragedy. The younger branch of the race had been engaged in a struggle with the elder for the last two generations at least: and it had been the royal line that had suffered most during that period. Bitterly, in blood and heartbreak and long suppression, they had been weighed down under superior force: but now the time of reprisals had come. As they stood there confronting each other, the stern young King

on one side and his kinsmen on the other, with a quarter of a century of wrong between them, the shadow of the young prince at Falkland, and the old father at Rothesay, and the eighteen years of captivity full in the minds of all, what a day of reckoning at last! It makes the retribution almost more tragic, like the overwhelming fate of the Greek drama, that the men upon their trial had nothing to do with these crimes, unless it might be the last. Murdoch of Albany had not exerted himself to liberate James, but that was his only evident offence, and his sons were not instrumental, so far as appears, in any injury to their royal cousin. The sins of the fathers were to be visited upon the children. We are told that the two sons, young men in the flower of their youth, were executed one day, and their father and maternal grandfather, a very old man, the Earl of Lennox, whose share in the matter it is difficult to make out, on the next. Thus James settled summarily the question between himself and his kinsmen. The house of Albany ended upon the scaffold, and however just their doom might have been, there was something appalling in this swift and sweeping revenge, carried out rigorously without a sign of hesitation by a young king, a happy bridegroom, an accomplished and gay cavalier.

It must indeed be allowed, notwithstanding his poetry and his evident love of everything that was lovely and of good report, that the reign of the first James was a stern one. Every witness agrees as to his accomplishment, and that he was the flower of knighthood, of splendour and courtesy, the most chivalrous, the

most daring, the most graceful and gracious of all his Court: and his genius as a poet is even more generally acknowledged. The King's "Quhair" as a poem is quite capable of standing on its own merits, and needs no additional prestige as the performance of a king. Had he been but a wandering minstrel Chaucer would have had no need to be ashamed of his pupil. It is full of delightful descriptions of nature and love and youth: the fresh morning as it rises upon the castled heights, the singing of the birds and fluttering of the leaves, the impulse of a young heart even in the languor of imprisonment to start up and meet the sun, with all the springs of new life which at that verdant season come with every new day—the apparition of the beautiful one suddenly appearing in the old immemorial garden with all its flowers, herself the sweetest and the fairest of flowers, all are set before us, with a harmony and music not to be excelled. The young Prince chafing at his imprisonment, dreaming of all the fantastic wonderful things he might do were he free, yet still so full of irrepressible hope that his impatience and his longings are but another form of pleasure, takes shape and identity as distinct as if he had been one of the figures in that famous pilgrimage to Canterbury, which had been part of his training in this delightful art. If James had never reigned at all he would still have lived through all these centuries in the guise in which he stood at his window on that May morning, and suddenly, amid his youthful dreams, beheld the lovely vision of the Lady Jane emerging from under the young spring verdure of the trees. There is a

certain window not generally supposed to be that at which the royal captive stood—a window in the Norman Tower of Windsor Castle, now fitly garnished and guarded by sympathetic hands, from which the spectator looking out upon the deep moat-garden underneath in the circle about the old donjon will scarcely be able to withstand the thrill of feeling which attends a poetic scene and incident fully realised. Nothing could be more green, more fresh, more full of romance and association, than this garden where all is youthful as the May, yet old in endless tradition, the garden of the Edwards and Henrys, where Chaucer himself may have thought over his accounts or taken the delightful image of his young squire "synging" who was, "or flouting all the day" from among some group of bright-faced lads in their bravery, where the countess who dropped her garter may have wandered, and the hapless Henry, the mild and puny child who was born there while James was undergoing his far from harsh captivity, played. James Stewart's name, had he been no king, would have been associated with this place, as that of his master in poetry is with the flowery ways of Kent.

Nor was his inspiration derived alone from the well of English undefiled. A still more wonderful gift developed in him when he got home to his native country. Though the tones of Scotch humour were much less refined, and its utterances at that early period could be scarcely more than the jests and unwritten ballads of the populace, yet his early acquaintance with them must have lingered in the young Prince's mind,

acquiring additional zest from the prepossessions of exile and the longing for home. And when the polished singer of the King's "Quhair" found himself again in his native land he seems to have burst forth with the most genuine impulse into the broad fun, rustical and natural and racy of the soil, which perhaps was more congenial to his Scottish audience. "Peblis to the Play" and "Christis Kirk on the Green" are poems full of the very breath of rural life and the rude yet joyous meetings of the country folk at kirk and market, which with wonderfully little difference of sentiment and movement also inspired Burns. He must have had a mind full of variety and wide human sympathy almost Shakspearian, who could step from the musings of Windsor and the beautiful heroine, all romance and ethereal splendour, to the lasses in their gay kirtles, and Hob and Raaf with their rustic "daffing," as true to the life as the Ayrshire clowns of Burns, and all the clumsy yet genial gambols of the village festival. It is one of the most curious and least to be expected transformations of poetic versatility—for it is even amazing how he could know the life into which he thus plunged joyous, as if he had been familiar with it from his childhood. King James was not without an object amid all the laughter and the pranks of his holiday. The King's cheerful ridicule of the clumsy fellows who could not draw the bow was intended, with a prick of scorn under the laughter, to rouse up his rustic lieges to emulation, not to be behind the southern pock-puddings whose deadly arrows were, in every encounter between Scots and English, the chief danger

to the fighting men of the north. It is curious that this difference should have existed and continued with such obstinacy through all these fighting centuries; the Scotch spearmen were all but invulnerable in their steady square, like a rock, but they had little defence against the cloth-yard shafts of the English bowmen, which neither exhortation nor ridicule, neither prizes to win nor disaster to fear, could teach them to adopt. James laboured hard, in ways more practical than his poems, to introduce this new arm, but in vain. It was kept up languidly in holiday contentions, like that of Christis Kirk on the Green, while his life lasted; but when his reign was over and the momentary stimulus withdrawn the bows were all thrown away.

The King's command of this humorous vein, so dear to his people, with its trenchant sketches from the life and somewhat rough jests, is wonderful, when his courtly breeding and long separation even from such knowledge of rustic existence as a prince is likely to obtain is considered. And the many-sided nature which made these humours so familiar and easy to him is a strange discovery in the midst of all the tragic circumstances of his life and reign. The union of the most delicate poetry and romance with that genial whim and fancy is unusual enough: but it is still more unusual to find the stern Justiciar, avenger of blood and redresser of wrong, the reconstructer of a distracted country, capable not only of the broad fun of the rustic ballad-maker, but of so tolerant and humorous a view of the humble commons, the underlying masses upon which society is built. For the first aspect

of affairs in Scotland could not be a cheerful one: although it was rather with the nobles and gentlemen, the great proprietors of the country, who had to be summoned to exhibit their charters and prove their titles, partly no doubt with the view of discovering what Crown lands had been alienated by the Albany party, that the King's quarrel was, than with the humbler subjects of the nation.

Yet there is no doubt, with all these lights and softening influences of character and genius, that his reign was a stern one. James had everything to reform in the country to which he came with so many new ideas and so enlarged a knowledge of what the internal economy of a nation might be made. It is rather against the general historical estimate of the talents and power of the Regent Albany that the new King should have found, as appears, so much to do for the reorganisation of the commonwealth—regulating the laws, appointing courts of justice, inquiring into the titles of property, and in every other way giving consistency and order to the affairs of Scotland. However, the lavish grants made to the great Scots lords and the licence given them to rule their vassals as they pleased arose not from weakness but from Albany's deliberate policy of securing a strong party on his side, a policy exactly opposed to that of James, whose heart was set on subduing these fierce nobles, and perhaps of developing the people at large, the nation itself, if that is not too modern an ambition. The reign of Law, broken and disturbed by a hundred storms, but still henceforward with a statute-book to fall back

upon and some fitful authority at its command, began in Scotland in his day.

There are some curious details in the *Scotichronicon* about the taxes, now, it would seem, for the first time levied upon the general mass of the people. In 1424, the year after James's return, a tax of twelvepence in the pound was imposed by the Parliament at Perth, for the maintenance of the King's state and payment of his ransom, upon all goods, lands, and annual revenues of whatever description, both spiritual and temporal, which was passed with the consent of the estates, no doubt under the stimulus of the general rejoicing at the King's return. This impost was to last for two years. An income tax so general and all-embracing could scarcely be expected to be popular, but for the first year it was paid, we are told, with readiness, certain of the greatest nobles in the kingdom being appointed in their various districts to the office of collecting. That the Church should have taken her share in the payment of this tax says much for the loyalty of the Scotch priesthood and their unity with the people at this crisis of the national history. In the second year, however, grumblings arose. It is comprehensible that a nation unaccustomed to this pressure should respond to it in a moment of enthusiasm, yet become uneasy under the repetition when the enthusiasm had probably died away, especially if a fear arose that it might become permanent. King James, however, adopted a course not at all usual with governments when the power to exact has once been placed in their hands. When the popular murmur

came to his ears he stopped at once the unpopular demand. How the paying of the ransom was carried on, and how the maintenance of the King's state we need not inquire. The Crown lands were no doubt extensive still. Some years later another experiment of the same kind was made; the new tax, however, being only twopence in the pound, and its object the payment of expenses of a mission sent to France to negotiate a marriage between the baby-princess Margaret and the equally juvenile dauphin—an object which does not appear to have appealed to the sympathies of the people, since we are told that it was the cause of immediate murmurs, the King not only stopped the unpopular tax but returned the money to those who had paid it —a most admirable but seldom followed example.

The curious system afterwards employed by all the Scots kings of tours or "raids" of justice throughout the kingdom seems to have originated in James's energetic reign, but he carried not only the officers of the law, but occasionally his entire Parliament with him, moving about to the different centres of Scotland with great impartiality. Sometimes they met at Edinburgh, in the Great Parliament Hall in the Castle, and made "many good laws if they could have been kept," says the chronicler; sometimes at Perth, a favourite residence of the King; and on one memorable occasion so far north as Inverness, where, impatient of continual disquietude in the Highlands, James went to chastise the caterans and bring them within the reach of law. This he did with a severe and unsparing hand, seizing a number of the most eminent

chiefs who had been invited to meet him there, and executing certain dangerous individuals among them without mercy. These summary measures would seem to have borne immediate fruit in the almost complete subjugation of the Highlands. But it was hard to reckon with such a restless element as the clans, and hanging and heading were very ineffectual measures among people with whom "another for Hector" was the simplest suggestion of natural law.

It was after this stern Parliament of Inverness that there occurred at Edinburgh one of the most curious and picturesque scenes that it is possible to imagine. One of the chiefs tried at that assize was the greatest and most important of all, the Lord of the Isles, sometimes called Donald and sometimes Alexander by the chroniclers, who on his promise to amend his ways, and no longer harbour caterans or head forays, was, no doubt out of respect for his almost princely position, set at liberty. But no sooner was the fierce chieftain set free, "within a few days after," says the chronicler, than he took and burnt the town of Inverness, in which the Parliament had been held, and showed his impenitence by an utter abuse of the mercy accorded to him. When, however, he heard that the King himself with all the forces of the kingdom was coming against him, Donald hastily disbanded his men and took refuge in the watery fastnesses of his islands: and it would seem that he must have felt the tide of national sentiment to be against him, and his power not equal to make any stand against all the force of peaceful and law-abiding

Scotland under the energetic new King. The wily Highlander made his submission in the way which, no doubt, he thought most likely to disarm authority and gain exemption. He choose Easter day, the greatest of religious festivals, for his appearance as a penitent, and in the middle of the service in the Chapel of Holyrood appeared suddenly, almost without clothing, and knelt down before the King "where he was sittand at his orison," praying for grace in the name of Him who rose from the dead that day. So strange an interruption in the midst of all the glories of the Easter mass throws a strange and wild light upon the varieties of national life in Scotland. That half-savage figure, with plaid and weapons cast aside, defenceless, at the King's mercy, in all the primitive abandonment yet calculation of early patriarchal times; while all that the art and culture of a splendid age could do to give magnificence to the most imposing ceremonial of the Church surrounded this strange apparition, the incense rising, the music pealing, the Court in all its glory of flashing jewels and splendid stuffs filling the lofty area. Like some wild god of the mists suddenly gleaming through the fragrant smoke between the bishop's white robes and the kneeling King, what a strange interruption to the mass! The King, at the request of the Queen we are told, gave him his life, as the adjuration addressed to him and all the force of the surroundings gave James little choice but to do; for he could not have offended the sentiment of his people by refusing the boon which was demanded in that Name, however doubtful he might be of the expediency of granting

it. "Then the King began to muse," says Boece. He must have been devout indeed to have been able to return to the course of the service with the Islesman before him on his knees, and all that wild half of the kingdom, with its dangerous habits and fierce tribal laws, thus suddenly made visible—a spectre which had often before troubled the King's peace. James had not to learn for the first time that apparent submission from such a suppliant did not necessarily mean any real change, and must have thoroughly felt the hollowness of that histrionic appearance and all the difficulties which beset his own action in the matter. The conclusion was, that the life of the Lord of the Isles was spared, but he was committed to safe keeping in the strong Castle of Tantallon, with, however, the unfailing consequence, that his brother took the field with all his caterans in his stead.

James reigned in Scotland for thirteen years—a reign full of commotion and movement, by which many in high place were humiliated, the spoils of the feudal tyrants taken from them, and the wrongs of the suffering commonalty redressed, proceedings which procured for the King many enemies among the nobility before the force of popular sentiment was strong enough to balance this opposition by its support. He began in Scotland that struggle which for some time had been going on in England against the power of the nobles, who were still in the north something like a number of petty kings ruling in their own right, making little account of national laws, and regarding the King with defiance as almost a hostile power. One of the

greatest risks of such a struggle is that it raises now and then a fiery spirit stung by the sense of injury and the rage of deprivation into a wild passion of revenge which bursts every restraint. The Grahams of Strathearn in the north had fallen specially under the rectifying process of James's new laws of property: and out of this house there suddenly arose the tragic figure of an avenger whose brief but terrible career occupies but a single page in history, yet contains all the elements of a fatal drama. Sir Robert Graham, of whose antecedents there is little record, was not the head of the house, but a younger brother of daring character, and one of those fanatics of race to whom the glory of their house is a religion. The first we hear of him is a sudden appearance in the Parliament of January 1435, when he made a fiery and violent speech, ending by an impeachment of the King himself for injustice and robbery. Such an assault would find little support in the public assembly of the States, in the awe of the royal presence, and Graham had to escape for his life, finding means of flight into the Highlands, the ever-ready refuge for rebels. There he launched wild threats against James, which the King, probably well accustomed to missiles of the kind, paid little attention to. The monarch was warned too, we are told, by another wild apparition, which suddenly appears out of the mists for this purpose—a Highland witch of the order of those who drove Macbeth's ambition to frenzy, but whose mission now was to warn James of the mischief brewing against him. The King was brave and careless, used to the continual presence

of danger, keeping his Christmas merrily at Perth with all the sports and entertainments with which it was possible to cheat the gloomy weather, and made little but additional mirth both of the prophecy and the threats. Evidently the Court found pleasure in the fair city on the Tay. They were still lingering there, having taken up their residence in the monastery of the Black Friars, at the end of February. In Scotland as elsewhere the great religious houses seem to have been the best adapted to give hospitality to kings. It was long after this date before anything that could be called an independent royal residence was built at Holyrood itself: for generations the King and Court were but guests in the stately abbey, which was, like the monastery of the Black Friars, so convenient and commodious a house both for entertainment and shelter that its great chambers became the natural, as they were the most stately and pleasant, lodging that could be provided for a monarch.

The tragedy that followed is well known. At the end of a pleasant evening when there had been music—in which James himself was the first connoisseur in Scotland, inventing, some say, the national lilt, the rapidly rising and falling strain which is so full of pathos yet so adaptable to mirth—"and other honest solaces of grete pleasance and disport," the sound of trampling feet and angry voices broke upon the conventual stillness outside and the cheerful talk of the friendly group within. The King was taken at a disadvantage, apparently without even a gentleman of his Court near him, nothing but his wife and her ladies lingering

for a last moment of pleasant conversation before they went to bed. It is easy to imagine the horror with which the little party must have listened to the rush of the savage band, hoping perhaps at first that it was but some tumult in the street, or affray between the townsfolk and the caterans—never very far off and often threatening St. John's town—till the cries and clashing of the arms came nearer, and wild torch-light flared through the high windows and proved the fatal object of the raid. The groans of a few easily despatched sentinels, the absence of any serious opposition or stand in defence, the horrible discovery of bolts and bars removed and the King at the mercy of his enemies, must have followed in a few terrible moments. No incident in history is better known than that piteous attempt of one distracted girl, a Douglas, born of a heroic race, to bar the door with her own slim arm, thrusting it through the holdfasts from which the bolt had been taken away: poor ineffectual bar! yet enough to gain a moment when moments were so precious, and while there was still a chance of saving the King.

The narrative of the death struggle, and the distracted attempts to find a place of concealment for the victim, are too heartrending to be repeated here. James fell, it is said, with sixteen wounds in him, hacked almost to pieces, yet facing his murderers so desperately that some of them bore the marks of his dying grip when they were brought to the scaffold to be killed in their turn with every circumstance of horror conceivable some time later. The execution of these miserable traitors, one of

them the King's own uncle Athole, took place at Edinburgh for the greater solemnity and terror of the punishment, which was accomplished by every kind of torture. The Queen, too, after the horrible scene of which she had been a witness, and almost more than a witness—for she had thrown herself before her husband and had been wounded in the terrible struggle—gathered her children and fled to Edinburgh Castle to put the little heir of the kingdom, now James II, in security. The hapless child was sadly crowned at Holyrood at six years old, with a hastily adapted ceremonial, the first of many such disastrous rites to come.

The time of James's reign had been one of rising prosperity throughout the realm. Law and order had been established in recognised courts and tribunals, the titles of property had been ascertained and secured, not without loss, no doubt, to many arrogant lords who had seized upon stray land without any lawful title, or on whom it had been illegally bestowed during the Albany reign—but to the general confidence and safety. And the condition of the people had no doubt improved in consequence. It is difficult to form any estimate of what this condition was. All foreign witnesses give testimony of an unpleasing kind, and represent the country as wretched, squalid, and uncivilised: but on the other hand nothing can be more unlike this report than the most valuable and unintentional evidence furnished by King James's own poems, with their tale of village merry-makings and frays which convey no impression of abject poverty, nor even of that rudest level of life where material wants are so pressing as

to exclude all lighter thoughts. "On Mayday," says King James, "when everybody is bound to Peblis to the play,"

> "At Beltane quhan ilke bodie bownis
> To Peblis to the play,
> To heir the singing and sweit soundis,
> The solace suth to say.
> Be firth and forest furth they found,
> They graythit them full gay;
> God wot that wald they do that stound,
> For it was thair feist day
> They said
> Of Peblis to the Play."

All the lasses of the west, he goes on to tell us, were up at cockcrow, and no men might rest for the chatter and the noise of their preparations. One cried that her curch was not starched enough, another that a hood was best, another bewailed herself as "so evil sunburnt" that she was not fit to be seen. The young folk stream along "full bold" with the bagpipes blowing, and every village adding its contingent, "he before and she before to see which was most gay."

> "Some said that they were mercat folk,
> Some said the Quene of May
> Was cumit
> Of Peblis to the Play."

When they arrive at the "taverne hous" they give orders that the board be served, and to see that the napery is white, "for we will dyn and daunce." At "Christis Kirk on the Green" there is a similar description, the lasses coming out as before, "weshen clean," in their new grey kirtles "well prest with many plaits," with their gloves of doeskin and morocco shoes. All these incidental traits, and the atmosphere of the merry ballads, though both end in a fray, contradict with vigour the cold and wretched picture given by outsiders of a country where the people warmed themselves by burning sulphureous stones dug out of the ground, where the houses had a cow's hide stretched for a door, and all was squalid misery and nakedness. There was plenty of fighting going on it is evident—not a lowland fair without its broken heads (a habit that, according to Sir Walter Scott, no mean authority, lasted into the nineteenth century)—and much oppression, the great lords reigning like absolute tyrants in the midst of subjects without resource or protection; but the case of the peasantry notwithstanding all these evils does not seem to have been a bad one. A certain vigorous capacity of revival, which history shows us continually as existing on the broad level of the soil, must have brought them back to rough ease and comfort, and the freedom of the natural healthful atmosphere which makes itself apparent in transcripts of life so little likely to be forced or optimistic. In all times and circumstances there can be little doubt that the amount of simple enjoyment to be got out of life, especially by the young, who form at least the half of every community,

far exceeds the elements of wellbeing which outsiders see in it. And the protection of the Church, the comparative quiet to be enjoyed on church lands, the charities and succour of the cloister, must have made an incalculable addition to the possibilities of existence. Everything in James's reign was calculated to increase the stability and good order which are the best guarantees of national life; even his severities cultivating a sense of security in the weak and a wholesome consciousness of the necessity of self-restraint in the strong. For the first time for many generations the nobles were kept within bounds, and exceptional cruelties became if not impossible, yet of so certain discovery and punishment that lesser tyrants at least must have trembled. The law that might makes right fell into temporary disuse, and a better law, that of the courts that sat periodically over all the kingdom, and—appealing still more strongly to the imagination—a king that shut his ears to no petition and interfered with a strong hand to right the wronged, began a new era for the commonalty of Scotland. Even the unfavourable description so often quoted of Eneas Silvius, reports the common people as having "abundance of flesh and fish," no small ingredient of wellbeing, and records rather a complete absence of luxuries than that want which reduces the vital strength of a nation. The same authority tells of exportations of "hides, wool, salt fish, and pearls," the latter a curious item, although there were as yet no manufactures, and even such necessaries as horse-shoes and every kind of harness had to be imported from Flanders. But the

Scots in their farmhouses and cottages made the cloth with which they were clothed, and their "blew caps," the well-known blue bonnet which has lasted to our own days. And they retained the right which, according to her monkish chronicler, St. Margaret had been the first to secure for them—of immunity from all military requisitions, and even, which is a curious contradiction of the supposed tyrannies of the nobles, held an absolute property in their own goods which out of the island of Great Britain no peasantry in the world possessed. The French allies who were in Scotland in the end of the fourteenth century were struck with angry consternation to hear themselves hailed by a set of clodhoppers, and bidden to keep the paths and not trample down the growing corn, and to find that, however willing the Scots men-at-arms might be to harry England when occasion offered, not the greatest lord in the French contingent could carry off a cow or a brace of pullets without compensation. We cannot but think that the country in which the peasant's barnyard was thus defended was at least as forward in the best elements of civilisation as those in which there were hangings of arras and trenches of silver, but no security for anything in homesteads or workshop which might be coveted by the seigneur.

HOLYROOD

Edinburgh, as has been said, never seems to have been a favourite habitation of this enlightened and accomplished Prince. Perhaps Queen Jane found the east winds too keen on the heights,

or the Abbey of the Holy Rood too low in the valley. The heir was born there it is true, and we have note of various Parliaments and visits, but no settled residence in the capital. One incident is mentioned by the chroniclers which must have afforded a picturesque scene, when the King himself presided, before the gates of Edinburgh Castle, at a duel between a knight called Henry Knokkis or Knox (curious precursor in the dimness of distance of another of his name!), who had been accused by an Edinburgh burgess of treasonable speeches against the King—and his accuser. But who this accuser was, and by what privilege he was allowed to meet a gentleman and knight in single combat we have no information. Perhaps he was himself of noble blood, a younger son, a man before his time, seeking the peaceful profits of trade instead of those of the marauder, as it has become the fashion of a later age to do. It is almost impossible not to fancy that there must have been a touch of the burlesque in this combat, which James himself interfered to stop, separating the combatants. He was very careless it would seem of treasonable speeches, apt to treat them lightly and very probably smiled a little at the zeal of the citizen who was more jealous of his honour than he was himself. The platform before the gates would still make a splendid area for any feat of arms, if the winds did not interfere before the King and blow the combatants away: and the old-world crowd with their many colours, the jerkins slashed and embroidered with the blazon of all the great families in Scotland, the plumed caps and dazzling helmets of courtier and knight,

the border of blue bonnets outside, and all the shining array of fair ladies around and behind the throne, would present a more striking picture than the best we could do nowadays. Let us hope the sun shone and warmed the keen clear air, and threw into high relief the towers and bastions against the northern blue.

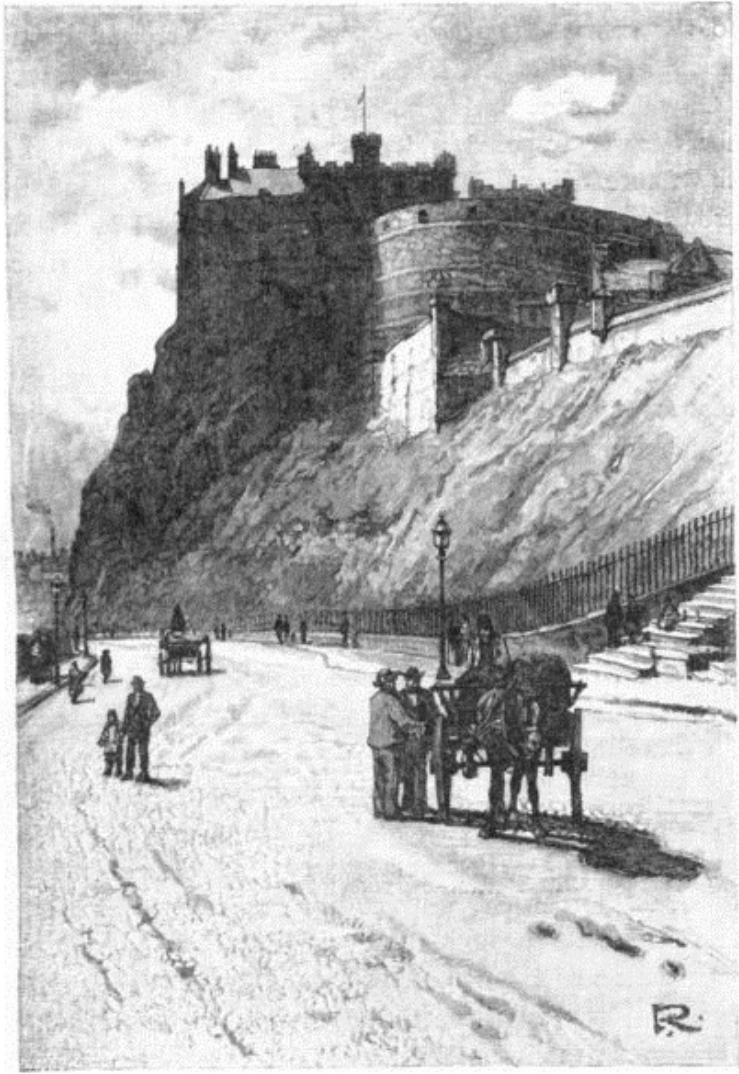
Edinburgh by this time had grown into the proportions of a town. The houses which the citizens had the privilege of building within the castle precincts would appear to have been low, to secure the protection of the walls; and by certain precautionary regulations for their preservation from fire it would seem that many of them were still thatched. The King's residence there, judging from the straitened accommodation, which was all that existed in a much more advanced period, must have been small and poor, though there already existed a Parliament Hall, in which probably other great assemblies were held. The city walls were continued along the crest of the ridge in narrow lines, deflecting a little only on the south side, where the limits were broken by several wealthy and well-cultivated enclosures where brotherhoods were established—White and Black Friars, sons of Augustine and Dominic, with their great detached houses, their gardens always an example of husbandry, and chapels filling the air with pleasant sound of bells. King James had himself endowed, besides many existing foundations, a monastery for the Franciscans or Grey Friars, which has always continued to be one of the chief ecclesiastic centres of Edinburgh. It was so fine a building, as the story goes, that the humble-minded Minors

declined at first to take possession of it as being too magnificent for an Order vowed to poverty; though as their superior was a monk from Cologne, sent for by the King on account of his learning and sanctity, and accustomed to the great convents of the Continent, such an objection is curious. On the south side of the town, at some distance outside the walls, on the platform afterwards occupied by the buildings of the old High School, stood amid its blossoming gardens the Church of St. Mary in the Field, afterwards so fatally known as the Kirk of Field, a great house so extensive and stately that it had already served on several occasions as a royal lodging. St. Giles's, one of the oldest foundations of all, stood among its graves, at the foot of the Castle Hill in the centre of the life of ancient Edinburgh, as it does still. These clusters of sacred buildings, encircled by their orchards and gardens, made a fringe of verdure, of charity and peace, sanctuaries for the living and resting-places for the dead, round the strong and dark fortifications of the little royal town, which hitherto had held for its life upon that ridge of rock, a dangerous eminence lying full in every invader's way.

CHAPTER II
JAMES II: WITH THE FIERY FACE

It is clear that the public opinion of Scotland, so far as there was such a thing in existence, had no sympathy whatever with the murderers of James. The instruments of that murder were in the first place Highland caterans, with whom no terms were ever held and against whom every man's hand was armed. And the leaders who had taken advantage of these wild allies against their natural monarch and kindred were by the very act put beyond the pale of sympathy. They were executed ferociously and horribly, according to the custom of the time, the burghers of Perth rising at once in pursuit of them, and the burghers of Edinburgh looking on with stern satisfaction at their tortures—these towns feeling profoundly, more perhaps than any other section of the community, the extraordinary loss they had in the able and vigorous King, already, like his descendant and successor, the King of the commons, their stay and encouragement. If there was among the nobility less lamentation over a ruler who spared none of them on account of his race, and was sternly bent on repressing all abuse of power, it was silent in the immense and universal horror with which the event filled Scotland. It would seem probable that the little heir, only six years old, the only son of King James, was not with his parents in their Christmas rejoicings at Perth, but had been left behind at Holyrood, for

we are told that the day after his father's death the poor little wondering child was solemnly but hastily crowned there, the dreadful news having flown to the centre of government. He was "crownd by the nobilitie," says Pitscottie, the great nobles who were nearest and within reach having no doubt rushed to the spot where the heir was, to guard and also to retain in their own hands the future King. He was proclaimed at once, and the crown, or such substitute for it as could be laid sudden hands upon, put on his infant head. The scene is one which recurred again and again in the history of his race, yet nothing can take from it its touching features. At six years old even the intimation of a father's death, especially when taking place at a distance, would make but a transitory impression upon the mind; yet we may well imagine the child taken from his toys, wrapped from head to foot in some royal mantle, with a man's crown held over his baby head, receiving with large eyes of wonder and fright easily translated into tears, the sacred oil, the sceptre which his little fingers could scarcely enclose. Alas for the luckless Stewarts! again and again this affecting ceremony took place before the time of their final promotion which was the precursor of their overthrow. They were all kings almost from their cradle—kings ill-omened, entering upon their royalty with infant terror and tears.



EDINBURGH CASTLE FROM THE SOUTH-WEST

When they had crowned the little James, second of the name, the lords held a convention "to advise whom they thought most able both for manheid and witt to take the government of the commonwealth in hand." They chose two men for this office, neither of whom was taken from a very great family, or had, so far as can be known, any special importance—Sir Alexander Livingstone, described as Knight of Callender, and Sir William Crichton, Chancellor of Scotland. Perhaps it was one of the compromises which are so common when parties are nearly equal in power which thus placed two personages of secondary importance at the head of affairs: but any advantage which might have been secured by this selection was neutralised by the division of power, which added to all the evils of an interregnum the perplexity of two centres of government, so that "no man knew," as says Pitscottie, "whom he should obey." One of the Regents reigned in Edinburgh, the other in Stirling—one had the advantage of holding possession of the King, the other had the doubtful good of the support of the Queen. It may be imagined what an extraordinary contrast this was to the firm and vigilant sway of a monarch in the fulness of manhood, with all the prestige of his many gifts and accomplishments, his vigorous and manful character and his unquestioned right to the government and obedience of the country. It had been hard work enough for James I., with all these advantages, to keep his kingdom well in

hand: and it would not be easy to exaggerate the difficulties now, with two rival and feeble powers, neither great enough to overawe nor united enough to hold in check the independent power of the great houses which vied with each other in the display of dominion and wealth. In a very brief time all the ground gained by King James was lost again. Every element of anarchy arose in new force, and if it had been hard to secure the execution of the laws which would have been so good had they been kept in the time when their chief administrator was the King himself, it may be supposed what was the difficulty now, when, save in a little circuit round each seat of authority, there was virtually no power at all. Pitscottie gives a curious and vivid picture of the state of affairs in this lamentable interval.

> "In the mean time many great dissensions rose amongst us, but it was uncertain who were the movers, or by what occasion the chancellor exercised such office, further than became him. He keeped both the Castle of Edinburgh and also our young King thereintill, who was committed to his keeping by the haill nobilitie and ane great part of the noble men assisted to his opinion. Upon the other side, Sir Alexander Livingstoun bearing the authoritie committed to him by consent of the nobilitie, as said is, contained another faction, to whose opinion the Queen mother with many of the nobility very trewly assisted. So the principals of both the factions caused proclaime lettres at mercat crosses and principal villages of the realm that all men should obey conforme to the aforesaid letters sent forth

by them, under the pain of death. To the which no man knew to whom he should obey or to whose letters he should be obedient unto. And also great trouble appeared in this realm, because there was no man to defend the burghs, priests, and poor men and labourers hauntind to their leisum (lawful) business either private or public. These men because of these enormities might not travel for thieves and brigands and such like: all other weak and decrepit persons who was unable to defend themselves, or yet to get food and sustentation to themselves, were most cruelly vexed in such troublous times. For when any passed to seek redress at the Chancellor of such injuries and troubles sustained by them, the thieves and brigands, feigning themselves to be of another faction, would burn their house and carry their whole goods and gear away before ever they returned again. And the same mischief befell those that went to complain to the Governor of the oppression done to them. Some other good men moved upon consideration and pitie of their present calamities tholed (endured) many such injuries, and contained themselves at home and sought no redresse. In the midst of these things and troubles, all things being out of order, Queen-Mother began to find out ane moyane (a means) how she should diminish the Chancellor's power and augment the Governor's power, whose authority she assisted."

The position of Queen Jane in the circumstances in which her husband left her, a woman still young, with a band of small children, and no authority in the turbulent and distracted country,

is as painful a one as could well be imagined. Her English blood would be against her, and even her beauty, so celebrated by her chivalrous husband, and which would no doubt increase the immediate impulse of suitors, in that much-marrying age, towards the beautiful widow who was of royal blood to begin with and still bore the title of Queen. That she seems to have had no protection from her royal kindred is probably explained by the fact that Henry VI was never very potent or secure upon his throne, and that the Wars of the Roses were threatening and demanding the whole attention of the English Government. Wounded in her efforts to protect her husband by her own person, seeing him slaughtered before her eyes, there could not be a more terrible moment in any woman's life, hard as were the lives of women in that age of violence, than that which passed over Jane Beaufort's head in the Blackfriars Monastery amid the blood and tumult of that fatal night. The chroniclers, occupied by matters more weighty, have no time to picture the scene that followed that cruel and horrible murder, when the distracted women, who were its only witnesses, after the tumult and the roar of the murderers had passed by, were left to wash the wounds and compose the limbs of the dead King so lately taking his part in their evening's pastime, and to look to the injuries of the Queen and the torn and broken arm of Catherine Douglas, a sufferer of whom history has no further word to say. The room with its imperfect lights rises before us, the wintry wind rushing in by those wide-open doors, waving about the figures on the

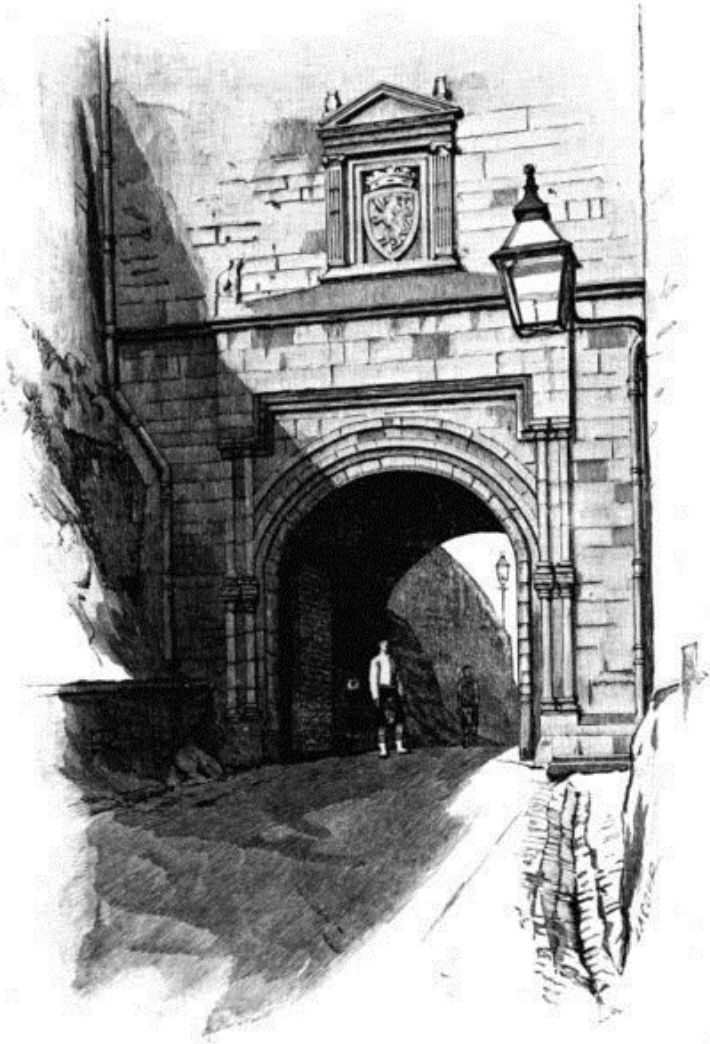
tapestry till they too seemed to mourn and lament with wildly tossing arms the horror of the scene—the cries and clash of arms as the caterans fled, pausing no doubt to pick up what scattered jewels or rich garments might lie in their way: and by the wild illumination of a torch, or the wavering leaping flame of the faggot on the hearth, the two wounded ladies, each with an anxious group about her—the Queen, covered with her own and her husband's blood; the girl, with her broken wrist, lying near the threshold which she had defended with all her heroic might. They were used to exercise the art of healing, to bind up wounds and bring back consciousness, these hapless ladies, so constantly the victims of passion and ambition. But amid all the horrors which they had to witness in their lives, horrors in which they did not always take the healing part, there could be none more appalling than this. Neither then nor now, however, is it at the most terrible moment of life, when the revolted soul desires it most, that death comes to free the sufferer. The Queen lived, no doubt, to think of the forlorn little boy in Holyrood, the five little maidens who were dependent upon her, and resumed the burden of life now so strangely different, so dull and blank, so full of alarms and struggles. Her elder child, the little Princess Margaret, had been sent to France three or four years before, at the age of ten, to be the bride of the Dauphin—a great match for a Scottish princess—and it is possible that her next sister, Eleanor, who afterwards married the Duc de Bretagne, had accompanied Margaret—two little creatures solitary in their

great promotion, separated from all who held them dear. But the four infants who were left would be burden enough for the mother in her unassured and unprotected state. It would seem that she was not permitted to be with her boy, probably because of the jealousy of the Lords, who would have no female Regent attempting to reign in the name of her son: but had fixed her residence in Stirling under the shield of Livingstone, who as Governor of the kingdom ought to have exercised all the functions of the Regency, and especially the most weighty one, that of training the King. Crichton, however, who was Chancellor, had been on the spot when James II was crowned, and had secured his guardianship by the might of the strong hand, if no other, removing him to Edinburgh Castle, where he could be kept safe under watch and ward. The Queen, who would seem to have been throughout of Livingstone's faction, and who no doubt desired to have her son with her, both from affection and policy, set her wits to discover a "moyane," as the chroniclers say, of recovering the custody of the boy. The moyane was simple and primitive enough, and might well have been pardoned to a mother deprived of her natural rights: but it shows at the same time the importance attached to the possession of the little King, when it was only in such a way that he could be secured. Queen Jane set out from Stirling "with a small train" to avert suspicion, and appeared at the gates of Edinburgh Castle suddenly, without warning as would seem, asking to be admitted to see her son. The Chancellor, wise and wily as he was, would appear to have

acknowledged the naturalness of this request, and "received her," the chronicler says, "with gladness, and gave her entrance to visit her young son, and gave command that whensoever the Queen came to the castle it should be patent to Her Grace." Jane entered the castle accordingly, with many protestations of her desire for peace and anxiety to prevent dissensions, all which was, no doubt, true enough, though the chroniclers treat her protestations with little faith, declaring her to have "very craftilie dissembled" in order to dispel any suspicion the Chancellor may have entertained. It would seem that she had not borne any friendship to him beforehand, and that her show of friendship now required explanation. However that might be, she succeeded in persuading Crichton of her good faith, and was allowed to have free intercourse with her son and regain her natural place in his affections. How long they had been separated there is no evidence to show, but it could scarcely be difficult for the mother to recover, even had it fallen into forgetfulness, the affection of her child. When she had remained long enough in the castle to disarm any prejudices Crichton might entertain of her, and to persuade the little King to the device which was to secure his freedom, the Queen informed the Chancellor that she was about to make a pilgrimage to the famous shrine of Whitekirk, "the white kirk of Brechin," Pitscottie says, in order to pray for the repose of the soul of her husband and the prosperity of her son, and asked permission to carry away two coffers with her clothes and ornaments, probably things which she had

left in the castle before her widowhood, and that means of conveyance might be provided for these possessions to Leith, where she was to embark. This simple request was easily granted, and the two coffers carried out of the castle, and conveyed by "horss" to the ship in which she herself embarked with her few attendants. But instead of turning northward Queen Jane's ship sailed up the Firth, through the narrow strait at Queensferry, past Borrowstounness, where the great estuary widens out once more, into the quiet waters of the Forth, winding through the green country to Stirling on its hill. She was "a great pairt of the watter upward before ever the keepers of the castle could perceive themselves deceived," says Pitscottie. As the ship neared Stirling, the Governor of the kingdom came out of the castle with all his forces, with great joy and triumph, and received the King and his mother. For one of the coffers, so carefully packed and accounted for, contained no less an ornament than the little King in person, to whose childish mind no doubt this mode of transport was a delightful device and pleasantry. One can imagine how the Queen's heart must have throbbed with anxiety while her son lay hidden in the bed made for him within the heavy chest, where if air failed, or any varlet made the discovery prematurely, all her hopes would have come to an end. She must have fluttered like a bird over her young about the receptacle in which her boy lay, and talked with her ladies over his head to encourage and keep him patient till the end of the journey was near enough, amid the lingering links of Forth, to open the lid and set him free. It is

not a journey that is often made nowadays, but with all the lights of the morning upon Demayat and his attendant mountains, and the sun shining upon that rich valley, and the river at its leisure wending, as if it loved them, through all the verdant holms and haughs, there is no pleasanter way of travelling from Edinburgh to Stirling, the two hill-castles of the Scottish crown.



INNER BARRIER, EDINBURGH CASTLE

It would be pleasant to think that Queen Jane meant something more than the mere bolstering up of one faction against another in the distracted kingdom by the abduction of her son. It is very possible indeed that she did so, and that to strengthen the hands of the man who was really Regent-Governor of Scotland, but whose power had been stolen from his hands by the unscrupulousness of Crichton, seemed to her a great political object, and the recovery of the supreme authority, which would seem to have appeared to all as infallibly linked with the possession of the young King, of the greatest importance. It is evident it was considered by the general public to be so; but there is something pitiful in the struggle for the poor boy, over whose small person those fierce factionaries fought, and in whose name, still so innocent and helpless as he was, so many ferocious deeds were done.

No sooner was he secure in Stirling than the Governor called together a convention of his friends, to congratulate each other and praise the wit and skill of "that noble woman, our soverain mother," who had thus set things right. "Whereby I understand," he says piously, "that the wisest man is not at all times the sickerest, nor yet the hardy man happiest," seeing that Crichton, though so great and sagacious and powerful, should be thus deceived and brought to shame. "Be of good comfort therefore," adds this enlightened ruler; "all the mischief,

banishment, troubles, and vexation which the Chancellor thought to have done to us let us do the like to him." He ended this discourse by an intimation that he was about to besiege Edinburgh. "Let us also take up some band of men-of-war, and every man after his power send secret messages to their friends, that they and every one that favours us may convene together quietly in Edinburgh earlie in the morning, so that the Chancellor should not know us to come for the sieging of the castle till we have the siege even belted about the walls; so ye shall have subject to you all that would have arrogantly oppressed you."

This resolution was agreed to with enthusiasm, the Queen undertaking to provision the army "out of her own garners"; but the Governor had no sooner "belted the siege about the castle," an expression which renders most graphically the surrounding of the place, than the Chancellor, taken by surprise, prostrated by the loss of the King, and finding it impossible to draw the powerful Earl of Douglas to his aid, made overtures of submission, and begged for a meeting "in the fields before the gates," where, with a few chosen friends on either side, the two great functionaries of the kingdom might come to an agreement between themselves.

By this time there would seem to have begun that preponderating influence of the Douglas family in Scotland which vexed the entire reign of the second James, and prompted two of the most violent and tragic deeds which stain the record of Scottish history. James I. was more general in his attempt at the repression and control of his fierce nobility, and the family most

obnoxious to him was evidently that of his uncle, nearest in blood and most dangerous to the security of the reigning race. The Douglas, however, detaches himself in the following generation into a power and place unexampled, and which it took the entire force of Scotland, and all the wavering and uncertain expedients of law, as well as the more decisive action of violence quite lawless, to put down. Whether there was in the pretensions of this great house any aim at the royal authority in their own persons, or ambitious assertion of a rival claim in right of the blood of Bruce, which was as much in their veins as in those of the Stewarts, as some recent historians would make out, it is probably now quite impossible to decide. The chroniclers say nothing of any such intention, nor do the Douglases themselves, who throughout the struggle never hesitated to make submission to the Crown when the course of fortune went against them. The Chancellor had been deeply stung, it is evident, by the answer of Douglas to his appeal, in which the fierce Earl declared that discord between "you twa unhappie tyrants" was the most agreeable thing in the world to him, and that he wished nothing more than that it should continue. Deprived of the sanction given to all his proceedings by the name of the King, outwitted among his wiles, and exposed to the ridicule even of those who had regarded his wisdom with most admiration, Crichton would seem to have turned fiercely upon the common opponent, perhaps with a wise prescience of the evil to come, perhaps only to secure an object of action which might avert danger from himself and bring him once more

into command of the source of authority—most likely with both objects together, the higher and lower, as is most general in our mingled nature. The meeting was held accordingly outside the castle gates, the Chancellor coming forth in state bearing the keys of the castle, which were presented, Buchanan says, to the King in person, who accompanied the expedition, and who restored the great functionary to his office. The great keys in the child's hand, the little treble pipe in which the reappointment would be made, the tiny figure in the midst of all these plotters and warriors, gives a touch of pathos to the many pictorial scenes of an age so rich in the picturesque; but the earlier writers say nothing of the little James's presence. There was, however, a consultation between the two Regents, and Douglas's letter was read with such angry comments as may be supposed. The Earl's contempt evidently cut deep, and strongly emphasised the necessity of dealing authoritatively with such a high-handed rebel against the appointed rulers.

It would appear, however, that little could be done against the immediate head of that great house, and the two rulers, though they had made friends over this common object, had to await their opportunity, and in the meantime do their best to maintain order and to get each the chief power into his own hands. Crichton found means before very long to triumph over his adversaries in his turn by rekidnapping the little King, for whom he laid wait in the woods about Stirling, where James was permitted precociously to indulge the passion of his

family for hunting. No doubt the crafty Chancellor had pleasant inducements to bring forward to persuade the boy to a renewed escape, for "the King smiled," say the chroniclers, probably delighted by the novelty and renewed adventure—the glorious gallop across country in the dewy morning, a more pleasant prospect than the previous conveyance in his mother's big chest. Thus in a few hours the balance was turned, and it was once more the Chancellor and not the Governor who could issue ordinances and make regulations in the name of the King.

Nothing, however, could be more tedious and trifling in the record than these struggles over the small person of the child-king. But the story quickens when the long-desired occasion arrived, and the two rulers, rivals yet partners in power, found opportunity to strike the blow upon which they had decided, and crush the great family which threatened to dominate Scotland, and which was so contemptuous of their own sway. The great Earl, Duke of Touraine, almost prince at home, the son of that Douglas whose valour had moved England, and indeed Christendom, to admiration, though he never won a battle—died in the midst of his years, leaving behind him two young sons much under age as the representatives of his name. It is extraordinary to us to realise the place held by youth in those times, when one would suppose a man's strength peculiarly necessary for the holding of an even nominal position. Mr. Church has just shown in his Life of Henry V how that prince at sixteen led armies and governed provinces; and it is clear that this

was by no means exceptional, and that the right of boys to rule themselves and their possessions was universally acknowledged and permitted. The young William, Earl of Douglas, is said to have been only about fourteen at his father's death. He was but eighteen at the time of his execution, and between these dates he appears to have exercised all the rights of independent authority without tutor or guardian. The position into which he entered at this early age was unequalled in Scotland, in many respects superior to that of the nominal sovereign, who had so many to answer to for every step he took—counsellors and critics more plentiful than courtiers. The chronicles report all manner of vague arrogancies and presumptions on the part of the new Earl. He held a veritable court in his castle, very different from the semi-prison which, whether at Edinburgh or Stirling, was all that James of Scotland had for home and throne—and conferred fiefs and knighthood upon his followers as if he had been a reigning prince. "The Earl of Douglas," says Pitscottie, "being of tender age, was puffed up with new ambition and greater pride nor he was before, as the manner of youth is; and also prideful tyrants and flatterers that were about him through this occasion spurred him ever to greater tyranny and oppression." The lawless proceedings of the young potentate would seem to have stirred up all the disorderly elements in the kingdom. His own wild Border county grew wilder than ever, without control. Feuds broke out over all the country, in which revenge for injuries or traditionary quarrels were lit up of the strong hope in every man's

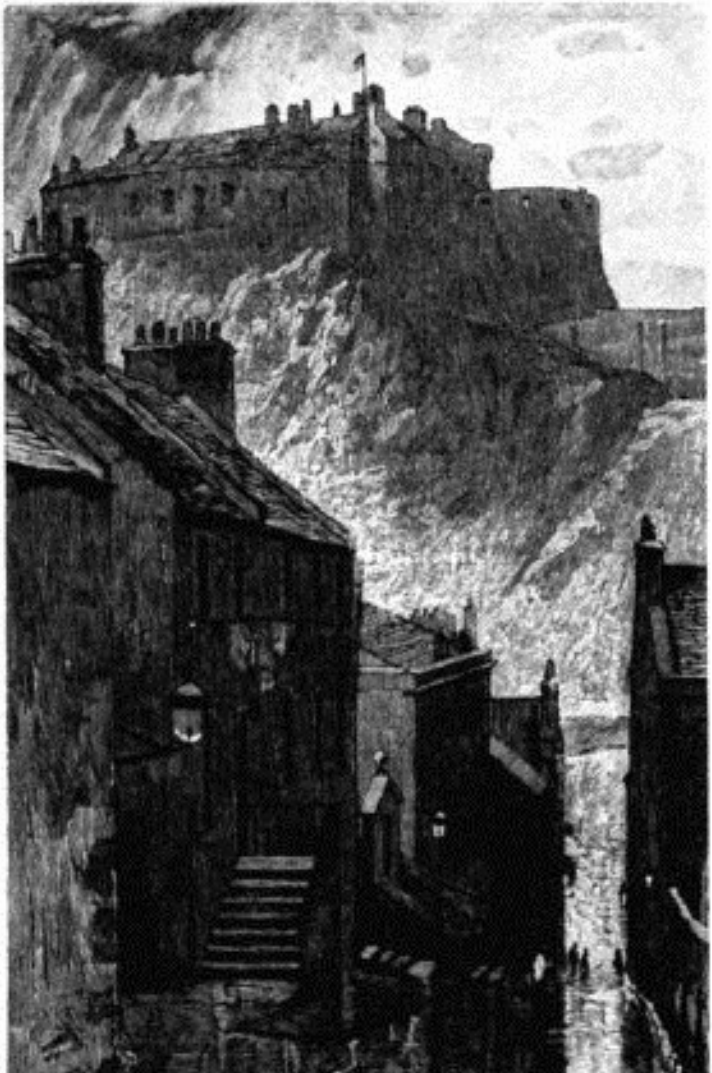
breast not only of killing his neighbour, but taking possession of his neighbour's lands. The caterans swarmed down once more from the mountains and isles, and every petty tyrant of a robber laird threw off whatever bond of law had been forced upon him in King James's golden days. This sudden access of anarchy was made more terrible by a famine in the country, where not very long before it had been reported that there was fish and flesh for every man. "A great dearth of victualls, pairtly because the labourers of the ground might not sow nor win the corn through the tumults and cumbers of the country," spread everywhere, and the state of the kingdom called the conflicting authorities once more to consultation and some attempt at united action.

The meeting this time was held in St. Giles's, the metropolitan church, then, perhaps, scarcely less new and shining in its decoration than now, though with altars glowing in all the shadowy aisles and the breath of incense mounting to the lofty roof. There would not seem to have been any prejudice as to using a sacred place for such a council, though it might be in the chapter-house or some adjacent building that the barons met. It is to be hoped that they did not go so far as to put into words within the consecrated walls the full force of their intention, even if it had come to be an intention so soon. There was but a small following on either side, that neither party might be alarmed, and many fine speeches were made upon the necessity of concord and mutual aid to repress the common enemy. The Chancellor, having restolen the King, would no doubt be most confident in

tone; but on both sides there were equal professions of devotion to the country, and so many admirable sentiments expressed, that "all their friends on both sides that stood about began to extol and love them both, with great thanksgiving that they both regarded the commonwealth so mickle and preferred the same to all private quarrels and debates." The decision to which they came was to call a Parliament, at which aggrieved persons throughout the country might appear and make their complaints. The result was a crowd of woeful complainants, "such as had never been seen before. There were so many widows, bairns, and infants seeking redress for their husbands, kin, and friends that were cruelly slain by wicked murderers, and many for hireling theft and murder, that it would have pitied any man to have heard the same." This clamorous and woeful crowd filled the courts and narrow square of the castle before the old parliament-hall with a murmur of misery and wrath, the plaint of kin and personal injury more sharp than a mere public grief. The two rulers and their counsellors no doubt listened with grim satisfaction, feeling their enemy delivered into their hands, and finding a dreadful advantage in the youth and recklessness of the victims, who had taken no precaution, and of whom it was so easy to conclude that they were "the principal cause of these enormities." Whether their determination to sacrifice the young Douglas, and so crush his house, was formed at once, it is impossible to say. Perhaps some hope of moulding his youth to their own purpose may have at first softened the intention of the plotters. At all events they

sent him complimentary letters, "full of coloured and pointed words," inviting him to Edinburgh in their joint names with all the respect that became his rank and importance. The youth, unthinking in his boyish exaltation of any possibility of harm to him, accepted the invitation sent to him to visit the King at Edinburgh, and accompanied by his brother David, the only other male of his immediate family, set out magnificently and with full confidence with his gay train of knights and followers —among whom, no doubt, the youthful element predominated —towards the capital. He was met on the way by Crichton— evidently an accomplished courtier, and full of all the habits and ways of diplomacy—who invited the cavalcade to turn aside and rest for a day or two in Crichton Castle, where everything had been prepared for their reception. Here amid all the feastings and delights the great official discoursed to the young noble about the duties of his rank and the necessity of supporting the King's government and establishing the authority of law over the distracted country, sweetening his sermon with protestations of his high regard for the Douglas name, whose house, kin, and friends were more dear to him than any in Scotland, and of affection to the young Earl himself. Perhaps this was the turning-point, though the young gallant in his heyday of power and self-confidence was all unconscious of it; perhaps he received the advice too lightly, or laughed at the seriousness of his counsellor. At all events, when the gay band took horse again and proceeded towards Edinburgh, suspicion began to steal among the Earl's

companions. Several of them made efforts to restrain their young leader, begging him at least to send back his young brother David if he would not himself turn homeward. "But," says the chronicler, "the nearer that a man be to peril or mischief he runs more headlong thereto, and has no grace to hear them that gives him any counsel to eschew the peril."



EDINBURGH CASTLE FROM THE VENNEL

The only result of these attempts was that the party of boys spurred on, more gaily, more confidently than ever, with the deceiver at their side, who had spoken in so wise and fatherly a tone, giving so much good advice to the heedless lads. They were welcomed into Edinburgh within the fatal walls of the Castle with every demonstration of respect and delight. How long the interval was before all this enthusiasm turned into the stern preparations of murder it seems impossible to say—it might have been on the first night that the catastrophe happened, for anything the chroniclers tell us. The followers of Douglas were carefully got away, "skailled out of the town," sent for lodging outside the castle walls, while the two young brothers were marshalled, as became their rank, to table to dine with the King. Whether they suspected anything, or whether the little James in his helpless innocence had any knowledge of what was going to happen, it is impossible to tell. The feast proceeded, a royal banquet with "all delicatis that could be procured." According to a persistent tradition, the signal of fate was given by the bringing in of a bull's head, which was placed before the young Earl. Mr. Burton considers this incident as so picturesque as to be merely a romantic addition; but no symbol was too boldly picturesque for the time. When this fatal dish appeared the two young Douglases seem at once to have perceived their danger. They started from the table, and for one despairing moment looked wildly round

them for some way of escape. The stir and commotion as that tragic company started to their feet, the vain shout for help, the clash of arms as the fierce attendants rushed in and seized the victims, the deadly calm of the two successful conspirators who had planned the whole, and the pale terrified face of the boy-king, but ten years old, who "grat verie sore," and vainly appealed to the Chancellor for God's sake to let them go, make one of the most impressive of historical pictures. The two hapless boys were dragged out to the Castle Hill, which amid all its associations has none more cruel, and there beheaded with the show of a public execution, which made the treachery of the crime still more apparent; for it had been only at most a day or two, perhaps only a few hours, since the Earl and his brother in all their bravery had been received with every gratulation at these same gates, the welcome visitors, the chosen guests, of the King. The populace would do little but stare in startled incapacity to interfere at such a scene; some of them, perhaps, sternly satisfied at the cutting off of the tyrant stock; some who must have felt the pity of it, and had compunction for the young lives cut off so suddenly. A more cruel vengeance could not be on the sins of the fathers, for it is impossible to believe that the Regents did not take advantage of the youth of these representatives of the famous Douglas race. Older and more experienced men would not have fallen into the snare, or at all events would have retained the power to sell their lives dear.

If the motives of Livingstone and Crichton were purely

patriotic, it is evident that they committed a blunder as well as a crime: for instead of two boys rash and ill-advised and undeveloped they found themselves in face of a resolute man who, like the young king of Israel, substituted scorpions for whips, persecuting both of them without mercy, and finally bringing Livingstone at least to destruction. The first to succeed to William Douglas was his uncle, a man of no particular account, who kept matters quiet enough for a few years; but when his son, another William, succeeded, the Regents soon became aware that an implacable and powerful enemy, the avenger of his two young kinsmen, but an avenger who showed no rash eagerness and could await time and opportunity, was in their way. The new Earl married without much ceremony, though with a papal dispensation in consequence of their relationship, the little Maid of Galloway, to whom a great part of the Douglas lands had gone on the death of her brothers, and thus united once more the power and possessions of his name. He was himself a young man, but of full age, no longer a boy, and he would seem to have combined with much of the steady determination to aggrandise and elevate his race which was characteristic of the Douglases, and their indifference to commonplace laws and other people's rights, an impulsiveness of character, and temptation towards ostentation and display, which led him at once to submission and to defiance at unexpected moments, and gave an element of uncertainty to his career. Soon after his succession it would seem to have occurred to him, after some specially unseemly disputes

among some of his own followers, that to get himself into harmony with the laws of the realm and gain the friendship of the young King would be a good thing to do. He came accordingly to Stirling where James was, very sick of his governors and their wiles and struggles, and throwing himself at the boy's feet offered himself, his goods and castles, and life itself, for the King's service, "that he might have the licence to wait upon His Majesty but as the soberest courtier in the King's company," and proclaimed himself ready to take any oath that might be offered to him, and to be "as serviceable as any man within the realm." James, it would seem, was charmed by the noble suitor, and all the glamour of youth and impulse which was in the splendid young cavalier, far more great and magnificent than all the Livingstones and Crichtons, who yet came with such abandon to the foot of the throne to devote himself to its service. He not only forgave Douglas all his offences, but placed him at the head of his government, "used him most familiar of any man," and looked up to him with the half-adoring admiration which a generous boy so often feels towards the first man who becomes his hero.

This happened in 1443, when James was but thirteen. It would be as easy to say that Douglas displaced with a rush the two more successful governors of the kingdom, and took their places by storm—and perhaps it would be equally true: yet it would be vain to ignore James as an actor in national affairs because of his extreme youth. In an age when a boy of

sixteen leads armies and quells insurrections, a boy of thirteen, trained amid all the exciting circumstances which surrounded James Stewart, might well have made a definite choice and acted with full royal intention, perhaps not strong enough to be carried out by its own impulse, yet giving a real sanction and force to the power which an elder and stronger man was in a position to wield. We have no such means of forming an idea of the character and personality of the second James as we have of his father. No voice of his sounds in immortal accents to commemorate his loves or his sadness. He appears first passively in the hands of conspirators who played him in his childhood one against the other, a poor little royal pawn in the big game which was so bloody and so tortuous. His young memory must have been full of scares and of guileful expedients, each party and individual about him trying to circumvent the other. Never was child brought up among wilder chances. The bewildering horror of his father's death, the sudden melancholy coronation, and all the nobles in their sounding steel kneeling at his baby feet, which would be followed in his experience by no expansion or indulgence, but by the confinement of the castle; the terrible loneliness of an imprisoned child, broken after a while by the sudden appearance of his mother, and that merry but alarming jest of his conveyance in the great chest, half stifled in the folds of her embroideries and cloth of gold. Then another flight, and renewed stately confinement among his old surroundings, monotony broken by sudden excitements and the babble in

his ears of uncomprehended politics, from which, however, his mind, sharpened by the royal sense that these mysterious affairs were really his own, would no doubt come to find meaning at a far earlier age than could be possible under other circumstances. And then that terrible scene, most appalling of all, when he had to look on and see the two lads, not so much older than himself, young gallants, so brave and fine, to whom the boy's heart would draw in spite of all he might have heard against them, so much nearer to himself than either governor or chancellor, those two noble Douglases, suddenly changed under his eyes from gay and welcome guests to horrified victims, with all the tragic passion of the betrayed and lost in their young eyes. Such a scene above all must have done much to mature the intelligence of a boy full like all his race of spirit and independence, and compelled to look on at so much which he could not stop or remedy. Thus passive and helpless, yet with the fiction of supremacy in his name, we see the boy only by glimpses through the tumultuous crowd about him with all their struggles for power, until suddenly he flashes forth into the foreground, the chief figure in a scene more violent and terrible still than any that had preceded it, taking up in his own person the perpetual and unending struggle, and striking for himself the decisive blow. There is no act so well known in James's life as that of the second Douglas murder, which gives a sinister repetition, always doubly impressive, to the previous tragedy. And yet between the two what fluctuations of feeling, what changes of policy, how many long exasperations, ineffectual

pardons, convictions unwillingly formed, must have been gone through. That he was both just and gentle we have every possible proof, not only from the unanimous consent of the chronicles, but from the manner in which, over and over again, he forgives and condones the oft-repeated offences of his friend. And there could be few more interesting psychological studies than to trace how, from the sentiments of love and admiration he once entertained for Douglas, he was wrought to such indignation and wrath as to yield to the weird fascination of that precedent which must have been so burnt in upon his childish memory, and to repeat the tragedy which within the recollection of all men had marked the Castle of Edinburgh with so unfavourable a stain.

We are still far from that, however, in the bright days when Douglas was Lieutenant-Governor of the kingdom, and the men who had murdered his kinsmen were making what struggle they could against his enmity, which pursued them to the destruction of one family and the frequent hurt and injury of the other. How Livingstone and his household escaped from time to time but were finally brought to ruin, how Crichton wriggled back into favour after every overthrow, sometimes besieged in his castle for months together, sometimes entrusted with the highest and most honourable missions, it would be vain to tell in detail. James would seem to have yielded to the inspiration of his new prime minister for a period of years, until his mind had fully developed, and he became conscious, as his father had been, of the dangers which arose to the common weal from the

lawless sway of the great nobles, their continual feuds among themselves, and the reckless independence of each great man's following, whose only care was to please their lord, with little regard either for the King and Parliament or the laws they made. During this period his mother died, though there is little reason to suppose that she had any power or influence in his council, or that her loss was material to him. She had married a second time, another James Stewart called the Black Knight of Lorne, and had taken a considerable part in the political struggles of the time always with a little surrounding of her own, and a natural hope in every change that it might bring her son back to her. It is grievous that with so fair a beginning, in all the glow of poetry and love, this lady should have dropped into the position of a foiled conspirator, undergoing even the indignity of imprisonment at the hands of the Regents whom she sometimes aided and sometimes crossed in their arrangements. But a royal widow fallen from her high estate, a queen-mother whose influence was feared and discouraged and every attempt at interference sternly repressed, would need to have been of a more powerful character than appears in any of her actions to make head against her antagonists. She died in Dunbar in 1446, of grief, it is said, for the death of her husband, who had been banished from the kingdom in consequence of some hasty words against the power of the Douglas, of whom however, even while he was still in disgrace, Sir James Stewart had been a supporter. Thus ended in grief and humiliation the life which first came into

sight of the world in the garden of the great donjon at Windsor some quarter of a century before, amid all the splendour of English wealth and greatness, and all the sweet surroundings of an English May.

James was married in 1450, when he had attained his twentieth year, to Mary of Gueldres, about whom during her married life the historians find nothing to say except that the King awarded pardon to various delinquents at the request of the Queen—an entirely appropriate and becoming office. No doubt his marriage, so distinct as a mark of maturity and independence, did something towards emancipating James from the Douglas influence; and it is quite probable that the selection of Sir William Crichton to negotiate the marriage and bring home the bride may indicate a lessening supremacy of favour towards Douglas in the mind of his young sovereign. Pitscottie records a speech made to the Earl and his brothers by the King, when he received and feasted them after their return from a successful passage of arms with the English on the Border, in which James points out the advantage of a settled rule and lawful authority, and impresses upon them the necessity of punishing robbers and reivers among their own followers, and seeing justice done to the poor, as well as distinguishing themselves by feats of war. By this time the Douglases had once more become a most formidable faction. The head of the house had so successfully worked for his family that he was on many occasions surrounded by a band of earls and barons of his own blood, his brothers having

in succession, by means of rich marriages or other means of aggrandisement, attained the same rank as himself, and, though not invariably, acting as his lieutenants and supporters, while his faction was indefinitely increased by the followers of these cadets of his house, all of them now important personages in the kingdom. It was perhaps the swelling pride and exaltation of a man who had all Scotland at his command, and felt himself to have reached the very pinnacle of greatness, which suggested the singular expedition to France and Rome upon which Douglas set forth, in the mere wantonness of ostentation and pride, according to the opinion of all the chroniclers, to spread his own fame throughout the world, and show the noble train and bravery of every kind with which a Scottish lord could travel. It was an incautious step for such a man to take, leaving behind him so many enemies; but he would seem to have been too confident in his own power over the King, and in his greatness and good fortune, to fear anything. No sooner was he gone, however, than all the pent-up grievances, the complaints of years during which he had wielded almost supreme power in Scotland, burst forth. The King, left for the first time to himself and to the many directors who were glad to school him upon this subject, was startled out of his youthful ease by the tale of wrong and oppression which was set before him. No doubt Sir William Crichton would not be far from James's ear, nor the representatives of his colleague, whom Douglas had pursued to the death. The state of affairs disclosed was so alarming

that John Douglas, Lord Balvenie, the brother of the Earl, who was left his procurator and representative in his absence, was hastily summoned to Court to answer for his chief. Balvenie, very unwilling to risk any inquisition, held back, until he was seized and brought before the King. His explanations were so little satisfactory, that he was ordered at once to put order in the matter, and to "restore to every man his own:" a command which he received respectfully, but as soon as he got free ignored altogether, keeping fast hold of the ill-gotten possessions, and hoping, no doubt, that the momentary indignation would blow over, and all go on as before. James, however, was too much roused to be trifled with. When he saw that no effect was given to his orders he took the matter into his own hands. The Earl of Orkney with a small following was first sent with the King's commission to do justice and redress wrongs: but when James found his ambassador insulted and repulsed, he took the field himself, first making proclamation to all the retainers of the Douglas to yield to authority on pain of being declared rebels. Arrived in Galloway, he rode through the whole district, seizing all the fortified places, the narrow peel-houses of the Border, every nest of robbers that lay in his way, and, according to one account, razed to the ground the Castle of Douglas itself, and placed a garrison of royal troops in that of Lochmaben, the two chief strongholds of the house. But James's mission was not only to destroy but to restore. He divided the lands thus taken from the House of Douglas, according to Pitscottie, "among

their creditors and complainers, till they were satisfied of all things taen from them, whereof the misdoers were convict." This, however, must only have applied, one would suppose, to the small losses of the populace, the lifted cows and harried lands of one small proprietor and another. "The King," adds the same authority, "notwithstanding of this rebellion, was not the more cruel in punishing thereof nor he was at the beginning:" while Buchanan tells us that his clemency and moderation were applauded even by his enemies.

This is throughout the opinion which we find of James. He was capable of being moved to sudden violent indignation and hasty action, as was too distinctly demonstrated afterwards; but the hasty outburst once over came back at once without rancour to his natural benignity, always merciful, slow to anger, ready to hear whatever the accused might have to say for himself, and to pardon as long as pardon was possible. Notwithstanding the rebellious and audacious contempt of all authority but their own shown by the Douglas party, notwithstanding the standing danger of their insolent power, their promises so often broken, their frequent submissions and actual defiance, his aim in all his dealings with them was rather to do justice to the oppressed than to punish the guilty. His genial temper, and that belief in his kind which is always so ingratiating a quality, is proved by the account Major gives of his life on those military expeditions which from this time forth occupied so much of his time. He lived with his soldiers as an equal, that historian tells us, eating as

they did, without the precaution of a taster, which Major thinks highly imprudent, but which would naturally bind to the frank and generous monarch the confidence and regard of his fellow-soldiers, and the captains with whom he shared the sometimes scanty provisions of the campaign.

News of these strange events was conveyed to Douglas, now in England on his return from the pilgrimage of pride and ostentation to which, though it was professedly for the Papal jubilee, no one attempts to give a religious character. He was returning at his leisure, lingering on his way, not without suspicion of secret treaties with the English in support of the party of York, though all the prepossessions of Scotland and King James were on the other side: but hurried home on hearing the news, and was politic enough to make immediate submission as soon as he became aware of the seriousness of the crisis, promising everything that could be demanded of him in the way of obedience and respect of "the King's peace." Once more he was fully and freely pardoned, his lands, with some small diminution, restored, and the King's confidence given back to him with a too magnanimous completeness. In the Parliament held in Edinburgh in June 1451 he was present, and received back his charters in full amity and kindness, to the great satisfaction and pleasure of "all gud Scottis men." Later in the year, in his capacity of Warden of the Marches, he was employed to assuage the endless quarrels of the Border, but during his negotiations for this purpose secretly renewed his mysterious and

treacherous dealings with England, of which there is no very clear account, but which was of all others the kind of treachery most obnoxious to his countrymen. So far as would appear, James obtained some hint of these clandestine proceedings, and was very angry, "highly commoved," as was natural: on hearing which Douglas appeared once more to ask pardon, with apparently an inexhaustible confidence in the clemency of the young man whom he had guided so long. But the idea of some "quyet draucht betwixt him and the King of Ingland," some secret understanding with the old enemy, was more serious still than domestic rebellion, and though he pardoned at the "great request" of the Queen and nobles, the King did not again restore so doubtful a representative to the great offices he had held. There would seem to have been a pause of consternation on the part of Douglas when he found for the first time the charm of his friendship and every petition for pardon ineffectual. To attribute the change to old Crichton, who had recovered much of his former influence and was again Chancellor, was easy, and the Earl who had but the other day sworn the King's peace with all, set an ambush for his old opponent, and would have succeeded in killing him but for Crichton's son, "ane young valiant man," who overcame the bravos, and housed his father safely in his Castle of Crichton. Douglas himself was afterwards almost surprised in Edinburgh by Crichton's followers, and saved himself only by a hurried departure not unlike a flight.

This disappointment, and the loss of the King's favour, and

the apparent solidity of his rivals in their place, half maddened the great noble, little accustomed to yield to any contradiction. He had been up to this time, save in so far as his private feuds and covetousness were concerned, on the side of lawful authority; the King's man so long as the King was his man, and did not interfere with the growth of his wealth and greatness. But now he would seem to have given up hope of recovering his hold upon his sovereign, and turned his eyes elsewhere for support. The Earl of Crawford in the north country, and the Lord of Isles who was also Earl of Ross in the west, were as powerful and as intractable as Douglas himself, and more often in open rebellion than in amity with the King, a constant danger and disturbance of all good order and law. Douglas in his anger made an alliance with these two, by which all bound themselves to resent and avenge any injury offered to either. It was probably an expedient of rage and despair—the desire of doing what was most baneful and insolent to his former friends, such as happens often when a breach occurs —as much as a political act; but it is evident that in every way Douglas was on the eve of open treachery, no longer disposed to keep any terms with the royal master whose patience had been exhausted at last. It required, however, a crowning outrage to arouse once more James's much-forgiving spirit.

Among the gentlemen of Galloway, the most of whom rode with Douglas and supported him in all his high-handed proceedings, too near neighbours to venture upon independence, were a few who preferred to hold the other side, that of law and

justice and the authority of the King. Among them was "one called Maclelan, who was tutor of Bombie for the time, and sister's son to Sir Patrick Gray, principal servitor to the King, and captain of his guard." The refusal of this man to serve in the rebellious host under the Earl was immediately punished by Douglas, who assailed his house and carried him off prisoner. The story reads like a romance, which, however, is no reason for receiving it with discredit. A more doubtful circumstance is that it is asserted to have happened in Douglas Castle, which had been very recently destroyed by James, and which was besides at a great distance from Edinburgh. I hazard a conjecture whether it may have happened in the Castle of Abercorn, since it must have been impossible for Douglas in Galloway to pursue Sir Patrick to the very gates of Edinburgh. Wherever the incident may have occurred, the story is, that Sir Patrick Gray, the uncle of the prisoner, hastened to the King with the story of his nephew's danger, and was at once sent off by James with "a sweit letter of supplication," praying the Earl to deliver over the unfortunate gentleman to the messenger for love of the King. The Earl was at dinner when, "bloody with spurring, fiery red with haste," Sir Patrick arrived at the castle, where the drawbridge was lifted and the doors closed. "The Earle caused incontinent draw the boards, and rose and met the said Sir Patrick with great reverence and humilitie, because he was the King's principal servant and familiar to His Grace." I tell the rest of the tale in the words of Pitscottie:—

"He inquired at the said Patrick if he had dined, who answered that he had not. Then the Earle said there was 'no talk to be had betwixt ane full and ane fasting; therefore ye shall dine, and we shall talke together at length.'

"In this meane tyme Sir Patrick Gray sat down to his dinner, and the Earle treatted him and made him goode cheare, whereof Sir Patrick was well contented, believing all things to succeed well thereafter. But the Earle of Douglas on the other pairt took a suspicion and conjecture what Sir Patrick's Gray's commission was, and dreading the desyne thereof should be for his friend, the tutor of Bombie; therefore in the meane time when they were at the dinner, talking of merry matters, the Earle caused quietly take forth the tutor of Bombie out of prison, and have him to the greene and there strooke off his head and took the samine away from him, and syne covered a fair cloth on his bodie that nothing might be seene of that treasonable act that was done.

"In this meane time when dinner was done Sir Patrick Gray presented the King's writing unto the Earle, who reverently received it and considered the effect thereof. He gave great thanks to Sir Patrick Gray, saying he was beholden to him that brought so familiar an writing from his Prince to him, considering how it stood betwixt them at that time: and as to the desire and supplication, it should be thankfullie granted to the King, and the rather for Sir Patrick's sake; and took him by the hand and led him furth to the greene where the gentleman was lying dead, and shew him the manner, and said, 'Sir Patrick, you are come a litle

too late; but yonder is your sister's son lying, but he wants the head; take his body and do with it what you will.' Sir Patrick answered again with ane sore heart, and said, 'My Lord, ye have taken from him his head, dispone upon the body as ye please;' and with that called for his horse and leapt thereon. And when he was on horseback he said to the Earle on this manner, 'My Lord, an I live ye shall be rewarded for your labour that ye have used at this time, according to your demerits.' At this saying the Earle was highly offended and cryed for horse. Sir Patrick seeing the Earle's fury spurred his horse, but he was chased neare to Edinburgh before they left him, and had it not been his leid horse was so tryed and goode he had been taken."

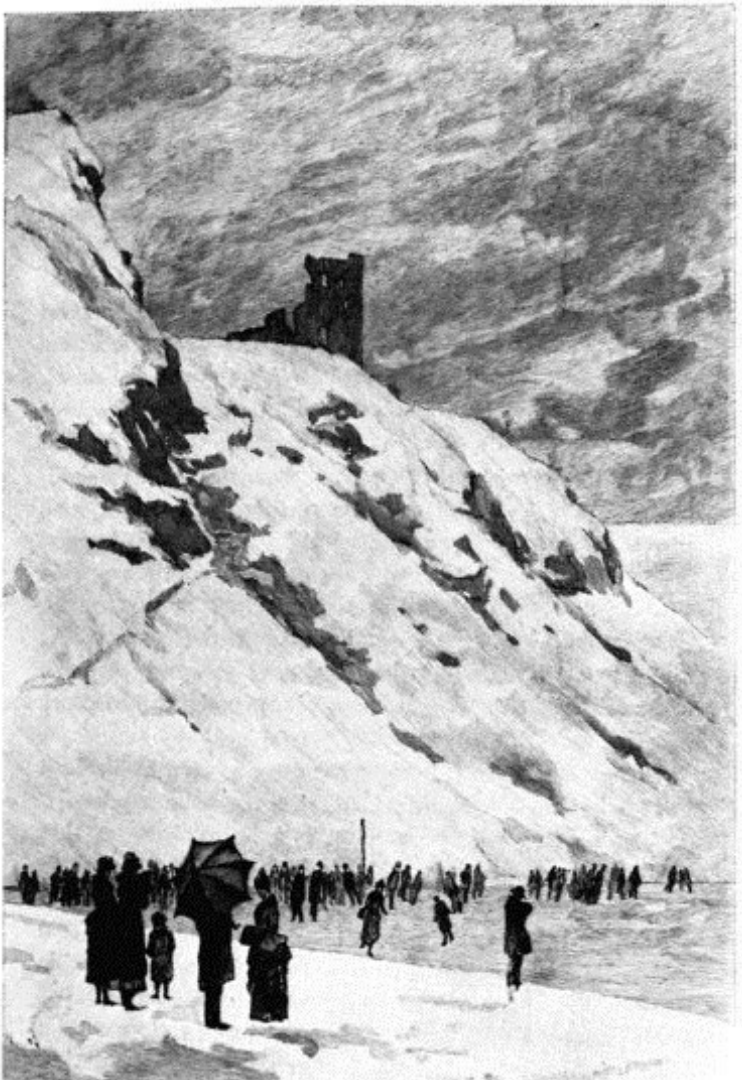
The scene that ensued when James—awaiting in Edinburgh the return of his messenger, without a doubt we may suppose of the obedience of Douglas the friend of his youth, the often-pardoned, owing so much to his clemency and friendship—saw Sir Patrick arrive breathless and haggard, scarcely escaping, though the King's messenger, with his life, and heard his story—the insolent contempt, the brutal jest, the cruel murder—is one that might well mark the turning-point even in a mind so magnanimous. The King had not been entirely without signs of inheriting his father's firmness and promptitude; but his gentleness of disposition, and strong inclination towards kindness and peace, had in general carried the day over his sterner qualities. He had shown both sides of his character when he pardoned Douglas and accepted his promises of reformation on

his return, but cut him off from public service and closed all the doors of advancement against him. The defiance now addressed to him, the scorn of his letters and request, so audaciously shown, raised a sudden storm of indignation in his breast. Whether his future action was based on the decision of his council to which he submitted, sanctioning on his own part the treachery by which alone Douglas could be beguiled within his reach, as the chroniclers, to whom such a device was quite justifiable, tell us; or whether when he issued his safe-conduct he still hoped to be able to convince the Earl of his folly in resisting, and to bring him to a real and effectual change of mind, no one can now tell. But James was so little addicted to treachery, so fair, tolerant and merciful, that we may well give him the benefit of the doubt, and believe that it was with the intention of making another effort to bring Douglas back to his right mind and allegiance that the King invited him to Stirling, where it was strange indeed that with all his enormities on his conscience Douglas ventured to come, whatever were the safe-conducts given. "Some sayes he got the great seale thereunto before he would grant to come to the King," says the chronicle. The fact that he did come however, after all that had passed, says much for his confidence in King James and in his own power over him, for Douglas must have been very well aware that safe-conducts and royal promises were but broken reeds to trust to.

When he arrived in Stirling, whatever lowering looks he might see around him—and it is scarcely possible to believe

that Sir Patrick Gray for one could have entirely cleared his countenance of every recollection of their last meeting, of the men-at-arms thundering at his heels, and his nephew's body headless on the greensward—Douglas found no change in the King, who received and banqueted him "very royally," thinking if it were possible "with good deeds to withdraw him from his attempt that he purposed to do." After supper the King took his rebellious subject aside, into another room opening from that in which they had supped, and which is still exhibited in Stirling Castle to the curious stranger, and once more reasoned with him on his conduct. No private matter would seem to have been introduced, the treasonable league which the Earl had made with Crawford and Ross, rebels against the lawful authority of the kingdom, being the subject on which James put forth all his strength of argument. Douglas, Pitscottie tells us, answered "verrie proudlie," and the argument grew hot between the two men, of whom one had always hitherto been the conqueror in every such passage of arms. It was probably this long habit of prevailing that made the proud Earl so obstinate, since to submit in words had never heretofore been difficult to him. At last the dispute came to a climax, in the distinct refusal of Douglas to give up his traitor-allies. "He said he myt not nor wald not," says a brief contemporary record. "Then the King said, 'False traitor, if you will not, I sall,' and stert sodunly till him with ane knyf." "And they said," adds this chronicle with grim significance, "that Patrick Gray straik him next the King with ane pole ax on the

hed." The other companions crowded round, giving each his stroke. And thus within a short space of years the second Earl of Douglas was killed in a royal castle, while under a royal safe-conduct, at a climax of hopeless discord and antagonism from which there seemed no issue. The exasperation of the King, the dead-lock of all authority, the absolutely impracticable point at which the two almost equal powers had arrived, account for, though they do not excuse, such a breach of faith. I prefer to believe that James had at least no decided purpose in his mind, but hoped in his own power to induce Douglas to relinquish these alliances which were incompatible with his allegiance; but that the sudden exasperation with which he became convinced of his own powerlessness to move him brought about in a moment the fatal issue (with who knows what sudden wild stimulus of recollection from the murder of which he had been a witness in his childhood?) which statesmen less impulsive had already determined upon as necessary, though probably not in this sudden way.



The "Schort Memorial of the Scottis Cronikles," called the Auchinleck Chronicle, gives a brief but striking account of the proceedings that followed. Earl Douglas's retainers and kinsmen would seem to have been struck dumb by the event, and probably fled in horror and dismay; but it was not till long after, when the King had left Stirling, that the younger brothers returned, on St. Patrick's Day in Lent, bringing with them the safe-conduct with all its seals, which they exhibited at the cross and dragged through the streets tied to a horse's tail, with many wild and fierce words against the King and all that were with him, ending by spoiling and burning the town. As James was no longer in it, however, nor apparently any one who could resist them, this was a cheap and unsatisfactory vengeance.

Some months after, in the summer of 1452, a Parliament was held at Edinburgh, in which the three Estates passed a declaration that no safe-conduct had been given on that fatal occasion—a declaration which it is evident no one believed, and which probably was justified by some quibble which saved the consciences of those who asserted it. The new Earl, James Douglas, was summoned to appear at this Parliament, but answered by a letter under his seal and that of his brother, which was secretly affixed to the door of the Parliament House, "declynand from the King, saying that they held not of him,

nor would hold with him, with many other slanderous words, calling them traitors that were his secret council." Some say it was upon the church doors that this defiance was attached. In any case it must have produced a wonderful hum and commotion through the town, where already no doubt the slaying of the Douglas had been discussed from every point of view—at the cross, and among the groups at the street corners, where there would be many adherents of the Douglas, and many citizens ready to discuss the new event and all its possible consequences. The Parliament was followed by a general muster upon the Burrowmuir, where the barons and their men gathered, with all their spears and steel caps glistening in the June sunshine, with an apparent intention of pursuing the race to its stronghold and making an end of it. The raid, which was led by the King in person, with an army of some thirty thousand men, accomplished little however, doing more mischief than good the chronicle says, treading down the new corn, and spoiling the country "right fellonly," notwithstanding the King's presence. The result, at all events, was complete submission on the part of the new Earl, accompanied by a promise to bear no enmity, a promise often made but altogether impossible in the fifteenth century to mortal flesh and blood.

It was scarcely possible however, short of a moral miracle, that such a thing could happen as the abandonment of the entire policy of the house of Douglas at a moment when their minds were embittered by so great a tragedy. The new Earl was not

a mere soldier, still less a courtier, but a man of some culture, originally intended, it is said, for the Church, though this does not seem to have withheld him from taking part in the tumults of the time. Nor did it restrain him from marrying his brother's widow, the hapless Maid of Galloway, whose share of the Douglas lands made her indispensable to her two warlike cousins, though it seems uncertain whether either of the two marriages, which necessitated two dispensations from the Pope, was anything but nominal. After his submission James Douglas was employed as his brother had been in the arrangement of terms of truce with England, which was too great a temptation for him, and led to further treasonable negotiations. He would seem also to have renewed his brother's alliances with the rebels of the north: and in a very brief period the nominal peace and doubtful vows were all thrown to the winds, and this time there seems to have been no question of partial rebellion, but every indication that a civil war, rending the entire country in two, was about to break forth. Douglas had the strong backing of England behind him, the support of the Highland hordes always ready to be poured upon the peaceful country, and many great lords in his immediate train. He had raised an army of, it is said, forty thousand men, an enormous army for Scotland, and it was evident that the struggle was one of life and death.

At this moment it would seem that King James for the first time lost heart. He had been fighting during all the beginning of the year 1455, reducing the west and south, the Douglas

country, to subjection and desolation. But when he found himself menaced by an army as great as anything he could muster, with the angry north in the background and clouds of half-savage warriors on the horizon, the King's heart sank. He is said to have left Edinburgh in disgust and depression, and taken ship at Leith for St. Andrews, to seek counsel from the best and most trustworthy of his advisers, a man whose noble presence appears in the distracted history with such a calm and sagacious steadfastness that we can well understand the agitated King's sudden impulse towards him at this painful period of his career. Bishop Kennedy had himself suffered from the lawlessness of the Douglas retainers: and he too had royal blood in his veins. He occupied one of the highest positions in the Church, and his wisdom and strength had made him one of the most prominent statesmen in the kingdom. James arrived hastily, according to the chronicle, unexpected, and with many signs of distress and anxiety. He betrayed to the Bishop his weariness of the ever-renewed struggle, and of the falsehood and treachery which, even if victorious, were all he had to encounter, the failure of every pledge and promise, the faith sworn one day which failed him the next, and the deep discouragement with all things round him which had taken possession of his mind. The wise prelate heard this confession of heart-sickness and despondency, and with a fatherly familiarity bade the young King sit down to meat, which he much wanted, while he himself went to his oratory to pray for enlightenment. That James thought no less than to throw up

the struggle and retire from his kingdom, is what the old writers say. But when, with his bosom lightened by utterance of his trouble, and his courage a little restored by food and rest, the Bishop came back to him with a cheerful countenance from his prayers, the King took heart again. Kennedy produced to him the old image of the sheaf of arrows which, bound together, were not to be broken, but one by one could easily be snapt asunder, and advised him to make proclamation of a free pardon to all who would throw down their arms and make submission, and to march at once against the rebel host with full confidence of victory. Inspired by this advice, and by the companionship of the Bishop who went with him, the King set out to meet the rebels, though with an army inferior in number to theirs. Douglas, from some unexplained reason, wavered and hesitated, taking no active step, and gave Bishop Kennedy time to put his own suggestion in practice in respect to his nephew Lord Hamilton —who was one of Douglas's chief supporters—sending secret messengers to him to urge him to submission. Hamilton no doubt had already perceived signs of wavering purpose and insecurity in the heterogeneous host, in which were many whose hearts failed them at sight of the King's banners—men who were apt to rebellion without being wound up to the extreme point of civil war: but he had "ane kyndlie love to Earl Douglas" as well as a regard for his own honour, and would not lightly desert his friend. While thus uncertain he appealed to Douglas to know what he meant to do, warning him that the longer he hesitated,

the less would be the forces at his disposal. Douglas replied haughtily that if he were tired of waiting he might go when he pleased—an indiscreet answer, which decided Hamilton to withdraw and throw himself upon the King's promised mercy. The same night he went over to the royal army, carrying with him so many that "on the morn thereafter the Earl Douglas had not ane hunder men by his own household," the whole host having melted away. Never was a greater risk for a monarchy nor a more easy and bloodless escape. The Earl fled to the depths of his own country and thence to England, where he lived long a pensioned dependant, after all his greatness and ambition, to reappear in history only like a ghost after many silent years.

Amid all these bewildering and bitter struggles, in which much misery was no doubt involved, it is recorded of the King that he never lost his humane character, and that even in the devastations he was forced to sanction or command, the cruel reprisals carried out over all the south of Scotland, his severity was always tempered with mercy. "He was not so much feared as a king as loved like a father," says Major. This luminous trait appears through all the darkness of the vexed and furious time. The King was always ready to pardon at a word, to believe in the vows and receive the submission of the fiercest rebels. One curious evidence of the confidence felt in him was shown by the widow of the murdered Earl, Margaret Douglas, the Maid of Galloway, a woman doubly injured in every relation—the sister of the young Earl murdered at Edinburgh, married by his

successor in order to reunite the Douglas patrimony, a great portion of which went to her as her brother's heir—and again forced into another and unlawful marriage by her husband's brother, immediately upon his death, for the same end. James received this fugitive kindly, restored to her part of the lands of her family, and finally married her—thus freeing her from the lawless bond into which she had been driven—to his own step-brother, John, Earl of Atholl, "the Black Knight of Lorne's son;" upon hearing of which another fugitive of a similar description appeared upon the scene.

> "When the Earl of Ross's wyff understood the King to be some pairt favourable to all that sought his grace she fled also under his protection to eschew the cruel tyranny of her husband, which she dreaded sometyme before. The King called to remembrance that this woman was married not by her own counsel to Donald of the Isles (the Earl of Ross). He gave her also sufficient lands and living whereon she might live according to her estate."

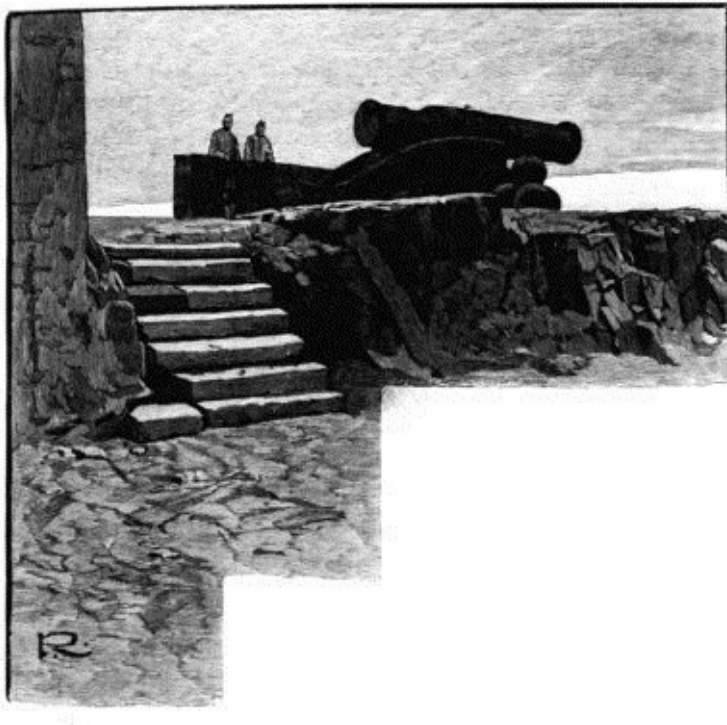
The case of women, and especially heiresses, in that lawless age must have been miserable indeed. Bandied about from one marriage to another, forced to accept such security as a more or less powerful lord could give, and when he was killed to fall victim to the next who could seize upon her, or to whom she should be allotted by feudal suzerain or chieftain, the mere name of a king who did not disdain a woman's plaint, but had compassion and help to give, must have conveyed hope to many

an unhappy lady bound to a repugnant life. James would seem to have been the only man who recognised the misery to which such unconsidered items in the wild and tumultuous course of affairs might be driven.

Thus King James and Scotland with him were delivered from the greatest and most dangerous of the powerful houses that held the country in fear. Shortly after he conquered, partly by arms, partly by the strain of a universal impulse, which seemed to rouse the barons to a better way, those great allies in the north who held the key of the Highlands, the Earl of Crawford and the Earl of Ross, so that at last something of a common rule and common sentiment began to move the country. It is almost needless to say that James took advantage of this temporary unity and enthusiasm in order to invade England—a thing without which no Scots King could be said to be happy. The negotiations by which he was at once stimulated and hindered—among others by ambassadors from the Duke of York to ask his help against Henry VI, with orders to arrest his army on their way—are too complicated to be entered upon; but at last the Scots forces set out and, after various successes, James found himself before Roxburgh, a town and castle which had remained in the hands of the English from the time when the Earl of March deserted his country for England in the reign of Robert III. The town was soon taken, but the castle, in which there was a brave garrison, stood out manfully. This invasion of the Borders, and opportunity of striking a blow at the "auld enemy," was evidently an act of the

highest policy while yet the surgings of civil war were not entirely quieted, and a diversion of ideas as well as new opportunities of spoil were peculiarly necessary. Its first excellent result was that Donald of the Isles, the Earl of Ross and terror of the north country, whose submission had been but provisionally accepted, and depended upon some evidence of real desire for the interest of the common weal, suddenly appeared with "ane great armie of men, all armed in the Highland fashion," and claimed the vanguard, the place of honour, and to be allowed to take upon him "the first press and dint of the battell." James received this unexpected auxiliary with "great humanitie," but prudently provided, before accepting his offer, which apparently, however, was made in all good faith, that Donald should "stent his pavilliones a little by himself," until full counsel had been taken on the subject. The army was also joined by "a great company of stout and chosen men," under the Earl of Huntly, whose coming "made the King so blyth that he commanded to charge all the guns and give the castle ane new volie." James would seem throughout to have felt the greatest interest in the extraordinary new arm of artillery which had made a revolution in warfare. He pursued siege after siege with a zeal in which something of the ardour of a military enthusiast and scientific inquirer mingled with the necessities of the struggle in which he was engaged. The "Schort Cronikle," already quoted, describes him as lingering over the siege of Abercorn, "striking mony of the towers down with the gret gun, the whilk a Franche man shot richt wele, and

failed na shot within a fathom where it was charged him to hit." And when, in the exultation of his heart to see each new accession of force come in, he ordered "a new volie" against the stout outstanding walls, the excitement of the discharge, the eagerness of an adept to watch the effect, no doubt made this dangerous expression of satisfaction a real demonstration of pleasure.



King James had attained at this time a success which probably a few years before his warmest imagination could not have aspired to. He had brought into subjection the great families which had almost contested his throne with him. Douglas, the highest and most near himself, had been swept clean out of his way. The fiercest rebel of all, the head of the Highland caterans, with his wild host in all their savage array, was by his side, ready to charge under his orders. The country, drained of its most lawless elements, was beginning to breathe again, to sow its fields and rebuild its homesteads. Instead of the horrors of civil war his soldiers were now engaged in the most legitimate of all enterprises—the attempt to recover from England an alienated possession. Everything was bright before him, the hope of a great reign, the promise of prosperity and honour and peace.

It is almost a commonplace of human experience that in such moments the blow of fate is near at hand. The big guns which were a comparatively new wonder, full of interest in their unaccustomed operation, were still a danger as well as a prodigy, and James would seem to have forgotten the precautions that were considered necessary in presence of an armament still only partially understood. The historian assumes, as every human observer is apt to do in face of such a calamity, a tone of blame. "This Prince," says the chronicle with a shrill tone of exasperation in the record of the catastrophe, "more curious

than became the majestie of a king, did stand hard by when the artilliarie was discharging." And in a moment all the labours and struggles, and the hope of the redeemed kingdom and all the prosperity that was to come, were at an end. One can imagine the sudden dismay in the group around him, the rush of his attendants, his own feeble command to keep silence when some cry of horror rose from the pale-faced circle. His thigh had been broken, "dung in two," by the explosion of the gun, "by which he was struken to the ground, and died hastilie thereafter," with no time to say more than to order silence, lest the army should be discouraged and the siege prove in vain.

So ended the troublous reign of the second James, involved in strife and warfare from his childhood, vexed by the treacheries and struggles over him of his dearest friends, full of violence alien to his mind and temper, which yet was justified by his example at the most critical moment of his life. He made his way through continual contention, intrigue, and blood, for which he was not to blame, to such a settlement of national affairs as might have consolidated Scotland and made her great—by patience and firmness and courage, and conspicuously by mercy, notwithstanding one crime. And when the helm was in his hands, and a fair future before him, fell, not ignominiously indeed, yet uselessly, a noble life thrown away, leaving once more chaos behind him. He was only twenty-nine when the thunderbolt thus falling from a clear sky destroyed all the hopes of Scotland; yet had reigned long, for twenty-three years of trouble, tumult, and

distress.

CHAPTER III
JAMES III: THE MAN OF PEACE

Again the noises cease save for a wail of lamentation over the dead. The operations of war are suspended, the dark ranks of the army stand aside, and every trumpet and fatal cannon is silent while once more a woman and a child come into the foreground of the historic scene. Once more, the most pathetic figure surely in history, a little startled boy clinging to his mother —not afraid indeed of the array of war to which he has been accustomed all his life, and perhaps with an instinct in him of childish majesty, the consciousness which so soon develops even in an infant mind, of unquestioned rank, but surrounded by the atmosphere of horror and affright in which he has been taken from among his playthings—stands forth to be hastily enveloped in the robes so pitifully over-large of the dead monarch. The lords, we are told, sent for the Prince in the first sensation of the catastrophe, and had him crowned at Kelso, feeling the necessity of that central name at least, round which to rally. They were not always respectful of the real King when they had him, yet the divinity which hedged the title, however helpless the head round which it shone, was felt to be indispensable to the unity and strength of the kingdom. Mary of Gueldres in her sudden widowhood would seem to have behaved with great dignity and spirit at this critical moment. She is said to have insisted that

the siege should not be abandoned, but that her husband's death might at least accomplish what his heart had been set upon; and the army after a moment of despondency was so "incouraged" by the coming of the Prince "that they forgot the death of his father and past manfullie to the hous, and wan the same, and justified the captaine theroff, and kest it down to the ground that it should not be any impediment to them hereafter." The execution of the captain seems a hard measure unless he was a traitor to the Scottish crown; but no doubt the conflict became more bitter from the terrible cost of the victory.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.