

This state of things could not long continue, and only brought increasing troubles to the country, which continued to be distracted by intestine dissensions, and foreign war. Arran, still supported by the cardinal and a small party of the nobility, persevered in exercising his authority as governor, and the queen dowager began to dread that all her endeavours would prove insufficient to keep her partizans together. In the Highlands and Isles, the presence of Huntly and Argyle was required to repress a rebellion of the clans, encouraged, in all probability, by the intrigues of England, which frequently adopted this policy to weaken her enemy. The disturbance was speedily repressed, yet not without much bloodshed being mixed up with those private feuds which prevailed in these savage districts. In a ferocious contest at Inverlochy, between the Frasers, led by the Lord Lovat and his son, with a more numerous body of the Macdonalds, the combatants, stripping to their shirts on account of the extreme heat of the weather, fought rather for extermination than victory; two survivors being left on one side, and four on the other.¹ During these sanguinary brawls in the remote Highlands, an equally disgraceful spectacle was exhibited at Perth, where a claim for the office of Provost was decided by arms, between Lord Ruthven on the one side, supported by a numerous train of his vassals, and Lord Gray,

¹ Diurnal of Occurrents in Scotland, p. 34.

with Norman Lesly, master of Rothes, and Charteris of Kinfauns, on the other. During his late ecclesiastical progress to Perth, the cardinal, who suspected Ruthven of leaning to the reformed opinions, had deprived him of his office of provost, and directed the citizens to elect Charteris: a crafty device, as was believed, to sow dissension between his rivals in power, it being notorious that the Lords Gray and Ruthven, with the Earl of Rothes and his adherents, had been hitherto unanimous in their opposition to Beaton. Nor was he unsuccessful: Ruthven, supported by the townsmen and merchants, in those days trained to arms, resented the affront, and held his place by force, whilst Charteris, reinforced by Gray, Glamis, and Norman Lesly broke into the town; and both parties meeting on the narrow bridge over the Tay, fought with sanguinary obstinacy till the victory declared for Ruthven; sixty of his opponents being left dead on the pavement, and the rest compelled to fly from the city.¹

It was now time for the Earl of Lennox to perform his engagements to Henry; and, having sailed from Bristol with a squadron of ten ships and a small force of hacbutteers, archers, and pikemen, he arrived on the coast of Scotland, attacked and plundered the Isle of Arran, and, sailing to Bute, occupied the island, and its castle of Rothesay, with little difficulty. These acquisitions,

¹ Diurnal of Occurrents in Scotland, p. 34. — Cant's Muses Threnodie, vol. i. p. 112.

according to agreement, were delivered to Sir Rise Mansell and Richard Broke, who accompanied the expedition, and took formal possession of them in behalf of the king of England.¹ He next directed his course to Dumbarton castle, a fortress, of which, as the key of the West of Scotland, Henry had long, but in vain, sought the possession. It was the property of Lennox, and being commanded by Sterling of Glorat, one of his retainers, to whom he had entrusted it on his departure for England, he did not doubt for a moment that it would be surrendered. In this, however, he was disappointed: Sterling received and recognised him as his master, but the brave baron did not forget his higher allegiance to his sovereign. The first mention of his giving up the castle to Henry was received with a burst of generous indignation; the garrison taking the alarm, rose in arms; and Lennox, with his English friends, becoming alarmed for their safety, were glad to make a precipitate retreat to their ships.

In the meantime the Earl of Argyle, with a considerable force, had occupied Dunoon, a strong castle situated on the narrow strait between Argyle and Renfrew, whilst George Douglas, with

¹ Instructions to Sir Rise Mansell, and Richard Broke. State Paper Office, August, 1544. In same repository is a Letter from Lennox to the Privy Council, dated West Chester, 8th of August, 1544. He was then going by land to Beaumarais, to join his ship, which had sailed the day before, and intended to proceed with all diligence on his expedition.

four thousand men, had entered Dumbarton. The squadron therefore deemed it prudent to fall down the Clyde; and being fired on in passing Dunoon, Lennox, in the chivalrous spirit of the times, accepted the defiance, and, landing under cover of a fire from his own ships, attacked the Highlanders, whom he dispersed with considerable slaughter. He next invaded Kentire, insulted and plundered the adjacent coasts of Kyle and Carrick, and returning to Bristol, dispatched Sir Peter Mewtas to inform king Henry, then at Boulogne, of the termination of an expedition which had failed in its principal purpose—the seizure of Dumbarton; and only rendered more distant the prospect of peace between the countries.¹ Much indignation was expressed by Lennox and the English ministers, against the Earl of Glencairn, and his son the master of Kilmaurs, whose services had been so lately purchased, and so soon withdrawn. Wriothesley, the chancellor, inveighed against “the old fox and his cub,” who had imposed on the simplicity of Lennox; and although both the father and son had written to excuse their proceedings, their falsehood was apparent, and their apology little regarded.²

During the continuance of this expedition, Sir Ralph Evre, Sir Brian Layton, and Sir Richard

¹ We know from the *Diurnal of Occurrents in Scotland*, p. 35, that Lennox arrived at Dumbarton on the 10th of August.

² *State Papers of Henry the Eighth*, published by government, p. 769.

Bowes, ravaged the Scottish borders with merciless barbarity, and organising a system of rapine and devastation against those districts where the Scots were most defenceless, reduced the country almost to a desert.¹ It could scarcely indeed be otherwise, considering the perseverance of the border inroads, and the distracted state of public affairs produced by the continued dissensions between the parties of the governor and the queen dowager. Men neither knew whom to obey, nor where to look for protection. In the beginning of November, the regent held a parliament in which Angus and his brother were charged with treason, and all the tremendous feudal penalties of banishment and forfeiture threatened to be enforced against them. On the 12th of the same month, the queen summoned the three estates to assemble at Stirling, and issued a proclamation discharging all classes of her subjects from their allegiance to the pretended regent.² In this state of things the talents

¹ Of these inroads, a brief contemporary abstract has been preserved in Haynes's State Papers, pp. 43-55 inclusive, a bloody ledger, as it has been rightly denominated, which, with all the formality of a business account, contains the successive inroads, burnings, and spoliations from July till November. By this it appears, that of towns, by which we must understand small villages, towers, farm offices, parish churches, and fortified dwelling-houses, were burnt, 192; and that the plunder amounted, in cattle, to 10,386; in sheep, to 12,492; in nags, geldings, and foals, to 1496; whilst the small number of those slain or made prisoners, evinces the little resistance encountered, and the defenceless state of the country.

² Diurnal of Occurrents in Scotland, p. 36;—corroborated in its

of the cardinal were again employed in negotiating an agreement between the rival factions, which, although insincere, had a brief success. Peace seemed to be restored, and Arran, eager to avenge the late outrages, advanced at the head of seven thousand men to the borders, and laid siege to Coldingham, then held by the enemy. But scarce had they planted their artillery, when their proceedings became again weakened by suspicion and treason: it was discovered that the Douglasses continued their correspondence with England. The inferior leaders dreading the result, began to disperse in disorder; the governor became alarmed for his personal safety, and two thousand English defeated and chased off the field a Scottish army more than triple their number. In this disgraceful rout, Angus, who had the conduct of the vanguard with Glencairn, Cassillis, Lord Somerville, and the sheriff of Ayr, opposed no resistance to the enemy, whilst Bothwell, who brought up the rear, in vain attempted to rally, and was at last compelled to join in the flight.¹

The failure of this last expedition was wholly to be ascribed to the intrigues of the Douglasses,

dates by the Acts of Parliament of Scotland, vol. ii. pp. 445-446-447. It is worthy of notice, that these rival parliaments which are new to Scottish history are alone mentioned in the Diurnal of Occurrents.

¹ The cannon, however, were carried off, as is asserted, by the exertions of the Douglasses. Their general conduct in the expedition renders the fact extremely doubtful.

who, with their associates, Glencairn and Cassilis, were now playing a desperate game. A sentence of treason hung over their heads in Scotland; in England, Henry regarded their conduct with so much suspicion, that in the late expedition of Hertford, no protection had been granted to their estates and vassals. They were now, therefore, in a position as precarious as it was discreditable; likely to lose the confidence of both governments; exposed to the chance of banishment from their own country, and to be cut off from a retreat into England. Under these circumstances they adopted that middle course which is not uncommon to men long engaged in political intrigue; and, more studious for the possession of power, than the preservation of character, they determined to break wholly with neither party. George Douglas, brother of Angus, a man of great ability, and little scrupulous as to means, continued his correspondence with the English king, and betrayed to him the secrets of the government. Angus, on the other hand, deceived Arran and the queen dowager into the belief that they had completely repented of their former tergiversation, and convinced of the injustice of Henry's demands, were prepared cordially to co-operate in the defence of the country.¹

By this pretended coalition, they gained an

¹ Our general historians, Buchanan, Lesly, and Maitland, not aware of the existence of private correspondence in the State Paper Office, which proves the double part acted by the Douglasses, have

important end. In a parliament held at Edinburgh in the beginning of December, which was attended by the whole body of the nobility, the earl and his brother Sir George being personally present, were absolved from the charge of treason, and declared innocent of the crimes which had been alleged against them. Glencairn, Cassillis, and Sir Hugh Campbell, sheriff of Ayr, obtained at the same time a remission for all treasons committed by them, in return for the good service done, or to be done to the realm, although it does not clearly appear what services could be meant.¹ An attempt was made to raise, by a land tax, a sum of money for the support of a thousand horsemen, to be placed for the defence of the borders under the Earl of Angus, which completely failed. The barons of Lothian declined either to pay the money or to serve under a leader whose honesty they doubted; and so universal was the suspicion of the treachery of the Douglasses, that when the regent repaired to Lauder, and issued his command for the immediate muster of the whole force of the realm, the country, throughout its various districts, refused to rise in arms. The commons dreaded a repetition of the flight from Coldingham,

represented this coalition as sincere. Not so, however, the *Diurnal of Occurrents*, p. 38, which gives the only accurate account of the siege of Coldingham, and the dispersion of the army. As to Buchanan, his narrative on this part of our history is so at variance with the truth, that it is little else than a classical romance.

¹ *Diurnal of Occurrents in Scotland*, p. 36.

and the barons adopted the expedient of entering into covenants with each other for their mutual defence against the continued inroads of the English.¹

Of all this, the effects were deplorable. During the contest for the regency, the border barons, whose duty it was to defend these districts, remained inactive; many border clans, at all times somewhat precarious in their allegiance, entered into the service of England, and assumed the red cross, as a badge of their desertion; others were compelled to purchase protection; whilst the English wardens insulted over the country, and became so confident in their superiority, that they contemplated its entire conquest even to the Forth, as a matter of no difficult attainment.

With these proud hopes, Sir Ralph Evre, and Sir Brian Layton, repaired to court; and in an interview with the king, explained to him a scheme for this purpose which, as a means of punishing the alleged perfidy of the Scots, met with his entire approval. As a reward for the uninterrupted success with which their various inroads had been attended, Evre obtained, it is said, a royal grant of all the country he should conquer in the Merse, Teviotdale, and Lauderdale, districts, of which a great part formed the hereditary property of the Earls of Douglas. The insolence of so premature an appropriation of his paternal estates, incensed Angus far

¹ Diurnal of Occurrents in Scotland, p. 37.

more than the indignity offered to his country ; and he is said to have sworn a great oath, that if Ralph Evre dared to act upon the grant, he would write his sasine or instrument of possession on his skin with sharp pens, and bloody ink. The English baron, however, was not of a temper to be deterred by threats, and soon after repaired to the borders with a force of five thousand men ; consisting of foreign mercenaries, English archers, and a body of seven hundred border Scots, who wore the red cross above their armour. With these they had recommenced their inroads, and even exceeded their former barbarity ; they burnt the Tower of Broomhouse, and in it its lady, a noble and aged matron, with her whole family. They penetrated to Melrose, which they left completely spoiled, and in ruins ; not sparing its noble Abbey, the burial place of the Earls of Douglas, whose tombs they ransacked and defaced with wanton sacrilege.

Deeply enraged at this new insult, Angus collected his vassals, and joining the governor, advanced to Melrose ; but they were surprised by a sudden attack of the English, and driven from their position with considerable slaughter. The cause of this new disaster is ascribed by an ancient chronicle, apparently a contemporary document, to the secret information furnished to the enemy by George Douglas ; and it is certain, that he was then in communication both with Sir Ralph Evre and his royal master ; but the sincerity of his bro-

ther, the earl, upon this occasion is not to be doubted; he acted in the true spirit of a feudal baron. The love of revenge, the desire to retaliate the insult offered to his house, burned inextinguishably strong in a bosom, which, for many years, had been a stranger to the love of his country; and Douglas, true only to himself, appeared for the moment to be true to Scotland. With these bitter feelings, he saw the English once more plunder Melrose, and commence their retreat to Jedburgh; whilst he and Arran, with a far inferior force, could only hang upon their rear, and watch their motions.

On reaching the Teviot, Evre, confident in his superior strength, which was more than five to one, encamped on a level moor or common above the village of Ancrum; whilst the Scots fell back to a neighbouring eminence, and hesitated whether, with so great a disparity, they should risk a battle. At this moment they were joined by Norman Lesly, master of Rothes, at the head of twelve hundred lancers; and soon after, Walter Scott, the veteran laird of Buccleugh, came up at full speed, with the news, that his followers were within an hour's march. It was resolved, with these reinforcements, to give battle to the enemy, who, during all this time, eagerly watched their motions; but, by the advice of Buccleugh, Arran abandoned the height which he occupied, and drew up in a level plain behind it, named

Peniel Heugh, where they were entirely concealed from the English; they then dismounted, and sent the horses with the camp boys to an eminence beyond the plain. These dispositions were intended to betray the English into the idea, that the Scottish army was in flight; and they succeeded. Rendered careless and confident by their long career of success, and anticipating a repetition of the combat at Coldingham, Sir Brian Layton, and Sir Robert Bowes, pushed on with the advance; whilst Sir Ralph Evre followed at full speed with the main battle, consisting of a thousand spears, with an equal number of archers and hacbutteers on each wing. The rapidity of their movement necessarily threw their ranks into some disorder; the horses were blown by their gallop up the hill; the infantry were breathless from eagerness to arrive on the same ground with their companions; and in this state, having surmounted the eminence, they discovered to their astonishment, instead of an enemy in flight, the compact serried phalanx of the Scots within a short distance of their own army. At this moment, a heron, disturbed by the troops, sprung from the adjacent marsh, and soared away over the heads of the combatants. "Oh!" said Angus, "that I had here my white goss hawk, we should then all 'yoke'¹ at once." To have halted, with the hope of restoring order to their ranks, would have been fatal; and Evre, relying on his superiority, charged

¹ To yoke—to set to—buckling closely together.

bravely and without delay. But the advantage of infantry over cavalry, of which the main body of the English was composed, never more strikingly evinced itself. The Scottish spears, an ell longer than the English, repulsed the van under Layton and Bowes, and pushed it back in confusion on the main battle, which, in its turn, was thrown upon the rereward. All was soon in confusion; and no efforts of their gallant leaders could prevent an entire rout. The setting sun shone full in the faces of the English; and their enemy had also the advantage of the wind, which blew the smoke of the harquibusses upon the columns of their adversaries and blinded them. On the first symptoms of flight, the six hundred Scottish borderers, who were in the service of Henry, throwing away their red crosses, joined their countrymen and with the merciless spirit, common to renegades, made a pitiless slaughter of their former friends. The neighbouring peasantry, who, from terror of the English, had not engaged in the battle, rose upon the flying enemy; and such was the deep desire of vengeance produced by the late ravages, that even the women took part in the pursuit, and calling out to their husbands and relatives, to "remember Broomhouse," encouraged them in the work of retribution. On the English side the loss was great, eight hundred being slain, and a thousand made prisoners; but that which afforded most satisfaction to the enemy was, the discovery amongst the dead bodies, of

Evre, and Layton, the leaders, who, for the last six months, had signalised themselves by such unexampled and cruel ravages. Amongst the captives were many knights and gentlemen; and the governor having first seized the camp equipage, which was left in Melrose, advanced to Coldingham, which the enemy evacuated; he then marched to Jedburgh, and recovered from the English, not only the city, but the greater part of the borders, which they had lately considered a conquered territory, making proclamation, that all who had been compelled to accept assurance from England, and assume the red cross, should, on returning to their allegiance, have a full indemnity.

On receiving news of this defeat, Henry expressed deep indignation against Angus, whom he accused of ingratitude, and threatened with the extremity of his resentment. Douglas's answer was characteristic;—"What," said he, "is our brother-in-law offended, because, like a good Scotsman, I have avenged upon Ralph Evre the defaced tombs of my ancestors; they were better men than he, and I ought to have done no less; and will he take my life for that? Little knows king Henry the skirts of Kernetable; I can keep myself there against all his English host.¹

¹ Godscroft's History of the House and Race of Douglas, vol. ii. p. 123. As a biographer, Hume of Godscroft, not unfrequently gives us characteristic traits, which I borrow from his pages when they bear the marks of truth. As an authentic historian, no one who has compared his rambling eulogistic story with authentic documents, will venture to quote him.

By this success, confidence was restored to the people, whose hearts had sunk under the unre-sisted ravages of the English ; whilst new strength was given to the party of the governor and the cardinal. It happened also, that, at this moment, they confidently expected the support of their continental allies. Francis the First, irritated by the late invasion of Henry, and the loss of Boulogne, was resolved to exert his utmost efforts against England ; he had detached the emperor from his alliance with that country, and now made preparations for its invasion by a powerful fleet ; whilst he determined to send an auxiliary force into Scotland to make a diversion in that quarter.

Of such resolutions, early advice was sent from France to Arran ; and the English monarch having become acquainted with these hostile intentions by a secret dispatch from George Douglas, began seriously to dread the consequences of raising so many enemies against him, and to be convinced, that his conduct towards Scotland had been inconsistent and impolitic. He was assured by Douglas, that so far from gaining his object, or promoting the treaties of peace and marriage, the rigorous measures which some reported he intended to use, would drive the people to despair.¹ These remonstrances

¹ Original Letter, Sir George Douglas to the king, from Lauder, February 25, 1544-5. Douglas asks Henry's pardon if he had offended him, states his great losses by the last invasion of the English army, and assures him, that the rigorous measures, which it was reported he intended to use towards Scotland, would be the means of driving the people to desperation. State Paper Office.

produced some effect, Henry prevailed on himself to try conciliation; and entrusted the Earl of Cassillis, one of his Solway prisoners, who had been long attached to the interests of England, with the management of the negociation. This nobleman repaired to the English court, February 28th, 1545; and having received his instructions, returned, after a short absence to Scotland. To prevail upon the Earls of Glencairn, Marshall, and the Douglasses, who professed never to have left the allegiance to the English king, to renew their active efforts in his service, was no difficult task; and the Earl of Angus, as a proof of his sincerity, resigned his office of lieutenant under Arran; but the governor, and the cardinal, were more difficult to manage. Huntly, Argyle, and the queen dowager, were absent; it was necessary they should be first consulted; and a convention of the nobility was appointed to be held on the 15th of April, for the purpose of deliberating on Henry's offers, and giving his envoy a final answer. In the meantime, the wardens were commanded to abstain from all hostilities; whilst, by the advice of Cassillis, the English monarch prepared his force for the invasion of the country, should matters not proceed according to his expectation. An army of thirty thousand men, under the command of the Earl of Hertford, was directed to be levied on the borders; and Sir Ralph Sadler, whose acquaintance with Scotland

had well fitted him for the office, was appointed treasurer at war, and political agent.¹

On the 17th of April, the convention was held at Edinburgh; Cassillis presented himself as the envoy of Henry, and acquainted the nobles, that if they consented to the treaties of peace and marriage, he was empowered to assure them that the king would forget what had past; and forbear to avenge the injuries which he had received.² It was the infirmity of this prince, that even in his efforts at conciliation, he assumed a tone of pride and superiority, which defeated his object. The injuries which he had received were little, in comparison with those which he had recently inflicted, and his power of avenging them was at best problematical. The influence too of the party of the governor, and the cardinal, was every day increasing; certain intelligence of the embarkation of the auxiliaries had been received from France; from Denmark they expected a fleet of merchantmen, laden with provisions; a friendly negociation had been opened with the emperor; and new importance had been conferred on Beaton by his receiving from Rome the dignity of legate *a latere* in Scotland.³

¹ Diurnal of Occurrents in Scotland, p. 38.

² Letter from the Privy Council to the Earl of Cassillis, in answer to his letter in cipher of 2nd April,—communicating the king's directions, April 10, 1545. State Paper Office.

³ Letter, Lord Lieutenant and Council of the North to the king, May 1, 1545,—stating that a Hull vessel had captured a

All these circumstances gave confidence to the political friends of the cardinal; whilst Henry's late invasion, and subsequent inroads, had created distrust and aversion, even in many of his former supporters. The consequence of this was natural, — almost inevitable; the negociation of Cassillis entirely failed; the influence of Beaton carried every thing before it in the convention; the treaties of peace and marriage were declared at an end; and it was resolved cordially to embrace the assistance of France.¹ The Earl instantly informed Henry of the complete defeat of his negociation; and, in the letter which conveyed the intelligence, advised the immediate invasion of Scotland with a strong force.

Mortified to be thus repulsed, Henry's animosity against Beaton became more vehement than before. To his energy and political talent he justly ascribed his defeat; and whilst he urged his preparations for war, he encouraged the Earl of Cassillis in organising a conspiracy for his assassination. The plot is entirely unknown, either to our Scottish or English historians; and now, after the lapse of nearly three centuries, has been discovered in the secret correspondence of the State Paper Office. It appears, that Cassillis had

Dutch ship laden with provisions for the Scots; and that, in one of the chests was found a commission from the Pope, appointing Beaton legate *a latere* in Scotland.

¹ Letter in Cipher, Cassillis to Henry the Eighth, April 20, 1545. State Paper Office.

addressed a letter to Sadler, in which he made an offer "for the killing of the cardinal, if his majesty would have it done, and promise, when it was done, a reward." Sadler showed the letter to the Earl of Hertford and the council of the North, and by them it was transmitted to the king.¹ Cassillis's associates, to whom he had communicated his purpose, were the Earls of Angus, Glencairn, Marshall, and Sir George Douglas; and these persons requested, that Forster, an English prisoner of some note, who could visit Scotland without suspicion, should be sent to Edinburgh to communicate with them on the design for cutting off Beaton. Hertford accordingly consulted the privy council upon his Majesty's wishes in this affair, requiring to be informed whether Cassillis's plan for the assassination of his powerful enemy was agreeable to the king, and whether Forster should be dispatched into Scotland. Henry conveying his wishes through the privy council, replied, that he desired Forster to set off immediately; to the other part of the query,

¹ Privy Council to the Earl of Hertford, dated May 30, 1545,—relative to the proposition of the Earl of Cassillis, for the assassination of cardinal Beaton. MS. State Paper Office. Also, letter from the Council of the North to the King's Majesty, May 21st, 1545. MS. State Paper Office. By the letter of 30th May, quoted above, it appears that the first resolution of the associated earls was to send a confidential envoy to meet and communicate with Sir Ralph Sadler at Alnwick. As to this purpose, however, they changed their mind, probably from the fear of incurring suspicion, and requested that Forster should be sent.

touching the assassination of the cardinal,—the answer of the privy council was in these words:—“ His majesty hath willed us to signify unto your lordship, that his highness reputing the fact not meet to be set forward expressly by his majesty, will not seem to have to do in it, and yet not misliking the offer, thinketh good, that Mr. Sadler, to whom that letter was addressed, should write to the earl of the receipt of his letter containing such an offer, which he thinketh not convenient to be communicated to the king’s majesty. Marry, to write to him what he thinketh of the matter; he shall say, that if he were in the Earl of Cassillis’s place, and were as able to do his majesty good service there, as he knoweth him to be, and thinketh a right good will in him to do it, he would surely do what he could for the execution of it, believing verily to do thereby not only an acceptable service to the king’s majesty, but, also a special benefit to the realm of Scotland, and would trust verily the king’s majesty would consider his service in the same; as you doubt not of his accustomed goodness to those which serve him, but he would do the same to him.”¹ In this reply, there was some address; Henry preserved, as he imagined, his regal dignity; and whilst he affected ignorance of the atrocious design, encouraged its execution, and shifted the whole responsibility upon his obsequious agents. On both points, the King’s commands were

¹ Lord Privy Council to Hertford, May 30, 1545. State Paper Office.

obeyed ; Sadler wrote to Cassillis, in the indirect manner which had been pointed out ; and Forster, in compliance with the wishes of the conspirators, was sent into Scotland, and had an interview with Angus, Cassillis, and Sir George Douglas ; the substance of which he has given in an interesting report now in the State Paper Office.¹ It is evident, from this paper, that both Angus and Cassillis were deterred from committing themselves on such delicate ground as the proposed murder of the cardinal, by the cautious nature of Sadler's letter to Cassillis, who, in obedience to the royal orders, had recommended the assassination of the prelate, as if from himself ; and had affirmed, though falsely, that he had not communicated the project to the king. These two earls, therefore, said not a word to the envoy on the subject ; although Cassillis, on his departure entrusted him with a letter in cipher for Sadler. Sir George Douglas, however, was less timorous, and sent by Forster a message to the Earl of Hertford in very explicit terms :—“ He willed me,” says the envoy, “ to tell my lord lieutenant, that if the king would have the cardinal dead ; if his grace would promise a good reward for the doing thereof, so that the reward were

¹ The Discourse of Thomas Forster, gentleman, being sent into Scotland by my lord lieutenant, to speak to the Earls of Cassillis, Glencairn, Anguisshe, Marshall, and George Douglas, being returned with the same to Dernton, the 4th July, 1545. MS. State Paper Office.

known what it should be, the country being lawless as it is, he thinketh that that adventure would be proved; for he saith, the common saying is, the cardinal is the only occasion of the war, and is smally beloved in Scotland; and then, if he were dead, by that means how that reward should be paid." Such was the simple proposal of Sir George Douglas, for the removal of his arch enemy; but, although the English king had no objection to give the utmost secret encouragement to the conspiracy, he hesitated to offer such an outrage to the common feelings of Christendom, as to set a price upon the head of the cardinal, and to offer a reward and indemnity to those who should slay him. For the moment, therefore afterwards, the scheme seemed to be abandoned by the earls, but it was only, to be resumed by Brunston.¹

¹ In the light which it throws upon the intrigues of the Douglasses and the state of parties in Scotland, the report of Forster is a paper of great historical value. It will be published in its entire state in the forthcoming volume of the State Papers; but an analysis of it, with a few brief extracts, may be interesting to the reader. It thus opens:—"The said Thomas Forster sayth, that according to my Lord Lieutenant's commandment, he entered Scotland at Wark, and so passed to his taker's house in Scotland, as tho he had repayed for his entree to save his lande, and declaring to his taker that he had occasion to speke with George Douglas, his taker was contented, according to the custome there, that he shuld go at his pleasure; whereupon he came to Dalkeith to George Douglas, and showed him th' occasion of his hither comyng to speake to him and th' Erll aforesaid, with message from my Lord Lieutenant and Master Sadleyr, who willed him to go to Douglas, where he would cause th' Erlls of Cassillis and Anguisse to mete hym, for he said he could not get them to Dalkeith without gret suspition. And

In the midst of these machinations for the removal of his enemies, and preparations for open war, important events had taken place in Scotland. Early in May, a French fleet having on board a body of three thousand infantry, and five

hereupon, he sayth, that going towards Douglas he met th' Erll of Anguisse at Dumfries, where, as he was hunting, he gave him welcome, saying he would give him hawkes and dogges, and caused him to pass the time with him that night; and on the morrowe brought hym with him to Douglas, and that afternoon sent for th' Erll of Cassillis, who, ryding all night, came thither the next day yerly in the mornyng, whereupon he and th' Erll of Anguisse went into a chamber together, and called the said Forster unto them, who then declared the occasion of his comyng, by whom he was sent, and the full of his instructions. As to the first article, they answered that they were glad he was come, and was welcome to them." To the second article, they say they indeed wanted Forster to come; and in reply to the question, how Henry's godly purpose for the peace and marriage may best be furthered, Cassillis answers that he is still the same true man to Henry as he was at his parting with his majesty. Angus equally promised his cordial assistance, and declared he would either *go to the field or stay at home, as Henry judged it best*, and would maintain, in the face of all Scotland, that the peace and the marriage were for the good of the realme of Scotland. Forster then desired them to state to him such matters as they had intended to communicate by the gentleman that should have met Mr. Sadleyr at Alnwick; upon which they briefly answered, that "the effect of that matter was none other than they had already declared;" but Cassillis added, "that such other matters as should be at the *convencion he would write it in cypher*, and send it to Mr Sadleyr," and so departed from them; and returning again to Dalkeith unto George Douglas, he said he declared to the said George all his conference with the foresaid Erls, requiring him to show him his opinion therein. Douglas promises to do so after the convention. Forster goes on to state, that Douglas went then to the convention, where he tarried seven days. On the return of Douglas from this convention, Forster asked the news, and what he would do for

hundred horse, under the command of the Sieur Lorges de Montgomerie, arrived off the west coast; but recollecting the device lately practised on their countrymen by the Earl of Lennox, this experienced officer was cautious of committing

the king's Majesty's advancement and godly affairs? Douglas answers, "that he will stand to it in all his power," the rather that he himself was one of them that "procured and promised the same, and that ther was never an honest man in Scotland that would be against that promise, for it was the doinge of all the nobles of Scotland, and the Governor's part was therein as deep as the rest of them."—Another thing agreed on at the convention was, that they would raise an army against the xxviiiith of July, and to have them upon Roslin Moor, three miles from Dalkeith, with a month's victuall, and so passing to invade England; by which tyme he saith the said Lorges Montgomerie hath undertaken on the French king's behalf, that th' army out of France by sea shall be ready to ayde them at their handes, or els at that time should invade in some other place of England. The said George Douglas told him also, that if my Lord Lieutenant thought mete th' army of Scotland were stayed, that then it should be well done to send some ships with diligence with three or four thousand men to ayde the gentlemen of the Isles, which would stay at home th' Erlls of Huntley and Argyle, and by that meanes he thinks it would stop the rest of th' army from coming forward; and if it is not so, then to prepare a great power of England to come to the borders against that time, which must come very strongly, for all the Lords and power of Scotland, as he sayth, will be wholly there, as they have promised; and by reason of th' encouragement of the Frenchmen and the fair largesses, that the French king hath promised them by Lorges Montgomerie, they are fully bent to fight as he sayth. But he saith, tho' that he must needs be also there with them, he will do them no good, but will do all that he can to stop them; and sayth, that if they may be stopped since they have made so gret braggis and avant to Lorges Montgomerie, it wold, as he thinketh, put away all the Commons' hearts from them."*

* The old spelling is not uniformly followed in the copy of this note.

himself by landing, till informed of the exact state of the country.¹ Being assured, however, that the French politics were still predominant, they disembarked at Dumbarton, and were received with much distinction; nor did the enthusiasm diminish when it was found they had brought a considerable sum of money for the emergencies of the war, a body guard of a hundred archers to wait on the governor's person, and the insignia of the Order of St. Michael for Angus, Huntly, and Argyle.² This favorable news the cardinal did not fail immediately to disseminate among his partizans;³ and a convention of the nobility being soon after held at Stirling, it was resolved, that the league with France should be maintained, and hostilities immediately commenced against England; but, with a great portion of the nobility these declarations were insincere. At this very moment Cassillis was organising his conspiracy for cutting off the cardinal; whilst his associates, Angus, Glencairn, and Sir George Douglas, had assured Forster, the English envoy, of their entire devotedness to his master. When the Scottish host, therefore, assembled, on the 9th of August, it was strong in apparent numbers, but weakened by treason and suspicion. From a force of thirty thousand men, with the veteran infantry of France, and a fine body of

¹ Intelligence by the Lord Wharton's espies, sent to the Earl of Hertford, June 11, 1545. State Paper Office.

² Diurnal of Occurrents, p. 39.

³ Intelligence of Lord Wharton's espies ut supra.

cavalry, including eighty barbed horse, something important was expected; and the people, whose feelings were strongly excited against England, looked with eager anxiety to the result; but they were miserably disappointed. The vanguard of the army was commanded by Angus; under him were the lords in the English interest, with the minor barons, who followed them; and their indisposition to hostilities completely shackled the efforts of the remainder of the army. England was indeed invaded, but the operations were feeble and disunited: Hertford had made excellent dispositions for the defence of the borders by his foreign mercenaries; the Spanish and Italian troops repelled the Scots with great gallantry; the preparations of many months led only to the sack of a few obscure villages, and the capture of some border strengths; and, after two days, the army of Scotland returned, to use the words of an ancient and authentic chronicle,—“through the deceit of George Douglas and the vanguard.”¹

It was on the 13th of August that this disastrous retreat took place, and, three days after, the Scottish lords in the interest of England addressed from Melrose a letter to Henry, in which they claimed credit for the total failure of the invasion, and advised the immediate advance of the Earl of Hertford, with an overwhelming force into the heart of the country, so well provided as to

¹ Diurnal of Occurrents, p. 40.

remain there for a lengthened period. They recommended him at the same time to march during the present harvest, and to publish a proclamation declaring that he came not to hurt the realm or any subject in it who would assist in promoting the peace and marriage between the two countries. The letter is a remarkable one, and affords a melancholy proof of the true character of the men, who, by our historians, are imagined to have, at that moment, entirely deserted the service of England.¹

The Earl of Hertford was sufficiently eager to obey these instructions, although to support a main army for any long period, and to follow the course pointed out by the Anglo-Scottish faction required greater resources than Henry could command, and was not agreeable to the impetuous

¹ State Paper Office, Letter, Hertford to Secretary Paget, enclosing the letter from the Scottish earls, August 25, 1545. The passage explaining the cause of the failure of the last invasion is curious, and completely corroborates the statement of the *Diurnal of Occurrents* quoted in the text, which statement is not to be found in any of our Scottish historians. "Further as to this last journey of ours it was advised by the queen, Cardinal, and this French captain Lorges Montgomerie. Huntly fortified this armye at his power; notwithstanding, all that they devised was stopped by us that are the king's friends." If the reader will take the trouble to turn to Maitland, vol. ii. p. 861, 862; or Lesly, p. 456, 457; or Ridpath's *Border History*, p. 552; or Buchanan, Book XV, ch. 28, he will discover how much the history of this important period has been mistaken and perverted. It was, perhaps, the discrepancy between the *Diurnal of Occurrents* and these writers which misled its editor into the idea that its first portion was composed from tradition and other imperfect sources. Yet it is the *Diurnal* which is right, whilst they are in the wrong.

spirit of the monarch. Preparations had been already made for the intended invasion, not only by land, but for a naval descent on the west coast. Negotiations were opened, through the Earl of Lennox, with Donald, Lord of the Isles and Earl of Ross; and this petty prince, with eighteen of his barons, disclaiming in proud language, all allegiance to Scotland, of which realm he described himself and his progenitors as the "auld enemies," entered willingly into the service of the English monarch, and bound themselves to assist Lennox with a force of eight thousand men.¹ Henry, who had been instructed by Glencairn and Douglas in the important policy of keeping Argyle and Huntly in their own country, by

¹ Orig. Commission, 23rd July, 1545, apud Ellencarne, from Donald, Lord of the Isles, and the Barons and Council of the Isles, to Rory Macalister, Bishop elect of the Isles, and Patrick Maclane to enter into a treaty with Matthew, Earl of Lennox. The document (State Paper Office) is a diplomatic curiosity; not one of the highland chieftains, eighteen in number, being able to write his name. To the celtic antiquary and genealogist, whose feet do not usually rest on such certain ground it may be interesting to give the names. They are Hector Maclane, Lord of Doward, John Macalister, Capitane of Clanranald; Rorye Macleod of Lewis; Alexander Macleod, of Dumbeggane; Murdoch Maclane, of Lochbuy; Angus Maconnill, brudir germane to James Maconnill; Alane Maclane, of Turloske, bruder germane to the Lord Maclane; Archibald Maconnill, capitane of Clan Houston; Alexander Mackeyn, of Ardnamurchane; Jhone Maclane, of Coll; Gilliganan Macneill, of Barray; Ewin Macinnon, of Straguhordill; Jhone Macquorre, of Ulway; Thom Maclane, of Ardgour; Alexander Ranaldsoun, of Glengarrrie; Angus Ranaldsoun, of Kuwdort; Donald Maclane, of Kengarrloch.

a diversion in the Isles, warmly welcomed the offers of the ocean prince, appointed him an annual pension, and encouraged him to assemble his forces. On the 18th of August, only two days after the retreat of the governor, the Lord of the Isles passed over to Knockfergus in Ireland with a fleet of a hundred and eighty galleys, and having on board a force of four thousand men. They are described in the original dispatch from the Irish privy council giving Henry notice of their arrival as “very tall men clothed for the most part in habergeons of mail, armed with long swords and long bows, but with few guns.”¹ To co-operate with the islesmen Henry commanded the Earl of Ormond to raise a body of two thousand kern and galloglasses, and appointed the Earl of Lennox to the chief command in the expedition, but at this moment Hertford, now ready to invade Scotland, requested the presence of the Scottish earl in his camp, and the western invasion was postponed till the termination of the campaign.²

On the 5th of September, the English commander assembled his army, and, having previously sent word to Cassillis, Glencairn, and the two Douglases that he expected they would join him with their vassals, he advanced to Alnwick, from

¹ Letter, Irish Correspondence, State Paper Office, Privy Council to the King, August 12th and 13th, 1545.

² August 23, 1545, Privy Council to Earl of Hertford; and August 27, 1545, Earl of Hertford and his Council to Secretary Paget. State Paper Office.

which rapidly pushing through Northumberland, he crossed the border and encamped before Kelso. The town, which was an open one, he occupied with ease, but the abbey held out and the Spanish mercenaries who assaulted it were repulsed by the garrison composed partly of monks. Hertford, however, brought up his ordnance, and a breach being effected, the church was carried, the steeple stormed, and its defenders put to the sword. In the mean time his friends, the Scottish earls, evaded his proposal of joining the army, and informed him by a secret messenger who brought a letter in cipher, that they could not without danger assemble their forces till acquainted more minutely with his plans.¹ No line of conduct could have been adopted more discreditable to themselves or more unhappy in its consequences to the people. Had they been bold and consistent in their adherence to England, their extensive estates would have been exempted from plunder, and the peasantry would have escaped through the desertion of their lords ; but their present conduct, whilst it brought all the evils, shared in none of the advantages of treachery, and only provoked Hertford to a more cruel and sanguinary retaliation. The lands of the potent house of Douglas lay principally in the districts now invaded. Melrose and

¹ Orig. in Cipher, State Paper Office, with the deciphered copy in the handwriting of Sir R. Sadler, then with the army, September 9, 1545, at Irvine. From the Earls of Angus, Cassillis, and Sir George Douglas to Hertford.

Driburgh were successively given to the flames; the villages, castles, and farm granges of the adjacent country rased and plundered; and the miserable inhabitants suffered the utmost extremities of war, of which it would be painful to recapitulate the common tale of havoc and desolation; Jedburgh was burnt, and fourteen villages in the neighbourhood. Hertford, in a dispatch to Henry, exultingly informed him it was the opinion of the border gentlemen so much damage had not been done in Scotland by fire for the last hundred years. Nay, so excessive was the cruelty that it shocked even the English borderers, and as they evinced a disposition to be lenient, an advanced guard of a hundred Irish was appointed to burn and spoil the villages in a more complete manner.¹

During these disgusting scenes the Scots were inactive. The experience of the last invasion had convinced the governor and the cardinal that Angus and his associates were more likely to betray than defend the country. Huntly and Argyle dreading the meditated attack of Lennox and the Lord of the Isles on the west coast, were detained in their own country, and after one abortive attempt to promote union, and resume hostilities, Arran appears to have abandoned the task in despair. Ten thousand men who were with difficulty assembled, entered England near Norham, burnt a single village, and through the counsel of

¹ Letter, Earl of Hertford and his Council to the king, Warkworth, September 18th, State Paper Office.

the Earl of Angus, on the first appearance of resistance, dispersed, and home.¹

The army of Hertford began now to suffer want in a country which they had reduced to a desert; and it was thought expedient to retreat. After reconnoitring Hume Castle which was found too strong to be carried by assault, the English commander swept in desolating progress through the Merse, burnt the towns and villages, raised the forts and peels, and, returning to Horton on the 23rd of September, dismissed his forces—placing his Italian and Spanish mercenaries in garrisons on the borders.² It appears from an original document that during this inroad, which only lasted fifteen days the destruction was dreadful, and sufficiently accounts for the deep and exasperated feelings of the Scottish people. The English burnt seven monasteries and religious houses, sixteen castles and towns, five market towns, two hundred and forty-three villages, thirteen mills, and three hospitals.³ Such were the arguments by which Henry endeavoured to persuade his neighbours, that he was solicitous for a peaceful matrimonial union between the two countries. During the invasion a characteristic trait of the English monarch occurred. Some French soldiers in the service of the Scots de-

¹ Diurnal of Occurrents, p. 40, corroborated by Orig. letter of Hertford and his Council, Sept. 8, 1545, State Paper Office.

² Earl of Hertford and Council to the king, Sept. 23, 1545. Horton, State Paper Office.

³ Statement of fortresses, towns, &c. burnt and destroyed during the expedition, State Paper Office.

served to Hertford, and the earl requested the king's advice whether they were to be received or trusted. His majesty, through his privy council, replied that it was scarcely good policy to give credit to any men of that nation with whom he had mortal war, unless they would evince their sincerity by some previous exploit. He recommended Hertford, therefore, if any greater number of Frenchmen offered themselves, to "advise them first to some notable damage or displeasure to the enemy;" and he particularised the "trapping or killing the cardinal, Lorges, the Governor, or some other man of estimation, whereby it can appear that they bear hearty good will to serve, which thing" continues the king, "if they shall have done, your lordship may promise them not only to accept the service, but also to give them such reward as they shall have good cause to be therewith right well contented."¹

After the retreat of Hertford, the governor held a parliament at Stirling, in which the Earl of Lennox and his brother the Bishop of Caithness were declared guilty of treason. The last meeting of the three estates had not been numerous, this was crowded by the nobles, and it was sarcastically said they came for land,² expecting a share in the division of the large estates of Lennox now forfeited to the crown. Argyle, whose services had

¹ Orig. Draft, in Secretary Petre's handwriting, Privy Council to Earl of Hertford, September 9, 1545, State Paper Office.

² Diurnal of Occurrents, p. 40.

been conspicuous, amid the desertion of the country by other noble houses, was rewarded with the largest share, whilst Huntly, another firm adherent of the government, received for his brother the bishoprick of Caithness, and a portion of the property of Lennox for himself.¹ It was determined, at the same parliament, that a force of a thousand men should be maintained for the defence of the marches, to be placed under the command of the bravest and most experienced border barons; and a tax of sixteen thousand pounds was directed to be levied on the three estates for their support, whilst an additional body of a thousand men was raised at the expense of France.² The cardinal, it was reported, meant to pass over to France with Lorges, the French commander, for the purpose of subsidising a much larger force for the continuance of the war, whilst he laboured to induce the queen mother, with her royal charge, to reside in his castle of St. Andrew's, gaining the governor Arran to his views upon this point by tempting him with the splendid prize already offered to his ambition, the marriage of the young queen to his eldest son.

This intelligence was communicated to Henry by a letter in cypher from his active and unscrupulous

¹ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. ii. pp. 458, 459. Diurnal of Occurrents, p. 41. Keith's Catalogue, p. 128.

² Diurnal of Occurrents, p. 41. The tax was to be raised conform to the Auld Taxations. * * Ilk pund land of auld extent eight shillings. Acts of Parliament, vol. ii. p. 460.

pulous correspondent, the Laird of Brunston (in a letter sent from Ormiston House, 6th October), and in the same dispatch he alluded darkly to his hopes that the intended journey of the cardinal to France would be cut short, assuring his royal employer that at no time were there more gentlemen desirous of doing him good service than at that moment.¹ He intimated in a subsequent letter to Lord Wharton, his wish to have a private meeting with the English warden, intreated that it might be kept secret, as a discovery might cost him both life and heritage, informed him that all his friends were ready whenever it pleased the king to command them, but stated that his majesty must be plain with them what he would have them to do—and explicit as to what they were to trust to on his part. In a letter of the same date from Brunston to the king, he requested a private interview with Sir R. Sadler, at Berwick, reiterated his injunction of secrecy, as his communications might affect his life, and promised to communicate such things as should be greatly to the advancing of his majesty's affairs.² It seems probable from these expressions that the plot for the assassination of the cardinal had been resumed, and as Brunston

¹ Letter in Cipher, Laird of Brunston to Lord Wharton, inclosed in a letter from the Earl of Hertford and Sir R. Sadler to Secretary Paget, October 20, 1545, State Paper Office. See extract in the Appendix.

² Letter in Cipher, with cotemporary decipher, Brunston to the King, Calder, October 20, 1545, State Paper Office. See extract in the Appendix.

directed the king to send his answer to Coldingham, then belonging to Sir George Douglas, we may presume that Angus, Cassillis, and the Scottish earls were acquainted with these proceedings. Unfortunately at this moment those invaluable documents, the letters in the State Paper Office, break off abruptly, perhaps we may add suspiciously: there is a hiatus from October to March 27th, an interval of five months, and we are compelled to trace the ravelled history of this obscure but interesting period, with such inferior guidance as is attainable elsewhere.

The intelligence lately received, that Beaton meditated a journey to France, and that the nobles had consented to the marriage of the young queen to the son of the governor, stimulated the English monarch to fresh exertions. Caerlaverock, Lochmaben, and Thrave, three castles of first rate strength and importance, were the property of his prisoner Lord Maxwell. To get possession of these, and garrison them as rallying points for his adherents, and to carry into execution the invasion of the west of Scotland by Lennox and the Lord of the Isles, were the two projects which engaged Henry's attention. Lord Maxwell, like his other brethren, had been at first kindly treated by the king on the condition of furthering his projects; but his conduct was suspicious and vacillating; he possessed not the greatness of mind to remain in durance and continue faithful to his country, whilst he hesitated to devote himself exclusively to England. Threat-

ened with being remanded to the Tower as a punishment for his repeated deceit, he was reduced to despair, offered to serve under Hertford with a red cross on his armour to show that he was a true Englishman, and at last purchased his return to Scotland at the price of the delivery of Caerlaverock.¹ But misfortune pursued him; early in November the governor and the cardinal attacked and stormed this fortress, whilst Lochmaben and Thrave, held by his sons, experienced a similar fate, and Maxwell himself being taken with his English confederates, was imprisoned in Dumfries.

For this disappointment Henry comforted himself with the hopes of success in the projected expedition against the west of Scotland. This prince, however, was either too precipitate or too dilatory.

Donald, Lord of the Isles, who in August had passed over to Ireland with a potent fleet, in vain expected the arrival of Lennox, then absent with the English army in Scotland; and after a sojourn of some months returned to find an obscure grave in his own dominions. He bequeathed, however, his affection to the English king, and the more substantial hope of inheriting his pension, to his successor in the sovereignty of the Isles, James Macconnell, Lord of Dunewaik; and Lennox having received information from Glencairn,

¹ Earl of Hertford, Bishop of Durham, and Sir R. Sadler to Secretary Paget, July 29, 1545, State Paper Office. Diurnal of Occurrences, p. 41.

that the time was favourable for the recovery of the castle of Dumbarton, passed rapidly over to Ireland, opened a communication with the new Lord of the Isles, dispatched his brother to practice on the fidelity of the constable, and taking the command of a body of two thousand men which had been levied by the Earl of Ormond, sailed from Dublin on the 17th of November, with a formidable squadron.¹ Such an armament, according to the opinion expressed by the Irish Privy Council, had not left Ireland for the last two hundred years.²

Yet, so great was the activity of Arran and the cardinal, that all these high hopes and preparations were destined to prove abortive. It appears that the arrival of Lennox's brother, the bishop of Caithness, and the admission of this prelate into the castle had alarmed them. Stirling of Glorat, the constable, received Caithness with distinction; yet, as he had already refused to deliver the fortress to Lennox, he now declared that he would hold it out against all till his mistress the queen was of age to demand it for herself. It was closely besieged by Arran, Huntly, and Argyle; but having defied their utmost efforts, the cardinal

¹ The 17th this present month of November, the Earl of Lennox, together with th' Erle of Ormond, toke their journey out of your porte of Dublin, accompanied with 2,000 men." Letter, Privy Council of Ireland to the king, 19th November, 1545, State Paper Office.

² Orig. Letter, Irish Privy Council to the king, 19th November 1545, State Paper Office.

and Huntly, who knew that the resolution of Scottish barons in that age was sooner moved by interest than by force, began to tamper with the ex-bishop and the constable, and succeeded in corrupting them. Caithness, bribed by the promise of his restoration to the see he had lost, proved false to his brother, and Stirling, for a high reward, was induced to deliver the fortress, in that age deemed impregnable, into the hands of the governor.¹ Henry's last hope was thus destroyed, and the armament of Lennox and Ormond, probably informed on their passage of the disastrous result, does not appear to have even attempted a descent. Whether it retraced its course to Dublin, or, as on a former occasion, steered for Bristol, is not easily discoverable. It is, indeed, a curious illustration of the imperfection and carelessness of our general historians both English and Scottish, that in neither the one nor the other do we find the slightest mention of a maritime expedition, which, by the letters of the Privy Council, seems in its outfit to have exhausted the exchequer and military resources of Ireland.

In his first invasion of Scotland, Lennox had lost the powerful assistance of the Islemen by his delay, in this last expedition he was deprived of it by precipitation. Had he waited for the arrival in Ireland of his envoy Colqhoun, whom he had sent to the Isles, he might have met with better success. James Macconnell, now Lord of the

¹ Lesly, Hist. p. 457,

Isles, inherited all the animosity of his predecessor against Scotland, and as soon as the unsettled state of his remote dominions permitted, opened a negotiation with the English monarch, and entered warmly into his views. He proposed to Henry that Lennox should be sent with an army to the Isle of Sanday beside Kentire, where he promised to join him with the whole strength of his kinsmen and allies; with Alane Maclane, of Giga, his cousin, the Clanranald, Clancameron, Clankayn, and his own surname or clan both north and south.¹ To these offers of this potent insular prince, the reply of Henry does not appear. They did not reach him, indeed, till the 15th February, 1545-6, and before he had time to open a negotiation it is probable that the attention of the monarch was engrossed by the extraordinary events which took place in Scotland.

To explain these, it will be necessary to look back for a few moments to the progress of the reformed opinions in that country. Notwithstanding the utmost exertions of the cardinal, and the check which they had received from the apostacy of the governor, the doctrines of the Reformation had continued, since the last cruel executions at Perth, to make a very perceptible progress. By many of those nobles, whom we have found in secret communication with England, they were

¹ Privy Council of Ireland to the Privy Council of England, 16th February, 1545, with the Lord of the Isles' letter enclosed, State Paper Office.

openly professed; the Earls of Cassillis, Glencairn, and Marshall, the Lords Maxwell and Somerville, Crichton, Laird of Brunston, with whose intrigues we are familiar, Cockburn of Ormiston, Sandelands of Calder, Douglas of Long Niddry, and many other barons and gentlemen declared their conviction of their truth, condemned with just indignation the zeal which had kindled the flames of persecution in the country, and found an argument for the matrimonial alliance with England, in the support it must give to those who earnestly desired to see a purer faith and a more primitive worship established at Scotland. This forms the best ground for their apology in their intrigues with Henry, and their designs for the subjection of the country to England; although it is not to be concealed, that in their secret correspondence with the English monarch, the establishment of true religion is rarely alluded to as a motive of action.

In those early days of the Reformed Church its sincere converts had arisen, with few exceptions amongst the religious orders themselves, or from the middle and lower classes of the people, men not wholly illiterate, as they have been unjustly represented, but who were led to the study of the Scriptures by their love of the truth; and over whose motives no suspicion of selfishness or of interest can be thrown. When such persons were dragged before the ecclesiastical tribunals, and refused to purchase their lives at the price of a recantation, the spectacle exhibited

by their death compelled even the most indifferent spectator to some enquiry; and these enquiries happily led, in many cases, to conviction and conversion. Neither, during the whole of the period of which we now speak, were men exposed to such severities of persecution: Arran himself, the governor of the kingdom, was at one time a convert; and so long as he continued the profession of the reformed opinions, the Scriptures, under the authority of Parliament, were openly read, the gospel preached by Rough and Williams within his household, and the books of the most eminent reformers allowed to be imported into the country. His return, however, to the Romish church, produced a melancholy change; and the influence acquired over his mind by Hamilton, the abbot of Paisley, had the worst effects upon the infant Reformation; his preachers, as we have seen, were dismissed; the professors of the new opinions discountenanced, and persecuted; the cardinal and his party artfully represented all innovators in religion as enemies to their country, — an argument, to which the conduct of the Earls of Cassillis, Glencairn, and the Douglasses, gave much force; it was deemed impossible that a man should be at the same time a friend to the independence of Scotland, and a friend to the independence of the human mind; the slender light which had begun to dawn, was suddenly extinguished, and the people were compelled once more to submit themselves to those blind guides, who were often

remarkable for little else than their ignorance and licentiousness. The Romish church in Scotland, had indeed, in former times, been distinguished by some men who combined profound learning with a primitive simplicity of faith. Even in this age it could boast of its scholars and poets ; but at the period of which we now speak, its character for sanctity of manners, ecclesiastical learning, or zeal for the instruction of the people in the word of life, did not rank high ; and the example of its head and ruler, Beaton, a prelate stained by open profligacy, and remarkable for nothing but his abilities as a statesman and politician, was fitted to produce the worst effects upon the great body of the inferior clergy.

Such was the state of things, when in July, 1543, George Wishart, commonly known by the name of the Martyr, returned to Scotland, in the company of those commissioners, whom we have seen dispatched for the negociation of the marriage treaty with England.¹ Of his early history little is known with certainty : it is probable, that he was the son of James Wishart of Pittarro, justice clerk to James the Fifth ; and as he was patronised in youth by John Erskine of Dun, well known as one

¹ This date of his arrival is important, as it marks the commencement of his preaching, and has been mistaken by Knox, and all our ecclesiastical historians. All are agreed that Wishart arrived with the commissioners, and they certainly arrived in the interval between the 16th and the 31st of July, 1543. This may be seen by comparing Sadler, vol. i. p. 235, with pp. 242, 243—245.

of the earliest enemies of the Romish church, to him he may have owed his instructions in the principles of the reformation. Erskine was provost of Montrose; and here Wishart first became known as master of a school, where he evinced his zeal and learning, by an attempt to instruct his pupils in Greek, as the original language of the New Testament: this exposed him to persecution; he fled to England, preached at Bristol against the worship and mediation of the Virgin; and being condemned for that alleged heresy, openly recanted his opinions, and burnt his faggot in the church of St. Nicholas in that city. This happened in 1538; his history, during the three following years is little known; but we again find him in England, and at Cambridge in 1543. There his character was marked by a devotion slightly tinged with ascetism, but deep and sincere, by his ample charities to the poor, his meekness to his brethren and pupils, and the universality of his learning; on the other hand, to such as despised his instructions, there was about him a zeal and severity of reproof, which irritated the wicked, and sometimes even exposed his life to danger. Such, at least, is the description given of him by an affectionate pupil, who had spent a year under his tuition; and it is confirmed by Knox, his early disciple.

It may easily be imagined, that the appearance at this time of such a man in Scotland was calculated to produce important effects. On his return, his chief supporters were the Earls of Casillis and

Glencairn, the Earl Marshall, Sir George Douglas, and the Lairds of Brunston, Ormiston, and Calder. Protected by their presence and influence, he preached in the towns of Montrose, Dundee, Perth, and Ayr, inveighing against the errors of popery, and the profligacy of the churchmen, with a severity and eloquence which made frequent converts, and led in some cases to acts of popular violence. At Dundee, the houses of the Black and Grey Friars were destroyed¹; similar attacks were attempted, but suppressed in the capital; and, when a regard for the preservation of peace and order induced the civil authorities to interfere, Wishart did not hesitate to threaten them with those denunciations of coming vengeance, by some writers pronounced prophetic; but for which there is no evidence that their author claimed this distinction. He enjoyed, it is to be remembered, the confidential intimacy, nay, we have reason to believe, that his councils influenced the conduct of Cassillis, Glencairn, Brunston, and the party which were now the advisers of Henry's intended hostilities, a circumstance which will perfectly account for the obscure warnings of the preacher without endowing him with inspiration.²

¹ Hamilton Papers quoted by Chalmers, *Life of Mary*, vol. ii. p. 403.

² It was a little before the 4th of September, 1543, that the riots took place at Dundee; and, though Knox does not give the date, we may presume, with a near approach to certainty, that it was at this time Wishart was interdicted from preaching in that city. Now, a week only before this, Cassillis, Glencairn, Angus, and

From the time of his arrival in the summer, 1543, for more than two years, Wishart appears to have remained in Scotland, protected by the barons, who were then in the interest of Henry, and who favored the doctrines of the Reformation. Of his personal history during this period, little is known. He continued his denunciations of the Romish superstitions, and inveighed with so much eloquence against the corrupt lives of the churchmen, that, incurring the extreme odium of Beaton, he is said to have twice escaped the plots which this unscrupulous prelate had laid for his life.¹ It was during this interval, as we have already seen, that Henry the Eighth encouraged the conspiracy of Brunston, Cassillis, Glencairn, and others, to assassinate his enemy the cardinal: of the existence of the plots against his life, Beaton was, to a certain degree, aware, and looking with suspicion on Wishart, not only as a disseminator of forbidden doctrines, but the friend of his most mortal ene-

Maxwell, with all their adherents, were mustering their forces for a great effort, and had advised Henry the Eighth to send a main army into Scotland, Sadler, vol. i. p. 278—280; whilst the Laird of Brunston, Wishart's great friend and protector, was to be sent on a mission to that monarch from the governor. The preacher thus lived in the intimacy of those who knew that a visitation of fire and sword was already determined on Scotland; and he naturally, perhaps justifiably, availed himself of that knowledge to make a salutary impression on his hearers.

¹ It ought to be stated, that, in support of this assertion, we have no evidence from original or contemporary letters.

mies, he earnestly laboured to apprehend him. Of all this the future martyr was so well advised from the spies of the English party, that he repeatedly alluded to his approaching fate. Yet for a considerable time, he escaped every effort made against him—nor was this surprising. When he preached, it was surrounded by mail-clad barons, and their armed retainers: since the time his life had been attempted, a two-handed sword was carried before him by some tried follower, and he himself, though generally meek and humble, showed occasional outbreakings of a courage and fire, which marked the education of a feudal age.

At length his anticipations were accomplished. Being at Dundee, he received a message from the Earl of Cassillis and the gentlemen of Kyle and Cunningham, requesting him to meet them in Edinburgh, where they intended to make interest that he should have a public disputation with the bishops; Wishart, obeying the summons, travelled to the capital, but his friends not having met him as they promised, he kept himself concealed for some days. He could not, however, restrain his desire to address the people; and being protected by the barons of Lothian, many of whom had then embraced the reformed opinions, he preached publicly at Leith, and afterwards at Inveresk, where Sir George Douglas declared his approbation of the doctrine, and his resolution to defend the person of the teacher. It was at this time, also, that

John Knox, already in middle life, became deeply affected by his instructions, and eagerly attached himself to his society.¹

During these transactions, the governor and the cardinal arrived in Edinburgh; and Wishart's friends, Crichton of Brunston, and Cockburn of Ormiston, considering his residence at Leith unsafe, removed him to West Lothian, where he remained concealed, in expectation of the arrival of Cassillis.² It is possible that the Martyr was ignorant of the true character of Brunston,—a dark and busy intriguer, who, for more than two years, had been organising a conspiracy for the assassination of the cardinal. But, if Wishart knew nothing of this, Beaton, as we have seen, was aware of the escapes he had made, and the snares still preparing against him; and when he heard that the preacher was in the neighbourhood, living under the protection of Brunston, waiting for the arrival of Cassillis, who had also offered to assassinate him, and about to hold a meeting with his enemies at Edinburgh, we are not to be surprised that he determined on his instant apprehension. That the future martyr knew his danger is certain, for he alluded to it: Cassillis had failed to meet him; the power of his enemies was increasing; his congregations began to fall away, yet he resolved, amid all discouragements, once more to address the people, and, in his last

¹ Knox's History, p. 52.

² Spotswood's History. M'Crie's Life of Knox, vol. i. pp. 42—78.

and most remarkable sermon, delivered at Haddington, alluded to the miseries about to fall upon the country. He then took a solemn farewell of his audience, and set out for the house of Ormiston, accompanied by Brunston, Sandilands of Calder, and Cockburn of Ormiston. At this moment Knox pressed to his side, and eagerly desired to accompany him, offering to bear the two-handed sword, as he was wont; but Wishart affectionately dismissed him. "Nay," said he, "Return to your pupils, one is sufficient for a sacrifice." At Ormiston that night he appeared unusually cheerful, addressed the friends assembled round him, after supper, taking for his subject the death of God's children, and, after having sung a psalm, retired to rest. At midnight the house was surrounded by a party of soldiers; a loud voice from without, which was immediately recognised as that of the Earl of Bothwell, summoned its inmates to surrender; and Wishart, awakening with the clang of arms in the court, at once apprehended the cause, and resolved to deliver himself.¹ Resistance, indeed, would have been hopeless: the cardinal, by whom Bothwell had been sent, was within a mile at the head of five hundred men, and Wishart, after an assurance that his life and person should be safe, surrendered himself to his captors. In the confusion, Brunston escaped to the neighbouring woods, whilst Cockburn and Sandilands were seized, and shut up in the

¹ Knox's History, pp. 53—54.

castle of Edinburgh. Meanwhile, Bothwell carried his prisoner to Hailes, his own residence, and, for some time, appeared resolved to keep his promise; but, at last, the incessant importunity of Beaton, and the expectation of a high reward, got the better of his resolution, and the mean and mercenary baron delivered his victim into the hands of the cardinal.¹

Having secured him, Beaton was not of a temper to hesitate in his measures, or adopt a middle course. He summoned a council of the bishops and dignified clergy to meet at St. Andrew's; requested the governor to nominate a judge whose presence might give a civil sanction to their proceedings; and, being refused by the timidity or humanity of Arran, determined to proceed on his own authority.² The alleged heretic was immediately arraigned before the spiritual tribunal, and defended his opinions meekly but firmly, and with a profound knowledge of Scripture. He appealed to the word of God as the sole rule by which he was guided in the doctrines he had taught the people; as he was ready to admit all its precepts, so was he bound, he declared, to refuse and deny every thing which it condemned, whilst he deemed of little consequence such points as it left in obscurity. He maintained his right to preach, notwithstanding his excommunication by the church, and contended that any man, with fervent faith, and a sufficient knowledge of Scripture, might be a teacher of

¹ Spotswood's History, p. 79.

² Lesly, p. 191. Knox's History, pp. 55-6.

the word of life. He declared the insufficiency of outward ceremonies to salvation when the heart was unaffected, derided auricular confession, and admitted only such sacrament as were recorded in Scripture. Of fasting he warmly approved; upheld the Lord's Supper as a divine and comfortable institution; maintained the necessity of our fully understanding the vows taken for us in our baptism; condemned the invocation of saints, and the doctrine of purgatory as unscriptural; and asserted his belief, that, immediately after death, the soul would pass into a state of immortal life and unfading felicity. Whilst he defended his own creed, supporting it by a constant reference to Scripture, he did not hesitate to stigmatize the doctrine of his opponents in unmeasured terms; pronouncing it pestilential, blasphemous, and abominable, not proceeding from the inspiration of God, but the suggestions of the devil." The result of all this was easy to be anticipated; Wishart was found guilty of heresy, and sentenced to be burnt. The trial took place at St. Andrew's; and no time was lost in carrying the sentence into effect.¹

On the 28th of March, he was led from the prison, with a rope about his neck, and a large chain round his middle, to the place of execution, in front of the castle, which was the archiepiscopal palace of the cardinal. Here a scaffold had been raised, with a high stake firmly fixed in the midst of it. Around it were piled bundles of dry

¹ Knox's History, pp. 59—66, inclusive.

faggots; beside them stood an iron grate containing the fire, and near it the solitary figure of the executioner. Nor did it escape the observation of the dense and melancholy crowd which had assembled, that the cannon of the fortress were brought to bear directly on the platform, whilst the gunners stood with their matches beside them;—a jealous precaution, suggested, perhaps, by the attempt of Duncan to deliver the martyr Hamilton, and which rendered all idea of rescue in this case perfectly hopeless. On arriving at the place, Wishart beheld these horrid preparations, which brought before him the agony he was to suffer, with an unmoved countenance; mounted the scaffold firmly, and addressed a short speech to the people, in which he exhorted them not to be offended at the word of God, by the sight of the torments which it seemed to have brought upon its preacher, but to love it, and suffer patiently for it any persecution which the sin of unbelieving men might suggest.¹ He declared, that he freely forgave all his enemies, not excepting the judges who had unjustly condemned him. The executioner came up to him at this moment, fell on his knees, and begged his forgiveness with much earnestness, as he was not guilty of his death: “Most willingly do I tender it,” said Wishart, and kissed him—“Now be of good courage, my heart, and do thine office; thou hast received a token that I forgive thee.” He then knelt down

¹ Knox, p. 64. Spotswood, p. 82.

and prayed audibly:—"O thou Saviour of the world, have mercy on me; Father of Heaven, into thy hands I commit my spirit." Having thrice repeated these words, he arose from his knees, and declared, without any perceptible emotion, that he was ready. The hooks were then fixed in the iron chain which was girt round his loins; and being raised on the gibbet, and the faggots kindled, he was first strangled by the rope, which was pulled tightly round his neck, and then consumed to ashes.¹

It was impossible for the people to behold unmoved so cruel an execution. It was remembered also, that the governor had refused his concurrence,—that the sanction of the civil authority had been withheld; and the fate of Wishart was pronounced unjust and illegal. That many of his opinions were such as the Church deemed heretical could not be denied; but men had now begun to appeal to the word of God, as the test of the truth; and to be subjected to such inhuman torments for the declaration of its precepts, was esteemed monstrous. The courage, meekness, and patience with which the martyr had borne his sufferings, produced a deep effect, and the invariable results of persecution were soon discernible in a spirit of increasing investigation, a revulsion from the tyranny of power, and a steady progress towards the truth.

But amid lamentations for their favorite preacher,

¹ Knox's History, pp. 68-9. Spotswood's History, p. 82.

deeper feelings were mingled; whispers of revenge began to circulate amongst the people; hints were thrown out, that God would not long suffer such cruelty to go unpunished; and, in those days of ignorance, when the truth was only beginning to dawn upon the darkness and ferocity of feudalism, an opinion began to be entertained, that the example of the Old Testament heroes, in cutting off a determined persecutor, was not unworthy of imitation. Such sentiments were not lost upon those men, who, under the influence of far baser motives, had, as we have seen, already organised a conspiracy for the assassination of the Cardinal. Cassillis, Glencairn, Sir George Douglas, Crichton of Brunston, with the Laird of Grange, and the Master of Rothes, had been prevented by various causes from accomplishing their purpose; the difficulty of binding Henry the Eighth to a direct promise of reward, and the discernment of Beaton, who, although he could not wholly discover, detected the working of some dark purpose against his life, had interrupted and balked the authors of the plot; and they hailed the feelings excited by the fate of Wishart, as a new means placed in their hands for the accelerating the catastrophe which they so ardently desired.

With the people Beaton had formerly been popular, as the determined enemy of England; but they now openly inveighed against his cruelty. John Lesly, brother of the Earl of Rothes, did not hesitate to declare, in public, that he would have blood for blood; and his nephew, Norman Lesly, with

Kirkaldy of Grange, had entered into a close correspondence with England.¹ With these, others of inferior name, but of higher honesty, were associated; and it cannot be doubted, that some men, who, before the death of the martyr, would have spurned at any proposal of an association with persons whose motives were so mercenary, were induced, after that event, to applaud, and even to join in their attempt. Of all these circumstances, Brunston and his friends were not slow to avail themselves: nor are we to forget, that if their minds had been already made up on the necessity of ridding themselves of the cardinal, the desire of avenging the fate of their friend must have whetted their slumbering purpose to new activity.

It is probable that Beaton, naturally presumptuous, disregarded any open threats, as the ebullition of impotent resentment; the voice of his flatterers amongst the clergy declared, that his salutary severity had saved the church; he was strong in the alliance of France; the schemes of the English faction had latterly been unsuccessful; and it is said, that, adopting a practice common in that age, he had strengthened himself by procuring bonds of manrent from Norman Lesly, and many of the most powerful nobles. Soon after the death of Wishart, he took a progress into Angus, and was present at the marriage of one of his natural daughters, Margaret Bethune, to David Lindsay, Master of Crawford, which was celebrated with great magnificence at

¹ Knox's History, p. 70. Spetswood's History, p. 82.

Finhaven Castle, the prelate bestowing upon the bride a dowry little inferior to that of a princess.¹

When absent on this festive occasion, intelligence was brought, that Henry the Eighth was urging forward his preparations for a new invasion, and he hurried to Fife, with the object of fortifying his castle of St. Andrew's, which he dreaded might be made a principal point of attack, and of procuring the barons, whose estates were contiguous to the coast, to strengthen it against the enemy. In the last invasion, the country, without a blow, had been abandoned to indiscriminate devastation, and having resolved to prevent a repetition of such disgrace, he summoned a meeting of the neighbouring gentry to consult on the best means for the defence of the kingdom.

In the midst of these exertions, he seems to have forgotten the secret enemies by whom he was surrounded, whilst they continued more warily than before to hold correspondence with England. In his last letters, the Laird of Brunston, whose mortal enmity to Beaton has been amply shown, complained to Lord Wharton, that the King of England was neither sufficiently definite in his commands, nor explicit in his promises of reward; but he expressed, at the same time, the readiness of his friends to serve the king, his wish to have a meeting with Lord Wharton in the most secret manner, as a discovery might cost him both life and heritage, and his fervent expectation, that although Beaton now intended

¹ Knox's History, p. 70.

a voyage to France, it would be cut short.¹ There seems, however, reason to believe, that, although the designs for the assassination of the prelate had been long maturing, and were thus gradually gathering round him, a private quarrel between him and Norman Lesly, precipitated their accomplishment. This young baron, known by the name of the Master of Rothes, had resigned to Beaton, on the promise of a valuable equivalent, the estate of Easter Wemyss in Fife.² In the meeting at St. Andrew's, he claimed the stipulated reward, and receiving what he deemed an equivocal reply, remonstrated with freedom; warm words followed: the cardinal complained of insulted dignity; and Norman answering with scorn, departed in deep wrath. Repairing to his uncle, John Lesly, he complained of the injury he had sustained, and both were of opinion, that after what had passed, delay would be dangerous. Messages were accordingly sent to the Laird of Grange, and others whose readiness to join in the attempt had, we may presume, been already ascertained; and it was determined, that the murder should be committed without delay.

On the evening of the 28th of May, Norman Lesly came, with only five followers, to St. Andrew's,

¹ At this moment (20th October, 1545) those invaluable guides, the State Papers, unfortunately fail us, and the rest of the history of Beaton's death is to be gathered from less authentic sources. That these friends of Brunston, so willing to obey the commands of Henry, were the same men who had formerly offered, through Brunston, to slay the cardinal, there seems little reason to doubt.

² Spotswood's History, p. 82.

and rode, without exciting suspicion, to his usual inn. William Kirkaldy of Grange was there already; and they were soon joined by John Lesly, who took the precaution of entering the town after nightfall, as his appearance, from his known enmity to Beaton, might have raised alarm. Next morning, at day-break, the conspirators assembled in small detached knots, in the vicinity of the castle; and the porter having lowered the drawbridge to admit the masons employed in the new works, Norman Lesly and three men with him passed the gates, and inquired if the cardinal was yet awake? This was done without suspicion; and as they were occupied in conversation, James Melville, Kirkaldy of Grange, and their followers, entered unnoticed: but, on perceiving John Lesly, who followed, the porter instantly suspected treason; and, springing to the drawbridge, had unloosed its iron fastening, when the conspirator Lesly anticipated his purpose by leaping across the gap. To dispatch him with their daggers, cast the body into the fosse, and seize the keys of the castle, employed but a few minutes; and all was done with such silence as well as rapidity, that no alarm had been given. With equal quietness the workmen who laboured on the ramparts were led to the gate, and dismissed; Kirkaldy, who was acquainted with the castle, then took his station at a private postern, through which alone any escape could be made; and the rest of the conspirators going successively to the apartments of the different gentlemen who formed the prelate's household, awoke them, and threaten-

ing instant death, if they spoke, led them, one by one, to the outer wicket, and dismissed them unhurt. In this manner a hundred workmen and fifty household servants were disposed of by a handful of men, who, closing the gates, and dropping the portcullis, were complete masters of the castle.¹ Meanwhile Beaton, the unfortunate victim, against whom all this hazard had been encountered, was still asleep; but awakening and hearing an unusual bustle, he threw on a night-gown, and drawing up the window of his bedchamber, inquired what it meant. Being answered that Norman Lesly had taken the castle, he rushed to the private postern; but, seeing it already guarded, returned speedily to his apartment, seized his sword, and, with the assistance of his page, barricaded the door on the inside with his heaviest furniture. John Lesly now coming up, demanded admittance. "Who are you?" said the Cardinal. "My name," he replied, "is Lesly." "Is it Norman?" asked the unhappy man, remembering probably the bond of manrent; "I must have Norman; he is my friend." "Nay, I am not Norman," answered the ruffian, "but John, and with me ye must be contented;" upon which he called for fire, and was about to apply it to the door, when it was unlocked from within. The conspirators now rushed in; and Lesly and Carmichael throwing themselves furiously upon their victim, who earnestly implored

¹ Knox's History, pp. 71-2. Letter, James Lindsey to Lord Wharton.—State Paper Office.—See Appendix.—Remarks on the murder of Beaton.

mercy, stabbed him repeatedly. But Melville, a milder fanatic, who professed to murder, not from passion, but religious duty, reproved their violence: "This judgment of God," said he, "ought to be executed with gravity, although in secret;" and presenting the point of his sword to the bleeding prelate, he called on him to repent of his wicked courses, and especially of the death of the holy Wishart, to avenge whose innocent blood they were now sent by God. "Remember," said he, "that the mortal stroke I am now about to deal, is not the mercenary blow of a hired assassin, but the just vengeance which hath fallen on an obstinate and cruel enemy of Christ and the Holy Gospel." On his saying this, he repeatedly passed his sword through the body of his unresisting victim, who sunk down from the chair to which he had retreated, and instantly expired.¹

The alarm had now risen in the town; the common bell was rung; and the citizens, with their provost, running in confused crowds to the side of the fosse, demanded admittance, crying out, that they must instantly speak with my lord cardinal. They were answered from the battlements that it would be better for them to disperse, as he whom they called for could not come to them, and would not trouble the world any longer. This, however, only irritated them the more, and being urgent that they would speak with him, Norman Lesly reproved them as unreasonable fools, who desired an audience of a

¹ Knox's History, pp. 71-2. Lesly, p. 191.

dead man ; and dragging the body to the spot, hung it by a sheet over the wall, naked, ghastly, and bleeding from its recent wounds. "There," said he, "there is your God ; and now that ye are satisfied, get you home to your houses," a command which the people instantly obeyed.¹

Thus perished Cardinal David Beaton, the most powerful opponent of the reformed religion in Scotland—by an act which some authors, even in the present day, have scrupled to call murder. To these writers the secret and long continued correspondence of the conspirators with England was unknown : a circumstance, perhaps, to be regretted, as it would have spared some idle and angry reasoning. By its disclosure we have been enabled to trace the secret history of these iniquitous times, and it may now be pronounced, without fear of contradiction, that the assassination of Beaton was no sudden event, arising simply out of indignation for the fate of Wishart ; but an act of long projected murder, encouraged, if not originated, by the English monarch ; and, so far as the principal conspirators were concerned, committed from private and mercenary considerations.

¹ Spotswood's History, p. 83.