

HISTORY
OF
SCOTLAND.

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P R E F A C E.

THE Volume of the History of Scotland, now published, comprehends the period from the assassination of Cardinal Beaton in 1546, to the marriage of Mary, Queen of Scots, with Henry, Lord Darnley, in 1565, an interval, brief, indeed, in point of time, but prolific in events, and most momentous in their consequences. In proof of this, it is enough to say, that it embraces the history of the Reformation in Scotland: it includes the outbreak, the progress, and the establishment of that wonderful revolution, of which, in a former volume, the Author has marked the faint approaches, but which now, with all its conflicting principles, its mingled feelings,

Besides these sources, he has occasionally derived assistance from two manuscript volumes of Selections from the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer, and the Register of the Privy Seal of Scotland.¹ Lastly, he has consulted an unpublished volume, entitled "Illustrations of the Reign of Queen Mary," consisting principally of Letters from the Talbot Correspondence, preserved in the Library of the College of Arms.²

In the examination of these materials, with a view to impart the condensed historical result to the reader, the only merit to which the Author ventures to lay claim, is an earnest desire to discover the truth; a task so difficult,

¹ These volumes were obligingly lent me by their Compiler, Mr. Pitcairn, the Author of that laborious and useful work, "The Ancient Criminal Trials."

² This valuable volume will soon be presented to the Maitland Club by Mr. Kirkman Finlay. We owe its compilation to Mr. Stevenson, Sub-Commissioner of the Public Records, whose learning and enthusiasm have done so much for the remoter periods of Scottish History.

that in looking back upon the wide field over which he has travelled, he can sincerely say, that each succeeding volume has more fully convinced him of the imperfection of its predecessor, and impressed upon his mind the necessity of increased labour if he hopes to produce any thing which is worthy to live.

This volume was nearly finished printing, when Mr. Van Raumer presented to the world his work, entitled "Contributions to Modern History," from the British Museum and the State Paper Office, embracing Illustrations of the Reign of Mary Queen of Scots, and of the character and conduct of Elizabeth. It is to be regretted that this lively and ingenious writer, should have fallen into the singular mistake of printing as new materials, what has been long familiar to the critical readers of Scottish and English history. The letters, or rather the extracts from letters, which he has given as illus-

trating the first part of the reign of Mary, from 1561 to 1565, had (with a few slight exceptions) been published from the originals by Keith, in his elaborate work, entitled, "The History of the Affairs of Church and State in Scotland." (Edinburgh, 1734.) This volume of Keith, was the great mine from which Robertson drew his stores, and it formed the chief basis of Hume for the Scottish portion of his history. Its letters have been repeatedly quoted by succeeding writers, and it is still of the greatest utility to every reader who is anxious to derive his knowledge from authentic sources. To repeat these letters was superfluous, to mutilate and misunderstand them, was unfortunate—but, the climax of error was to give them as new matter.¹ The Author mentions this to show that English and Scottish historians are

¹ This fact, of the previous publication of these letters by Keith, has been stated in an able article of the British and Foreign Quarterly Review, No. 7.

not so utterly neglectful of the manuscript riches of England, as has been supposed, and that the "new lights," which some of the periodical critics have hailed, as proceeding from Prussia, may indeed be new to that country, but have been burning for upwards of a century in England. Mr. V. Raumer, whose continental reputation is firmly established, will, it is hoped, receive these remarks as they are meant to be given—in the spirit of necessary, but not unfriendly criticism.

LONDON,
March 2d, 1837.

CONTENTS

OF

THE SIXTH VOLUME.

CHAP. I.

M A R Y.

FROM 1545 TO 1554.

	PAGE
STATE of Scotland after the Murder of Cardinal Beaton	1
Convention at Stirling	3
Knox and others join the Conspirators	3
Huntly made Chancellor	5
Parliament assembled	6
Siege of the Castle of St. Andrew's	7
Knox called to the Ministry	11
Death of Henry Eighth and Francis First	11
Policy of the Protector Somerset	13
Commencement of the War	14
French Fleet arrives	15
Castle of St. Andrew's surrenders to Leo Strozzi	17
Knox and others carried to France	17
Difficulties of the Governor	19
Treachery of the Nobles	20
Somerset invades Scotland	22
Fiery Cross sent through the Country	23
Scottish Army assembles at Musselburgh	26
Scottish Cavalry defeated	27

	PAGE
Attempt to arrest hostilities	25
Battle of Pinky	32, 33
Angus defeats the English Cavalry	35, 36
Panic of the Highlanders	37
The Scots defeated with great slaughter	38, 39
Retreat of the Protector	41
Invasion of Scotland by Wharton and Lennox	41
Spirited Conduct of the Queen Dowager	42
She proposes to send the young Queen to France	43
Intrigues of the Scottish Nobles in the Service of England	44, 45
They desert Lord Wharton and defeat him	46
His Severe Retaliation	47
Invasion of Scotland by Lord Grey	49
Monsieur D'Esse, with six thousand men, from France	25
Haddington invested	52
Parliament—Marriage of the Young Queen to the Dauphin determined	52
She passes over to France	53
Ferocity of the War	55
Reinforcements from France	57
Peace concluded	58
Intrigues of the Queen Dowager	59
She passes over to France	60
Her projects to possess herself of the Government of Scotland	63
Opposition of the Governor Arran	63
He resigns the Regency to the Queen Dowager	68

CHAP. II.

FROM 1554 TO 1561.

Character of Mary of Guise	69
Her Promotion of Frenchmen	69
Disturbances in the North	72, 73
Parliament assembled	74
Tax to support a Standing Army resisted	76
Mary of Guise joins the League between France and the Pope	77
The Scottish Nobles refuse to invade England	78

	PAGE
Parliament assembled	79
Scottish Commissioners sent to France	80
Marriage of Mary Queen of Scots to the Dauphin	81
Treachery of the Guises	82
Sudden deaths of the Scottish Commissioners	83
Parliament assembled	83
Accession of Elizabeth	84
Her general policy	85
Peace of Chateau Cambresis	86
Peace with Scotland	86
Retrospect of the Progress of the Reformation in Scotland from 1547 to 1558	88
Knox's intercourse with Calvin	89
His Return to Scotland, (1555)	89
Its influence upon his party	91
His chief Supporters	92
He leaves Scotland for Geneva	94
Progress of the Reformation in his Absence	96
First Covenant (3d Dec. 1557)	98
Alarm of the Romish Clergy	99
Martyrdom of Miln	100
Remonstrance of the Protestants	103
Their Demands	104
Parliament in 1558	106
Duplicity of the Queen Regent	107
Protest of the Reformers	108
Policy of the Queen Regent at the Accession of Elizabeth, (1558)	109
Course of the History resumed	109
Plan of the Guises for the destruction of the Protestants in Europe	109, 110
Mission of Bettancourt to Scotland	110
Change in the policy of the Queen Regent	110
Collision between the Protestant and Romish Parties	111
Boldness of the Reformers	112
The Preachers Summoned	112

Arrival of Knox in Scotland, May 3, 1559	113
The Protestant Lords accompany their Preachers to Perth	114
Interview between Erskine of Dun and the Queen Regent	115
Her dissimulation	115
Knox's Sermon against Idolatry	116
Demolition of the Religious Houses	117
The Queen Regent joined by Argile and the Lord James	118
Address of the Protestants to the Queen	119
To the Nobility	120
To the Catholic Clergy	121
Armistice between the Two Parties	122
New Bond or Second Covenant	123
The Queen departs from the Articles of the Armistice	124
Argile and the Lord James desert her	125
Preaching of Knox	126
Franciscan and Dominican Monasteries destroyed	127
Great numbers join the Congregation	128
They make themselves Masters of Perth	130
Knox's Letter to Cecil	131
Destruction of the Abbey Church, and Palace of Scone	133
Congregation take possession of Edinburgh	134

CHAP. III.

FROM 1559 TO 1561.

Views of the Congregation	135
Knox's Letter to Percy	137
Kirkaldy meets Percy	138
Elizabeth favours the Congregation	138
Proceedings of the Queen Regent	139, 140
Letter of the Congregation to Cecil	141
His remarkable Reply	143
The Congregation retire from Edinburgh	145
Mission of Sir James Melvil from France	146
Knox dispatched to Berwick	147
The Negotiation with England	149

	PAGE
Cautious Policy of Elizabeth	151
Her real Views	152
Letter of the Congregation to Cecil	153
They resolve to depose the Queen Regent	154
Character of Arran	155
Character of the Lord James	156
Knox's Letter to Cecil	159
Sir R. Sadler sent to Berwick	160
He meets Balnevis	161
Arrival of Arran in Scotland	162
Mission of Bettancourt from France	162
First French Auxiliaries arrive	163
Mission of the Bishop of Amiens	164
Arrival of Randolph in Scotland	166
Lethington joins the Congregation	166
Debate on deposing the Regent	169
She is deposed	170
Commencement of the War	172
Efforts of Knox	173, 175
Mission of Lethington to Elizabeth	175
Policy and Intrigues of Knox	177
Violent proceedings of the Duke	180
Arrival of the English Fleet	182
Treaty of Berwick	184
Lord Grey enters Scotland	185
Progress of Hostilities	186
Unsuccessful Attempt at Mediation	187
Congregation Defeated at Leith	188
Death and Character of the Queen Regent	191

CHAP. IV.

FROM 1560 TO 1561.

Anxiety of all Parties for Peace	193
Cecil and Wotton sent to Edinburgh	194
Their Negotiations with the French Commissioners	196

	PAGE
Treaty of Edinburgh	199
Reflections	201
Peace proclaimed 8th July, 1560	203
Parliament assembled	204
Its important deliberations	206 to 211
CONFESSON OF FAITH	212
It is sanctioned by Parliament	215
Act abolishing the Papal Power	215
BOOK OF DISCIPLINE	217
Some of its provisions	218
It is violently opposed	219
Bill against the Bishops	220
Council of Twelve	221
Proposal of a marriage between Arran and Elizabeth	222
Lethington sent to England	223
Sir James Sandilands sent to France	223
Interview of Throckmorton and the Cardinal Lorraine	224
Interview of Mary Queen of Scots with Throckmorton	225, 227
She refuses to confirm the Treaty of Edinburgh	227
Her audience with Sandilands	228
Secret policy of France	229
The real designs of the Guises	230
Death of Francis the Second	232
Throckmorton's Character of the Young Queen of Scots	233
Her Conduct after her husband's Death	235
Parliament assembled at Edinburgh	237
Proceedings of the Congregation	238
Proceedings of the Romanists	239
Intrigues of the Lord James	240
Arrival of Commissioners from the Scottish Queen	241
Their affectionate message and letters	242
Lethington's description of the state of parties in Scotland	243
Mission of the Earl of Bedford to the Queen of Scots	245
His interview with that Princess	247
Second audience	248
Mary's prudent replies	249
The Lord James's intrigues with Elizabeth and Cecil	251

	PAGE
His visit to the Queen of Scots at Rheims	253
Mary disregards the advice of the Romanists	253
She treats the Lord James with confidence	254
Her openness	255
Proposals of Marriage to her	256
The Lord James offered a Cardinal's hat	257
He betrays Mary's intentions to Throckmorton and Elizabeth	258
Elizabeth secures his services	259
Mary's caution	261
She determines not to make him Governor of Scotland . . .	262
Treachery of the Lord James	263
His secret intrigues with Cecil and Elizabeth	263
Schemes for intercepting Mary on her voyage	266, 268
Elizabeth refuses her a Passport	269
Mary's remonstrance to Throckmorton	270
Her prudent and dignified conduct	272
She sets sail	273
Her arrival in her dominions, 19th August, 1561	274

CHAP V.

1561—1565.

Enthusiasm of Mary's first reception	275
Sudden change to discontent	276
Attack on the Mass in her Chapel	277
Proclamation as to Religion	277
Mary's interview with Knox	278
His injudicious violence	280, 281
Lethington's character of Mary	282
Mary's title to the English Throne	283
Her anxiety to have it recognized by Elizabeth	284
Lethington's letter to Cecil	285
The Lord James's letter to the English Queen on the same subject	285, 286
Mary depresses the Romish party	287

	PAGE
Their discontent	288
Lethington's mission to Elizabeth	289
Sir Peter Mewtas sent to Mary	290
General Assembly of the Church and Schisms amongst the Protestants	292
State of Ecclesiastical property	223
Discontent of Knox and the Ministers	294
Proposals of a meeting between Mary and Elizabeth	295
Opposed by Knox	296
Madness of the Earl of Arran	297
His accusation of himself and Bothwell	298
Randolph's testimony to Mary's justice and clemency	299
Her prudent administration	300
Marriage of the Lord James, who is made Earl of Mar	301
He is sent to reduce the Borders to obedience	302
Proposals of Marriage by Sweden	303
Elizabeth agrees to an Interview	303
Mary's satisfaction	304
Hostile policy of France	304
Mission of Sir Henry Sidney into Scotland	306
Elizabeth delays the Interview	306
Arrival of a messenger from the Pope	307
Mary's progress to the North	309
Her suspicions of Huntly	309
She summons Inverness Castle	310
Huntly rises in arms	311
His defeat and death	311
Reflections on his fall	312
War between France and England	313
Mary's anxiety	314
Violence of Knox	315
Randolph censures him	315
Knox's interview with Mary	317
His criticism on the Court Dancing	318
Story of Chartellet	320
Mission of Lethington to England	321
Miserable state of France	322

	PAGE
Mary anxious to have Elizabeth's advice as to her marriage	323
Mystery of Cecil	324
Violence of Knox	324
Policy of his party	325
His interview with the Queen	326
Bishop of St. Andrew's, and others arraigned for saying Mass	327
Imprisoned	328
Quarrel between Knox and the Lord James	329
Knox's pulpit address to the protestant Nobles	330
He attacks the Queen's marriage	331
His violent interview with Mary	332
He apostrophises the Court Ladies	333
Lethington blames Knox's violence	334
Knox's letter to Cecil	335
Elizabeth proposes Leicester as a match for Mary	335
Mary's reply to Randolph	339
Reflections	340
Lethington's remonstrances to Cecil	341
Elizabeth's perplexity	342
Her pretexts for delay	342
Proposed restoration of Lennox	343
Elizabeth's duplicity on this subject	344, 345
Spirited replies of Murray and Lethington	346
Return of Lennox to Scotland	347
Mary's favour to him	348
Elizabeth's latin letter to Cecil	349
Sir James Melvil's mission to England	350
His account of the English Queen	351, 355
Elizabeth again proposes Leicester	356
Randolph's testimony to Mary's sincerity	356
Elizabeth's dissimulation	357
Protracted negotiations	359
Cecil's mysterious diplomacy	360
Restoration of the Earl of Lennox	361
Randolph's graphic picture of Mary	362
Her conversation with him	364
Her sentiments on her marriage	365

	PAGE
Her opinion of Leicester	367
Darnley arrives in Scotland	368
His favourable reception	369
Murray and Lethington urge the marriage with Leicester	371
Elizabeth refuses to recognize Mary's title	372
Mary's feelings	373
She is disappointed, and indignant	374
Difficulties of her situation	375
She resolves to marry Darnley	376
Her solicitude and affection for him	377
He is spoilt by his prosperity	378
Lethington sent to England	380
Feud between Bothwell and Murray	381
State of factions in Scotland	382, 383
Randolph's Letters	384, 388
Caution against Randolph's misrepresentations	389
Mary's attempt to gain Murray	390
Her instructions to Lethington	391
Lethington's treacherous conduct	393
Convention at Stirling	393
The Nobles agree to Mary's marriage	394
Arrival of Throckmorton at Stirling	395
Mary's dignified reply to him	395
English Privy Council protest against the marriage	397
Strength of the Papists in England	399
State of English parties	399
Randolph's crafty and false representations	400
Mission of Hay to Elizabeth	401
Schemes of the Protestants for assassinating Darnley	402
They solicit Elizabeth's assistance	403
She recalls Lennox and Darnley	404
Murray and his party pretend that Religion is in danger	404
Falsehood of this assertion	405
Proved by his own letters	405
Observations on the conduct of Knox	405
Tumultuous meeting of the Protestants at Edinburgh	407
Heads of their supplication	408

	PAGE
Mary's temperate reply	409
Conspiracy of Murray and Argile	410
They intend to seize or murder Darnley	410
Mary defeats the plot	411
Her vigorous measures against the rebels	412
Murray's schemes detected	414
Elizabeth intercedes for him	415
Mary's reply	416
Her marriage with Darnley	417

PROOFS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM

UNPRINTED MANUSCRIPTS.

- I. Fiery Cross sent through Scotland.
- II. State of Scotland after the Battle of Pinky.
- III. Arrival of the French Auxiliaries
- IV. Embarkation of the Young Queen for France.
- V. Ferocity of the War.
- VI. Arrival of the Queen Dowager in France.
- VII. Letters from Sir John Mason's Correspondence.
- VIII. Cardan and the Bishop of St. Andrew's.
- IX. Comparative power of the English and Scottish Nobles.
- X. Lord James and the Queen Dowager.
- XI. Letters and Public Papers of Knox.
- XII. Sir Ralph Sadler's Instructions.
- XIII. Cecil's Scottish Spies.
- XIV. Treaty of Berwick.
- XV. Letters of the Lord James, afterwards the Regent Murray.
- XVI. Character of the Earl of Huntly.
- XVII. An Irish Ambassador in 1560.
- XVIII. Mary's aversion to Knox.
- XIX. Mary and Lethington.
- XX. Elizabeth's refusal of a Passport to Mary.
- XXI. Lethington and Cecil.
- XXII. Characteristic Letter of Knox.